



**Volunteer Policies
Revised and Approved 7/21/10**

INTRODUCTION

Girl Scouts in the United States are part of a worldwide movement of girls and adults. This movement has the mission of providing an informal education program to inspire girls with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism, and service. Girl Scouting is based on the belief that every girl has a unique and individual potential and deserves the opportunity to develop this potential in the company of her peers and in an environment conducive to such development.

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois (hereafter referred to as the Council) is chartered by the Girl Scouts of the United States of America and adheres to all policies set forth in the current edition of the Blue Book of Basic Documents.

Volunteers are essential for the successful accomplishment of the goals and objectives set for Girl Scouts. Therefore, it is necessary to have policies and procedures to ensure the effective utilization of all volunteers. The following materials were developed to serve this purpose.

Responsibilities of Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois has the ultimate responsibility for the management and supervision of all volunteer members in its jurisdiction. This includes but is not limited to Girl Scout program, membership opportunities, health and safety requirements, financial resources and volunteer administration.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

All volunteers must subscribe to the Girl Scout Promise and Law and be registered members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America. All adults, regardless of their position in Girl Scouting, contribute directly or indirectly to the mission to develop "girls of courage, confidence, and character that make the world a better place".

All volunteers must support and work within the framework of the charter, articles of incorporation, bylaws, policies, standards, goals and plan of work of the Council, plus the corporate goals of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

All volunteers recognize the Girl Scout Movement as a voluntary service and therefore, do not expect, receive, or solicit any monetary reimbursement for their services.

Affirmative Action for Volunteers

The Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois, in recognition of its responsibility to our volunteers and adult members, reaffirms a policy to ensure fair and equal treatment in all of its practices regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, marital or socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois will provide full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, affirmative action policies will be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers and reflective of the population groups within its jurisdiction.

Appointment

Operational volunteers shall be appointed for a term of one year which is renewable upon agreement of the volunteer and the council. The term length of volunteers in elected positions will vary based upon the needs of the council.

Benefits

Benefits to the volunteer include training and other learning opportunities, support in their position, council publications, liability insurance, and supplemental accident insurance, as part of the national membership. Other benefits include council publications; tools for recording volunteer experience; and references upon request.

Child Abuse

The Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Child abuse and neglect are defined as the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse as exploitation, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18, by person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicates the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened.

Sexual abuse is the use, persuasion, or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, molestation, prostitution, or incest with children.

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts. It is against the Council's policy for any volunteer, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any member.

Any volunteer that is found to inflict physical abusive behavior or bodily injury upon girl members, or physically neglect girl members, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities, or emotional maltreatment of girl members including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks will be dismissed immediately and reported.

The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the council, any volunteer implementing Girl Scout program who is found guilty of child abuse and neglect or has been convicted of child abuse and neglect.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed to as a volunteer whether this information involves a single staff member, volunteer, girl, other person, or council business. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the council or other corrective action.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when the interests or concerns of any volunteer or any member of her/his family (including but not limited to a relative commonly described as a father, mother, child, brother, sister, wife, husband, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, or any individual who makes his/her home with a volunteer) or any party, group or organization(s) in which the volunteer is actively involved may be seen as competing with or compromising the interests, concerns or reputation of the Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois or the Girl Scouts of the USA. Any volunteer may be asked to sign a conflict of interest statement when it is deemed in the best interest of the council.

Conflict Resolution/Dispute

The conflict resolution process is based on the fundamental values of respect for the individual and fairness. The policy exists so members of the organization can air their grievances and have avenues to solving them. All volunteers may use the conflict resolution procedure. Every volunteer may expect a fair

resolution of her or his dispute without fear of jeopardizing her or his volunteer status. Informal counseling by volunteer and employed staff is the first step in resolving a situation involving a conflict or dispute. The initiation of the conflict resolution procedure, however, will not restrict the council from taking immediate and appropriate action with respect to the volunteer. The procedure is as follows:

Step 1. If an informal resolution is not possible and a further hearing is desired, the person filing the complaint must do so in writing, citing the issue. The signed and dated document must be specifically titled "Conflict Resolution/Dispute Request," identify the person with whom the conflict is registered, and cite the policy or procedure that has allegedly been misapplied. A copy should be sent to the identified person's supervisor. Within ten (10) working days, the supervisor will call a conference of all parties involved in the dispute and attempt to resolve the conflict. A written summary of the conference will be distributed to all parties.

