



SU Welcome Specialist

Girl Scouts offers the best leadership development experience for girls in the world.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is a one-of-a-kind leadership development program for girls, with proven results. It is based on time-tested methods and research-backed programming that help girls take the lead—in their own lives and in the world.

Research shows that girls learn best in an all-girl, girl-led, and girl-friendly environment. Girl Scouts is a place where she'll practice different skills, explore her potential, take on leadership positions—and even feel allowed to fail, dust herself off, get up, and try again.

Through Girl Scouts, girls:

-  **Discover** who they are and what they care about
-  **Connect** with others locally and globally to learn from others and expand their horizons
-  **Take Action** to make the world a better place.

Girl Scouts gain important skills in four areas that form the foundation of the GSLE:

 <p>STEAM/STEM</p>	 <p>ENTREPRENEURSHIP</p>	 <p>CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/ LIFE SKILLS</p>	 <p>OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES</p>
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By participating in the GSLE, girls walk away with 5 key outcomes:

-  Develop a strong sense of self.
-  Seek challenges and learn from setbacks.
-  Display positive values.
-  Form and maintain healthy relationships.
-  Learns to identify and solve problems in the community.



Service units are integral in bringing the GSLE to life and helping girls achieve these key outcomes. Thank you for all you do to grow the next generation of leaders!

GSKSMO serves 20,000 girls in Kindergarten–12th grade across its 47 county council.

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Welcome to the Service Team!

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a
the SU Welcome Specialist!

Your job has 2 key components:

- Welcome New Leaders
- Connect New Leaders to your SU and Council Resources

You are very important.

As the person responsible for welcoming, onboarding and supporting new GS troop leaders, your role is important to the success of the Girl Scout movement. You are a leadership role model for volunteers! Thank you for taking on a role that supports troop leaders in building a great experience for girls.

There is a whole volunteer team around you—your service team. Your direct supervisor is the service unit manager.

You will also work closely with the opportunity consultant in your service unit. An additional resource is your service unit support manager, who is your service unit’s liaison to Girl Scout headquarters.



SU Welcome Specialist Volunteer Description

Department: Mission Delivery

Appointed By: Service Unit Manager (SUM)

Purpose: The SU Welcome Specialist (SUWS) provides orientation, training, and support to new Girl Scout troop leaders.

Term of appointment: One Girl Scout year, with possibility for continued service

Support: Direct support is provided by the SUM and Service Unit Support Manager (SUSM)/Membership Manager (MM). She/he has access to relevant learning opportunities and materials that prepare for and support this role. Training and coaching will be provided by Troop Experience Managers.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure Service Unit Orientation is provided to each new volunteer within the guidelines set by the council; utilizes council resources to execute training.
- Provide new troop leaders with direction for tasks to be accomplished prior to meeting with girls.
- Monitor the start-up of new troops and advise leaders on establishing parental support and effective parent communications.
- Provide ongoing support to new leaders.
- Ensure adult volunteers are aware of council trainings and enrichment workshops.
- Remain informed about and comply with the most current policies, procedures, and guidelines of GSKSMO and GSUSA.

Core Competencies:

- Girl focus: Empower girls to lead activities, learn by doing, and cooperate with others on current issues that involve their interests and needs, while having fun.
- Personal integrity: Demonstrate dependability, honesty, and credibility.
- Adaptability: Adjust, modify own behavior, and remain flexible and tolerant in response to changing situations and environments.
- Oral communication: Express ideas and facts clearly and accurately.
- Foster diversity: Understand, respect, and embrace differences.
- Computer skills: Access to e-mail and the Internet.

Requirements:

- Must be a registered member of GSUSA
- Must pass a criminal background check
- Be guided in all actions by the Girl Scout Mission, Promise and Law.
- Ability to keep accurate records
- Willingness to work effectively with other team members
- Ability to communicate in a professional manner
- Demonstrated group and interpersonal communication skills
- Background in customer service and support or other relevant fields
- Excellent organization and project-management skills

This job description is not intended to be all-inclusive. Reasonable accommodations will be made to allow individuals with disabilities to perform volunteer jobs with the council whenever possible.

Key Responsibilities

Part 1—Welcome New Leaders

Remember what it is like to be new? Your job is to help our new leaders get the best start by conducting an in-person orientation with the new leader, and providing an orientation packet.

