

Service Unit Coordinator Guide 2023-2024





Introduction

The service unit coordinator serves as a knowledgeable, positive and encouraging source of support for the entire service unit team and enthusiastically engages others to carry out the team's plans for membership development and delivery of a quality Girl Scout experience.

Our Mission

Girl Scouts builds Girl Scouts of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Qualities of a Great Girl Scout Volunteer



Honesty

You are a trusted representative of your service unit and of Girl Scouts. If you strive to make honest and ethical decisions, your team will do the same.



Ability to Delegate

Where there is trust, there is strength! The ability to delegate tasks to appropriate team members is one of the greatest skills you can have.



Communication

Be clear and be knowledgeable about what you want done for the information you wish to convey. If you can't explain it, they can't understand it.



Sense of Humor

Always try to find the smiles inside the struggles! If you strive to find the "funny" and positive side of any situation, your teammates will too!



Confidence

When setbacks occur, help assure everyone that everything is going to be OK. Be a source of encouragement and calm during life's little storms.



Commitment

Lead by example. If you expect your team to work hard and give of their time and talents, always do your best to do the same.



Positive Attitude

Help keep your team focused on the goals ahead by keeping a smile on your face and in your voice. Positive energy produces positive results!



Creativity

Problems don't always have clear solutions and sometimes the best ideas take a little time to find. Always try to think outside the box!



Ability to Inspire

Motivation is key to achieving your goals. Keep everyone's spirits high by appreciating hard work and recognizing team members' strengths.



Intuition

Use your best judgment. Trust your gut. When there is no road-map telling you where to go or how to proceed, trust yourself and trust your team.

Service Unit Coordinator Playbook

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Service Unit Coordinator Position Description

The basic job description for the service unit coordinator is listed below. We would like for you to be the first line of contact for your service unit team and all of our troops across your service unit.

- Coordinate and facilitate the service team and support volunteers in accordance with the volunteer management system.
- Support the effective execution of service team roles and responsibilities.
- Prepare an agenda and preside over at least four service unit meetings during the membership year.
- Utilize service unit meetings to plan and discuss service unit activities, promote council services, provide training, distribute information, and interpret or clarify
- GSUSA and council policies, standards, and procedures.
- Communicate service unit meeting dates, times, and locations to volunteers.
- Ensure volunteers submit requested forms and reports to council by appropriate due dates.
- Ensure positive visibility and awareness of Girl Scouting in the community.
- Create an atmosphere of appreciation within the service unit using both informal methods and more formal GSUSA and GSCCC Adult Volunteer Awards and Recognitions.
- Provide conflict resolution with the support of council staff.

Thank You!

- Thank you for agreeing to serve as the service unit coordinator for your service unit.
- Your role is important to the Girl Scout movement. As a service unit coordinator, you will facilitate service to Girl Scouts through the service unit team's volunteers, support troop leaders and other volunteers, and support the council in achieving goals for membership and retention.
- This playbook is a resource for volunteers who are excited about welcoming, informing, and supporting their service unit by being a service unit coordinator. The information inside will help you engage volunteers, connect them to the service unit, and answer general troop and Girl Scout related questions.
- As the service unit coordinator, you will oversee the "business" of the service unit. Previously, the service unit coordinator performed responsibilities for several positions as well as organizing the leaders within the service unit. Now the service unit coordinator serves more as a facilitator, mentor and trainer to ensure the troop leaders are supported.
- So much happens behind the scenes in Girl Scouts! Most Girl Scouts have no idea how many adults it takes to keep our troops running smoothly. Thank you for taking on a role that supports leaders in building a great experience for Girl Scouts!

There are four key components to your position as service unit coordinator:

- Direction of all aspects of the service unit
- Promotion of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience
- Recruitment and retention of both Girl Scouts and adults
- Celebration and recognition of volunteers

Although yours is a pivotal role within the service unit, you don't have to "go it alone!" There is a whole volunteer team around you—your service unit team. And there is an entire staff behind you, too! Your GSCCC volunteer support specialist is your direct contacts and main sources of support. In addition, each service unit team position has an association and Council staff liaison to provide additional assistance when needed.

WELCOME TO THE SERVICE UNIT TEAM!