Step 2. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the disposition of the conflict resolution, the council employed staff member or the council employed staff member's supervisor will meet with the volunteer within ten (10) working days following her or his initial conference.

Step 3. In the event that the dispute is not resolved in Step 2, the employed staff member prepares a written report on the situation, including recommendations, and sends a copy to the chief executive officer.

OR

Step 4. The chief executive officer will appoint a dispute/complaint resolution review team. (The review team will be comprised of a management representative, an employee not involved in the conflict resolution process, and a council volunteer selected by the complainant.) The dispute review team will review the documentation on file and meet with the individuals involved. The review team may seek additional information, if necessary, to aid it in making a final decision. The team will provide the chief executive officer with a written report of its findings and recommendations within ten (10) working days of the review hearing. Copies will also be issued to the volunteer and immediate supervisor.

If the recommended resolution is not acceptable to the volunteer or any of the supervisors involved, a request to submit the recommended resolution to the chief executive officer for a final and binding decision will be made. The chief executive officer may exercise the following options:

1. Accept the Dispute Resolution Team's recommended solution.
2. Provide an alternative final and binding decision.

This is the council's final decision. It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer to implement the decision.

Criminal Background Check

For the protection of the membership and the council volunteers in positions which serve in primary leadership roles, positions that deal with money handling, and volunteers in designated assignments are required to complete a criminal background check and Child Abuse and Neglect Screening (CANTS). These procedures may include reference checks, criminal investigation, etc. Volunteers who refuse permission for conduct of these checks will not be accepted for placement with the council.

Debt

A debt is any money or product owed to Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois, a bank or outside vendor that has not been resolved within two weeks of it being brought to the attention of the debtor. This includes any product sales (cookies, nuts and candy, etc.), equipment, insignia, membership, program and training registration fees or insufficient funds checks returned to the council.

A person owing a debt to Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois, a bank or outside vendor, in the name of Girl Scouts, for more than 60 days (2 months) will be removed immediately from all adult volunteer position(s) currently held in the council. If the entire debt is paid or if the obligation of the Repayment Agreement is satisfied within six months, the individual will be considered for reinstatement to a volunteer position. Request for reinstatement will be reviewed and approved by a committee. If approved, money handling restrictions will be enacted per the committee.

A person incurring a second debt to the council, a bank, or outside vendor will be removed immediately from any and all adult volunteer position(s) and barred from holding any future volunteer positions with Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois.

Harassment

The council is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, and equitable treatment. It is the policy of the organization to provide all volunteers with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment. The council expressly prohibits any form of harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, marital status, citizenship, ancestry, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state and local law.

Any volunteer who feels that she or he has been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, council staff member, or any agent of the organization, should promptly report the incident to a their immediate supervisor. The supervisor, upon receiving the complaint, must take appropriate measures to resolve or correct the situation in an expeditious manner.

Membership

All adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall meet Girl Scouts of the USA membership standards, be registered through the council as members, and shall abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and the council.

Recognition

The council's formal recognition system will be consistent with the GSUSA's guidelines.

Reappointment

Prior to the completion of her or his term, each volunteer who is to be reappointed to the same position or rotated to a different position may receive confirmation of such reappointment or rotation. Reappointment is based on past performance, adherence to council and GSUSA policies and standards, and support of the Girl Scout purpose, values, and council goals. There will be a mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations and time commitments.

Release

Either the council or the volunteer may initiate a release from a position. A volunteer is requested to give as much notice as possible when resigning. A minimum of two weeks is requested.

Situations may arise that make it necessary to release an individual from a position. The council may release an individual because of, among other things, restructuring of a position in which the individual

serves, the volunteer's inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, or the refusal to comply with council or Girl Scouts of the USA policies. Release from the position does not cancel membership with Girl Scouts of the USA unless it is determined that she or he is unable to meet the membership requirement.