Key steps to onboarding new leaders:

1. When a new troop leader is recruited in your SU, upon confirmation of completing New Leader Training, you are to conduct an Orientation Meeting. New leaders will receive their troop number only AFTER they have completed New Leader Training. All troops must have 2 leaders, passed a background check, and have 5 girls.
2. A Troop Experience Manager will email you once a new leader has completed training. Once you have reached out to the new leader, please reply to the email and let us know you have connected with the new leader.
3. You will give the leader an orientation packet. Follow the outline in this manual. You should cover the following items in Orientation:
 - Service Unit Information such as contacts, meeting time and location, SU communication vehicles etc.
 - Who to call when an emergency happens
 - Program opportunities and Resources, i.e., Girls Guide to Girl Scouting and Journeys
 - Getting Into Girl Scouts – 1st meetings
 - Parent Meeting
 - Resources on the council’s website – highlight Volunteer Essentials – show the leader where this is located and what she/he may need it for during the year.
 - Community Partners
 - STEM Activities
 - Outdoor Opportunities
 - SU Events

Setting up a Mentoring Structure

One of the best ways to keep new troop leaders engaged and motivated is to set up a mentoring structure within your service unit. Volunteers remain committed when they feel appreciated, when they see they are making a difference, when there is opportunity for personal growth, and when they have a sense of belonging and teamwork. A mentor fills that role by providing one-on-one support to the new troop leader.

Work with your Service Unit Manager to establish a mentoring structure. Mentoring structures can look very different—some are formal (such as troop consultants assigned to specific grade levels or schools) while others happen during Service Unit meetings. Whatever structure you develop within your team, it is very important that your new troop leaders have a specific go-to person who will check in with them on a regular basis.

Part 2—Connect New Leaders to your SU and to Council Resources

Girl Scouting is fun with a purpose and the main way to ensure that girls experience this is to utilize the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Your responsibility is to promote the GS mission and leadership experience to new troop leaders at all times so that everything a troop or girl does is fun, friendly, and safe where they Discover, Connect, and Take Action to make the world a better place.

What this looks like:

- Connect with your SUM to ensure you are aware of larger SU events and plans
- Be knowledgeable of SU resources
- Be sure to check out the resources available on Troop Leader Central, under Forms and Resources on our website.
- Be knowledgeable in Girl Scout program materials.
- When discussing troop activities with new leaders, encourage them to utilize the three Girl Scout Processes. These are critical to the success of the GSLE.
- Start with the end in mind. When planning events and activities, talk to new leaders about what girls can gain from participating and how fun with a purpose builds leadership.
- Encourage participation in SU events, council programs and trainings.
- Challenge up—support down! See something that needs to be fixed? Are a lot of leaders confused about the same issue? Just remember, it is important to support even those decisions or policies you may not personally agree with in your role as an administrative volunteer.

Resources to help you:

- Review the Girl Scout Leadership Experience Overview on page 7 of this guide.
- The Troop Leader Central section of our council website: gsksmo.org/troopleader
- The GSUSA website: girlscouts.org

Girl Scout Leadership Experience

WHAT GIRLS DO

DISCOVER

CONNECT

TAKE
ACTION



HOW THEY DO IT

GIRL-LED

COOPERATIVE
LEARNING

LEARNING
BY DOING



Girl-Led:

Our goal is that all programs are girl-led. This means that girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how and why of their activities. We want leaders and program partners to encourage them to lead in the planning, decision-making, learning and fun as much as possible. This ensures that girls are engaged in their learning and experience leadership opportunities as they prepare to become active participants in their local and global communities.

The involvement of the girls varies depending on their age. To assist girls in designing their program, the Girl Scouts also stress the importance of girl/adult partnerships. Examples of this include adults and girls working together, adults helping girls make a decision by brainstorming and asking questions rather than providing answers and an adult guiding rather than leading.

Learn by Doing:

Learning by Doing, also known as Experiential Learning is a hands-on learning process that engages girls in the continuous cycles of action and reflection that result in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills. As they participate in meaningful activities and reflect on them, girls get to explore their own questions, discover answers, gain new skills, and share ideas and observations with others. Throughout the process, it is important for girls to be able to connect their experiences to their lives and apply what they have learned to their future experiences.