Overview of a Service Unit

Service units are organized groups of volunteers within a certain council-defined, geographical area who provide a critical layer of management and support needed to provide Girl Scout services throughout our council.

Since the Girl Scout council has a budget to support only a small staff in proportion to the population, the delivery of Girl Scout services relies heavily on volunteers. Troop leaders provide direct services to Girl Scouts, while service units provide vital support to leaders, Girl Scouts, parents, and caregivers through meetings, events, recruitment activities, financial management, etc.

The service unit team is responsible for extending membership by recruiting volunteers and Girl Scouts reflective of the diverse community including:

- Service unit team members
- Leaders and volunteers for a variety of pathways including troops and series
- Girl Scout membership at all grade levels
- Supporting the on-boarding of volunteers
- Assisting with Girl Scouts' and volunteers' registration

Providing direct support to Girl Scouts and adults through:

- Enrichment training
- Service unit networking and discussion groups
- Providing support to all volunteers through a variety of communication methods including service unit leader meetings
- Girl Scout-planned service unit events that promote a connection between troops in the service unit and enhance the troop experience
- Participation in council events and programs, including the Fall Product
- Sales Program and Cookie Programs.
- Volunteer recognition
- Providing service unit events that incorporate the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Ensuring that within each of the functions of the service unit, support will be consistent and flexible, and provide ease of access to the Girl Scout experience.

Community engagement by:

- Educating the community about the benefits of Girl Scouting
- Ensuring messaging and activities of the service unit reflect the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and council goals

Although every service unit has primary functions, it does not mean that these are the only volunteers who will assist with service unit business. For example, in service units with fewer troops and therefore, less volume, you might have several people on your team who assume more than one role or serve in more than one function. In larger service units, multiple people may be needed in order to function effectively and not overload any one person. You may find you need additional volunteers who are assigned specific duties under one of the list service unit team positions.

It is expected that all members of the service unit team will:

- Register as an adult member and be a positive representative of the Girl Scout
- Promise and Law.
- Be at least 18 years old and complete the volunteer screening process.
- Complete preliminary training to learn the job and eagerly participate in ongoing learning opportunities for continuous growth in the position.

- Participate in the development of the yearly Service Unit Engagement Plan.
- Participate as an active member of the service unit team by attending service unit volunteer support team meetings and service unit meetings.
- Provide excellent customer service by fulfilling responsibilities promptly and courteously.
- Build and maintain an effective working relationship with service team and council staff.
- Possess and utilize sound judgment, flexibility, organization, delegation, communication, and prioritization skills.
- Understand and help others understand and embrace diversity and inclusion.
- Follow all GSUSA and GSCCC policies, standards, and procedures.
- Display a positive, enthusiastic attitude that reflects the acceptance of the mission, vision, and goals of GSUSA and GSCCC.
- Support, promote, and maintain commitment to and knowledge of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and the National Program Portfolio, which includes the **Leadership Journeys and Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting handbook**.
- Have access and be able to communicate via phone, internet and email.



Planning Service Unit Meetings

Running a service unit meeting is an important responsibility of the service unit team, especially the service unit coordinator. These meetings can happen monthly, bi-monthly, or once per quarter and will focus on the specific needs within your service unit. Ideally, 20 percent of the meeting is spent on announcements and service unit business; the other 80 percent is spent on collaborating with each other, mentoring each other, planning events, and learning new skills.

Before meeting as a full service unit with all troops represented, a meeting will be held with the members of the service unit team to discuss and address what is to be presented at the service unit meeting. This meeting could be held an hour prior to the full service unit meeting or on another day. Conducting these meetings is a very important part of building the leadership of your service unit.

It is critical that the meetings be kept to a specific time schedule. Meetings need to start and end on time, unless the participants have been warned that the meeting could run longer than usual. Remember, your time and the time of all the other participants is valuable and needs to be honored. Make sure you do not spend too much presenting information that could have been learned via notes or a post-meeting email; instead, spend the majority of your time on learning opportunities or activities.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Provide time in the meeting for the different grade level groups to meet and share information and concerns.
- Include a “fun thing” on the agenda (i.e., learning a new song, playing a game, having a contest, teaching a new craft).
- Regularly thank individuals and recognize special services or achievements (coordinate with the adult recognitions coordinator).
- Have something at each meeting that the leaders can take back to their troop.