Representation of the Council

Prior to any action or statement that might significantly affect or obligate the council; volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval. These actions may include, but are not limited to statements to the press, lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or financial obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the council as specifically indicated within their job descriptions.

Separation

Either the council or the volunteer may initiate a release from a position. A volunteer is requested to give as much notice as possible when resigning. A minimum of two weeks is requested.

Situations may arise that make it necessary to release an individual from a position. The council may release an individual because of, among other things, restructuring of a position in which the individual serves, the volunteer's inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, or the refusal to comply with council or Girl Scouts of the USA policies, based on the needs of the organization, the need to maintain a positive public perception and the need to consider the organization's liability. Therefore, the termination or denial of a volunteer may be made by the immediate staff supervisor at any time it is determined to be in the best interest of the Council and/or its reputation. Separation from the position does not cancel membership with Girl Scouts of the USA unless it is determined that she or he is unable to meet the membership requirement.

Selection

Each volunteer is selected on the basis of qualifications for membership, ability to perform the volunteer position, volunteer and council need, and the willingness and availability to participate in training.

Sexual Harassment

The council policy is committed to providing volunteers with an environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Sexual harassment has been defined as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature".

It is against the organization's policies for any volunteer, male or female, to sexually harass another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex. The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with the council any volunteer who, in conducting Girl Scout program, advocates, solicits, or promotes any sexual behavior that is detrimental to the proper role model of girls.

Any volunteer who feels that she or he has been sexually harassed should promptly report such behavior to a supervisor or the chief executive officer. Upon receiving the complaint, a supervisor will report the matter to the chief executive officer who will take appropriate measures to resolve or correct the situation in an expeditious manner.

Training

All volunteers will complete required training for their position within three months of appointment. Additional training must be completed as deemed necessary within a specified time frame. At least one adult in a leadership role from each troop must complete Girl Scout Basic Leadership.

Uniforms

A uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scouting. Purchase of a uniform is at the volunteer's expense. Volunteers are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout pin when participating in Girl Scout activities when they are not in uniform. As representatives of the council, volunteers are responsible for presenting a good image to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

Council-Owned Properties

The following pertains only to council-owned property. Pets are not allowed with the exception of service animals. No hunting, firearms, weapons, fireworks or liquid fuels are allowed. Fishing without a license is not permitted. Children under 16 years of age do not need a license to fish. Reservations must be made with the council office prior to use of the property.

Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Controlled Substances

There will be no consumption of alcoholic beverages at any Girl Scout function without prior approval from the council's Board of Directors. Illegal drugs or other controlled substances are not allowed.

Internet

The volunteers of the Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois will adhere to GSUSA guidelines regarding internet use by members. Safety guidelines are outlined in the Safety Activity Checkpoints document.

Water Related Activities

For all aquatic activities, the GSUSA Safety Activity Checkpoints along with the GSSI's waterfront procedures and safety regulations must be followed.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available for girls and adults who would not otherwise be able to participate in the Girl Scout program. Financial need is based on the current Illinois Income Guidelines used for school lunch programs. Applicants are/or willing to become registered members of the Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois and does not have an outstanding debt with the GSSI.

Troop/Group Financial Assistance may be granted for:

1. Those new troops organized after the annual cookie sale program may request a loan. This loan should be refunded to the council financial assistance program within 6 months.
2. When troop funds become unavailable due to extenuating circumstances, a loan may be requested. This loan is to be repaid to the council when the money is retrieved.

Adult Financial Assistance may be granted for:

1. National membership registration
2. Registration fee for a council approved training/enrichment opportunity.

Individual Girl Financial Assistance may be granted for:

1. National membership registration
2. Council approved day or resident camp registration fees may be requested for no more than a one-week opportunity per girl in a calendar year.
3. Fee for council-sponsored events that are offered to individual Girl Scouts.
4. *Destinations* applicants who meet the criteria outlined in the financial assistance guidelines may receive monies based on eligibility and availability of funds.
5. Funds may be requested for sash and insignia or age level books.

A request for either of these may only be done once per grade level.

Example: A Girl Scout Brownie may only request her sash with insignia during her two years as a Girl Scout Brownie. Once she becomes a Junior, she may request this again.