Girls learn by:

- Experiencing an activity – typically includes active “hands on” learning
- Debriefing – discussing what happened and what they learned
- Application – applying what happened and what they learned to their lives

Cooperative Learning

Through cooperative learning, girls work together toward shared goals in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration that encourages the sharing of skills, knowledge and learning. Working together in all-girl environments encourages girls to feel powerful and emotionally and physically safe and allows them to experience a sense of belonging even in the most diverse groups. Girls also benefit from practicing teamwork, especially when they have different approaches to solutions.

Watch the video at gsksmo.org/troopleader under “Helpful Videos”

Forms

There are many forms new troop leaders will use. Listed below are essential forms and a few pertinent additional forms. These can all be found on the council website under the Forms and Resources tab (gsksmo.org/forms) unless otherwise noted.

Essential forms or links:

- **Lead Troop/Lead(er) Patch program**
Girl Scouts are able to participate in the LEAD troop patch program by completing activities that align with the Girl Scout Law. Upon completion in the spring, troop leaders can order a special patch to identify each Girl Scout as part of a LEAD troop. Troop leaders can earn recognition as a Lead(er)!
- **Troop Standard Incident Report**
To be used to report a serious incident, accident, or any child abuse suspected or disclosed
- **Troop Activity and Trip Application (and Sensitive Topics)**
To be used when planning trips or activities involving overnight stays, high risk, sensitive topics, or areas outside the council's boundaries. Also used if sensitive topics need parent permission before troop participation.
- **Bank Account Information Link and ACH Form:**
To be submitted when a troop bank account is opened or changes are made to the account
- **Finance Report – Troop Non Bank of America accounts**
To be submitted annually by June 1, along with the troop's May 31 bank statement – reports income/expenditures of a troop
- **Health History and Annual Permission Form**
Completed annually by parent/guardian and retained by the troop leader. The information assists in identifying appropriate care for a Girl Scout during her Girl Scout program and is provided prior to any Girl Scout day or overnight trip a girl is attending
- **Insurance Purchase**
To be purchased for all non-registered person(s) attending a Girl Scout event and for trips for more than (2) nights.

Working with Parents/Caregivers

One of the most important goals, especially in a new troop, is to set the expectation of parents to be active and engaged participants. Your key responsibility in this area is to work with the (new) troop leader to have frequent contact with her parents, keeping them informed of all aspects of the troop – trips, finances, programs, etc. You should also encourage the leader to develop a troop support committee – parents who have specific, assigned tasks such as assistant leader, cookie mom, treasurer, program assistant, or driver. It is very important that those relationships are built early in the Girl Scout year.

Most parents/guardians are helpful and supportive, and sincerely appreciate your time and effort on behalf of their daughters. You should always have the same goal, which is to make Girl Scouting an enriching experience for their girls.

If you need help with specific scenarios involving parents/guardians, try the following:

If a parent or guardian...	You can say...
...is uninvolved and asks how she can help but seems to have no idea of how to follow through or take leadership of even the smallest activity,	<i>"I do need your help. Here are some written guidelines on how to prepare for our camping trip."</i>
...constantly talks about all the ways you could make the group better,	<i>"I need your leadership. Project ideas you would like to develop and lead can fit in well with our plan. Please put your ideas in writing, and perhaps I can help you carry them out."</i>
...tells you things like, "Denise's mother is on welfare, and Denise really doesn't belong in this group,"	<i>"I need your sensitivity. Girl Scouting is for all girls, and by teaching your daughter to be sensitive to others' feelings you help teach the whole group sensitivity."</i>
...shifts parental responsibilities to you and is so busy with her own life that she allows no time to help,	<i>"I love volunteering for Girl Scouts and want to make a difference. If you could take a few moments from your busy schedule to let me know what you value about what we're doing, I'd appreciate it. It would keep me going for another year."</i>

HELPFUL HINTS FOR NEW TROOP LEADERS:

- Have a parent meeting before your first troop meeting.
- Keep track of girls' attendance, participation, and badges/patches earned.
- Track income (e.g. by girl/ reason) and expenditures (e.g. receipt book is recommended, etc.), and provide an annual Troop Finance Report to council.
- Share information with parents about troop trips, financial income/ expenses, updates, etc. on a regular basis.
- Most conflicts can be easily avoided by continual and thorough communication with parents. (e.g. via troop newsletter)
- Form a troop support committee to ensure the engagement of parents (e.g. cookie mom, treasurer, transportation), and explain how parent participation is expected.
- Participate in service unit and council events to enhance the girls' experience.