Using the Meeting Time Wisely

Tips and Suggestions:

- Every week, you will receive Volunteer Connection, an electronic newsletter from GSCCC. This newsletter contains announcements, upcoming events, and other important information. Review this newsletter for any timely reminders and remind the volunteers in your area to subscribe to and read the newsletter promptly.
- You can also refer to the Events Calendar on the gsgcc.org website to find out what is happening throughout the year.
- Start on time. End on time or early. Always.
- If your volunteers want to stick around and talk afterwards, they need to be given a window of time to do so. Sometimes being given the opportunity to share ideas is the best use of your time together. Be prepared to keep the building open longer than the scheduled time but know when/if the building manager needs to lock up the facility.
- Be consistent with your meetings. The opportunity to share information and “face time” with service unit team members and other leaders can make a huge difference in a volunteer’s Girl Scout experience. If you need suggestions of trainings or activities for your volunteers, please contact customer care@gsgcc.org.

Activity and Training Options

Keep them coming back!

Seek out, encourage and mentor new volunteers. Do you remember what it was like when you attended your first service unit leader meeting? Wouldn’t it have been easier if there was someone there whom you knew and who could explain the ins and outs? As a seasoned service unit team member, you have the opportunity to get the leaders off to a good start and give them a positive experience.

Include a training or activity as part of your service unit leader meeting. GSCCC staff, adult learning facilitators, and service unit team members can provide short trainings, also known as “Short and Snappy” trainings, at your meetings (or on a separate date) on a variety of beneficial subjects.

Don’t let any of your leaders be “the volunteer who never came back!” Take action with your team and brainstorm welcoming ideas to make every service unit leader meeting a positive experience!

Leading Service Unit Meetings

A Sample Meeting Agenda

It is the responsibility of the service unit coordinator to make sure that the service unit meeting runs smoothly and to request the resources the volunteers in your area might need. Here you will see a suggested meeting agenda and schedule to use as a sample with your leaders.

Notice that this meeting does not last longer than one hour. It is important that your volunteers know that the meeting will start on time, end on time, and not last longer than one hour, unless it is truly necessary. Make sure that you use the time you are given with your volunteers wisely.

Williamsburg Service Unit Meeting, Thursday, October 5, 2023, 7-8 p.m.

7 p.m. Welcome and Introductions

7:05 p.m. Icebreaker or team building game

7:15 p.m. Announcements and upcoming events (include financial report, Minutes from previous meeting, and council announcements or business)

7:25 p.m. Training or activity

7:55 p.m. Closing activity or game

Parts of the Meeting

1. Welcome – This is the beginning of your meeting. Introduce the service unit team, especially if you have new leaders attending. Use name tags or re-useable name plates on the tables in order to call individuals by name. You might explain how the members of your team serve in the area. This is also a great time to do a flag ceremony, or at least recite the Pledge of Allegiance, Girl Scout Promise and Law.

2. Icebreakers and Team-Building Games – Icebreakers and team-building games are a great addition to the service unit meetings. These games traditionally give people an opportunity to get to know each other and/or learn new skills. Always try to include information on how volunteers can use these games with their Girl Scouts, possibly explaining how to alter for younger or older Girl Scouts. These games can get more challenging as the year moves on and people get to know each other better. If you need suggestions for games and activities, contact customercare@gscoc.org.

3. Announcements and Upcoming Events – This is the third part of your service unit meeting. Here you will present service unit information, council information, and information about upcoming service unit events. Remember – don't spend more than 10 or 15 minutes making announcements. This information can be sent out via email either right before the meeting or soon after and this valuable meeting time may be better spent learning together instead.

4. Training or Activity – The majority of your time together needs to be devoted to a training or activity. This is your opportunity to bring in speakers and community resources, or facilitate a Journey, badge, or other outcomes-based training or activity. Be creative!

Make sure to ask the leaders in your area about what they would like to see at the meetings. Many times the service unit team is made up of experienced leaders who need different training than newer leaders, so be sure to keep your audience in mind when planning service unit meeting activities and trainings.