Troop/Group Money Earning

All money earning projects must be approved by the Membership Development Manager of each area before being conducted. Participation in the cookie sale program is a prerequisite for approval of money-earning projects, financial assistance and/or camperships unless the troop was formed after the completion of the cookie sale program.

GSUSA forbids use of games of chance, the direct solicitation of cash, and product-demonstration parties. Troops and Service Units may not solicit businesses, community groups or individuals for financial support. Gifts-in-kind, however, may be solicited from local businesses.

Money-earning activities must be age appropriate and adhere to all safety standards along with state and local regulations. Service Units and troops may not apply for, nor accept grant funding. Troop money-earning projects must not be scheduled during the ordering and delivery days of the council product sale nor during posted United Way blackout dates. Girl and adult members, in their Girl Scout capacities, may not participate in any direct solicitation for money on the behalf of other organizations.

Troop/Group Finances

Any funds collected in the name of Girl Scouting by individuals, troops or Service Units shall be reported to the council on an annual basis or upon request. These assets are property of the Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois.

All troops must open and maintain a checking account to reflect money earned/acquired or donated in the name of Girl Scouting. Each troop may have one debit card. Troops/Service Units may have on-line account access for viewing purposes only. It is highly recommended that Service Unit Treasurers as well as troop leaders review bank statements monthly.

If a troop disbands and there are unspent funds, the account is closed and the funds are returned to the council.

Contracts/Liability Release Forms

The Chief executive officer (CEO) and/or her/his authorized designee must approve and sign contracts and liability forms for Girl Scout activities conducted on the troop, Service Unit and council level. Under no circumstance should a troop leader sign a Hold Harmless Agreement for their girls. Each parent must individually make that decision and sign the agreement. Council representatives will not sign an agreement on behalf of a troop or Service Unit.

Insurance

Proof of insurance for non-Girl Scout facilities is required for troops/groups and Service Units participating in the following activities:

Hayrides	Skiing	Change Courses
Horseback Riding	Rental Vehicles	Swimming
Roller Skating	Snowboarding	Go-Carting
Theme/Water Parks	Ice Skating	Rock or Wall Climbing/Rappelling
Watercraft (boating, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, bumper boats)		

The minimum amount of insurance required of sites offering these activities is \$1,000,000 liability coverage, as recommended by the council's insurance company. Individuals who are not registered Girl

Scouts may participate in activities only if the appropriate Girl Scout accident insurance is purchased by the sponsoring troop or Service Unit prior to the event.

Vehicle Insurance Coverage

All vehicles used for Girl Scout activities must have the minimum amount of insurance required in the State of Illinois: \$20,000 bodily injury; \$40,000 each accident; and \$15,000 property damage. It is strongly recommended however the minimum amount of insurance coverage carried on private vehicles be \$100,000 bodily injury; \$300,000 each accident; \$25,000 property damage; and \$5,000 medical payments.

Troop/Group Travel

Girl Scout troops/groups planning trips lasting 3 or more nights (excluding holidays) and that exceed 175 miles one-way of hometown, must have prior approval from their Service Unit Director and the designated council staff. The troop/group leader must complete specialized training prior to applying for an extended trip permit.

When an adult male is serving as a driver on a Girl Scout activity, a non-related adult female must accompany the group in the vehicle. For transporting girls two non-related adults should accompany the girls whether on a local field trip or an extended trip.

Each child transported must be compliant with the Illinois "Child Passenger Protection Act". Each person transported in a noncommercial vehicle must have a specifically designed passenger seat and wear a seat belt.

Vehicles designed primarily to serve as recreational homes may only be used to transport the number of persons for which they have specifically designed passenger seats and seat belts.

Vehicles must be used for their intended purpose. Trucks and other similar type vehicles used to transport equipment and supplies may not be used to transport people in the area designed for cargo. Trailers or other towed vehicles must not be used to transport passengers. All drivers are encouraged to become registered members of the Girl Scout organization.

Troop/Group Activity Guidelines

When leading girls, a minimum of two (2) non-related adults must be present as each meeting or activity. GSUSA safety guidelines shall be consulted for all girl/adult ratios. During regular meeting, it is recommended that troops meeting in public facilities and not at a private residence. GSUSA safety guidelines should be consulted for meeting site requirements.