Consider who can lead the trainings that the leaders choose. Volunteers within your service unit might excel in certain subjects, and you may find a volunteers who is willing to share their experience with others. If you cannot find someone to facilitate a particular training, contact customercare@gscoc.org.

Another great use of volunteer mentors is to engage Girl Scout alumnae. Many alumnae continue to stay engaged and can offer many activity suggestions and resources. Some are even willing to travel and assist with troop meetings or events. Contact customercare@gscoc.org to find alumnae volunteers.

5. Closing Activity – This is the final part of your service unit meeting. There are many creative options for this portion of the meeting as well. Closing time is the perfect time for a friendship circle or short game. You could ask the volunteers to share something that they learned during the meeting or have used since you last met. It is also the best time to remind your volunteers of the next meeting date and time, especially if you only meet every other month.



Planning and running an informative, helpful, and timely meeting can be easy. If you need additional guidance or if you need help with your meetings, contact your volunteer support specialist.

Together with your service unit team, create a Take Action Plan to:

- Create a welcoming environment to help with leader retention.
- Work as a team to help the service unit run smoothly.
- Set goals to give the service unit direction.
- Establish a yearly calendar during the Service Unit Engagement Plan meeting to help everyone easily plan activities.
- Solve service unit problems as a group to help all team members develop problem solving skills.
- Develop an agenda for service unit leader meetings and service unit team meetings because using a team approach keeps everyone involved!

What to Avoid in Your Meetings

Avoid negativity!

Don't allow negativity to thrive in the meeting. There needs to be a time for participants to voice opinions, but encourage the conversation to move toward creative solutions rather than complaints. A great rule to establish and use with your service unit team is, "If you bring up a problem or concern during the service unit meeting, you must also give one possible solution." This helps to ensure that your meetings stay productive.

Avoid being unprepared.

Remember, you will need to use the small amount of time you have as wisely as you can. This means you need to create an agenda, arrive early, have all of your materials in hand, and be prepared when it is time for the meeting to start.

Avoid losing control of the discussion/agenda.

Again, opinions are valuable, but set aside a specific amount of time for discussion and then move forward. Consider using the Parking Lot at your meetings. Tell leaders you will email questions and answers to them within the week as a follow-up.

Recognizing Volunteers

Volunteers are our gold! Recognizing volunteers is a task that every team member needs to think about. There is no single solution to how to go about recognizing volunteers. Each gesture needs to be tailored to the volunteer(s) you wish to honor.

Never assume that volunteers know that they are appreciated. A sincere and spontaneous thank you note to a volunteer for a job well done is also a welcome bit of positive feedback. Personalizing your volunteer recognition component of your program is the best form of showing appreciation for the contribution of your volunteers.

Work with your service unit volunteer coordinator and adult recognitions coordinator to plan great ways to ensure that your service unit volunteers know just how valuable they are!

Delegating Tasks

*“Don’t try and do everything yourself because you can’t.”
Anthea Turner*

The first rule of management is delegation.

As a coordinator of volunteers, for you, “delegating tasks” means entrusting someone you have appointed to do a specific job – usually on their own without your assistance or interference. If you have the right person in place, your role as a service unit coordinator will become much easier, and your team will become more efficient and successful in achieving its goals.

Get rid of the “I’d Rather Do It Myself” mentality.

- “I can do it better.”
- “I can do it faster.”
- “I feel it’s my job.”
- “I don’t trust anyone else to do it.”

Why Delegate?

- Because you can’t do it alone.
- Because you build a team of experienced volunteers.
- Because you develop skills and confidence in others.

What happens if you don’t delegate?

- You over-extend yourself.
- People stop volunteering to help.
- Resentment and ill-feelings build.
- NO new leadership is developed.

The Dos and Don'ts of Delegating

DO:

- Be sure the person understands what the job is on the front-end and make sure that you are both “on the same page” about what specifically needs to be done.
- Maintain regular communication and contact with the person to whom you have entrusted the task in order to show encouragement and support.
- Show your appreciation whenever you have the chance.
- Be interested in other ideas and viewpoints.
- Let the person do the job!

DON'T:

- Coerce people into jobs they'd rather not do.
- Let someone continue in a job when nothing is getting better.
- Ask the wrong person to do the job or just choose a “warm body.”
- Overload people.
- Ask the same people over and over again.

Remember...to engage volunteers, you must support them by allowing them the opportunity to answer questions, to share their talents, and to share their expertise.

It's a Partnership!

The service unit team provides the “link” between staff and volunteers and Girl Scouts. Your role as a leader of the service unit team helps us maintain this vital connection, so that we keep it strong and healthy, and set ourselves up for growth so that we can serve more Girl Scouts.

Below are a few ways we can work together to strengthen this partnership:

- Facilitate participation in council meetings or trainings. This is a great way to network with other service units within your areas as well as gain valuable information about our organization.
- Assist in promoting, supporting, and attending the GSCCC Annual Meeting (held in February of each year). This annual event offers a wonderful opportunity to learn about GSCCC and network with other adult Girl Scouts throughout our council, as well as have a say in the decision making process (as a delegate).
- Work with the volunteer support team to provide constructive feedback in all areas so that we can continue to improve our organization. We depend on you to be the eyes and ears of our council!
- Be on the lookout for ways to network with your community to help identify funding possibilities, donation sources, potential volunteers, and community support for Girl Scouting.

Above all, help us be the SOLUTION to any problems that arise. With your help, our council can be a shining example of what healthy leadership can accomplish.

Managing Conflicts

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, and when handled constructively, conflict can actually enhance communication and relationships. At the very least, Girl Scouts are expected to practice self-control and diplomacy so that conflicts do not erupt into regrettable incidents. Shouting, verbal abuse, or physical confrontations are never warranted and cannot be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment.

When a conflict arises between individuals, encourage those involved to sit down together and talk calmly in a nonjudgmental manner. Depending upon the situation, each party may need some time—a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this. Although talking in this way can be uncomfortable and difficult, it does

lay the groundwork for working well together in the future. Whatever you do, do not spread complaints around to others. That kind of talk won't help the situation and causes only embarrassment and anger.

If a conflict persists, contact your volunteer support specialist for further assistance. If the team cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily, the issue can be taken to the next level of supervision.

Monthly Checklist (sample)

<p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review SU Engagement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan enrichment activity for leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Agenda items for first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note <input type="checkbox"/> Fall Product begins 	<p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> New Girl Scout year begins! <input type="checkbox"/> Review SU Engagement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan enrichment activity for leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Agenda items for first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce VST at leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> 10/11 – International Day of the Girl <input type="checkbox"/> 10/31 JGL Birthday
<p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review SU Engagement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan enrichment activity for leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Agenda items for first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note 	<p>December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review SU Engagement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan enrichment activity for leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Agenda items for first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note
<p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Cookie Program begins <input type="checkbox"/> Review SU Engagement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan enrichment activity for leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Agenda items for first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note 	<p>February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2/22 World Thinking Day <input type="checkbox"/> Review SU Engagement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan enrichment activity for leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Agenda items for first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note
<p>March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 3/12 Girl Scout Birthday <input type="checkbox"/> 3/30 Girl Scout award submissions due <input type="checkbox"/> Cookie Program wrap-up <input type="checkbox"/> Review SU Engagement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan enrichment activity for leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Agenda items for first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note 	<p>April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Appreciation month <input type="checkbox"/> 4/1 Early Renewal begins <input type="checkbox"/> 4/22 Girl Scout Leaders' Day <input type="checkbox"/> Review SU Engagement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan enrichment activity for leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Agenda items for first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note <input type="checkbox"/> Begin discussing VST roles for upcoming year <input type="checkbox"/> Begin discussing VST roles for upcoming year
<p>May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plan bridging or other end of year event <input type="checkbox"/> Review SU Engagement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan enrichment activity for leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Agenda items for first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss VST opportunities with volunteers and staff 	<p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6/30 (or earlier) troop finance reports due to Finance Coordinator <input type="checkbox"/> Review SU Engagement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Plan enrichment activity for leader meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Agenda items for first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Send out meeting reminder note

THANK YOU for your continued dedication to Girl Scouts, our mission,
and the Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast.

WE APPRECIATE YOU!