Service Unit Quick Facts

Please print or refer to the SU Welcome Specialist Contact sheet on our website. This form provides quick contact info for your new Troop Leaders and is a valuable resource for them.

Troop Banking

Once a troop has established their troop numbers, share with your new leaders that a Troop Experience Manager will be in touch to go over next steps with the leader to assist with opening a new account.

Explanation and Examples of Supplemental Insurance for Meetings and Events

Types of extra insurance available:

Plan 2 Accident insurance (\$0.11 per participant per calendar day)

- For members participating in approved Girl Scout activities lasting MORE than 3 days/2 nights or longer
- For non-members *participating* in an approved and supervised Girl Scout activity such as Father Daughter Dance or Court of Awards

Plan 3E Accident and Sickness Insurance (supplemental to individuals insurance) (\$0.29 per participant per calendar day)

- For *participants* in approved Girl Scout activities - most often purchased for council sponsored activities such as resident camp or for troop travel of 3days/2 nights or longer

Plan 3P Accident and Sickness Insurance (\$0.70 per participant per calendar day)

- For *participants* in approved Girl Scout activities – most often purchased for council sponsored activities such as resident camp or for troop travel of 3days/2 nights or longer

Plan 3PI Accident and Sickness Insurance for International Trips (\$1.17 per participant per calendar day)

- For *participants* in approved Girl Scout activities – this is a requirement for international trips

Terms

Participants: This includes adults, minors, members and nonmembers who participate in an event. For example, at an enrollment event, it would include current Members, the volunteers and any staff that will be attending and managing the activities designed especially for the potential enrollees, their parents, the children placed in a Supplemental Supervised Unit, and the supervisor(s) of that unit. As always, it would not include “Tagalongs” (see below)

Supplemental Supervised Unit: This may be called by many names. Some common ones include “boys’ unit,” and “pixie unit”. It is the children who would be “Tagalongs,” except for the fact that they are kept under the continuous supervision of an adult while a Girl Scouting activity takes place for Members. The reason they are insurable is that they are continuously supervised. In resident camping there may be a counselor assigned specifically to supervise the children of staff who are not campers. In the group setting, it may be siblings who are kept together away from the Girl Scout programming and supervised by an adult; Member or nonmember, or a properly trained and adult supervised older Girl Scout.

Tagalong: Tagalongs are siblings and friends, both boys and girls, who come with parents or guardians to a Girl Scout event. If they are not in a Supplemental Supervised Unit – they are not insurable and should not be attending and/or participating in Girl Scout program activities.

Purchasing Supplemental Insurance

Forms for purchasing extra insurance can be found at gsksmo.org/forms (search “insurance purchase form”)

Examples & Clarification

Troop Activities:

- Activities/field trips for Girl Scouts in specific a troop and their approved adult volunteers.
- Approved adults must have completed a background check.
- It is the leader's responsibility to ensure that Safety Activity Checkpoints and safety-wise information in Volunteer Essentials is followed for each activity.
- Examples include Saturday field trip to the local pottery store, troop camping trip (2-nights or less), and ziplining at a council camp.
- Additional insurance is only needed for these activities if an approved volunteer is unregistered.
- High-Risk activities, overnights and trips outside council boundaries require council approval. Troop leaders should submit an Activity/Trip Application at least 6 weeks in advance.

Family Events:

- To qualify for a family event, the event must (a) be open to all families and (b) all participants still must meet the age and skill level according to council or safety activity checkpoint standards.
- For example, if an event is only appropriate for Brownies and above, then all children participating must be in 2nd grade or older.
- Examples of family events include a father/ daughter dance, court of award, family picnic.
- Supplemental insurance needs to be purchased for all non-registered participants.

Overnights Longer Than 2-Nights:

- These are considered troop activities and all girls must be registered members and all adults must be approved volunteers (background check).
- Additional insurance will need to be purchased for all people participating in the trip.
- Council approval required. Must submit Activity/ Trip Application at least 6 months in advance.

Age and Skill Appropriate Activities: *In order to qualify as a participant, a person must meet the age and skill level of the activity.*

- If a safety activity checkpoint says that an activity is only appropriate for Juniors and up, then all participants must be grade 4 and up.
- A Cadette troop plans a field trip. If one of the girls has a sibling who is a registered Brownie, the sibling is considered a tagalong since this is a Cadette activity and cannot attend.
- A Cadette volunteers to work with a Brownie troop while completing her Leader in Action Award. This is approved activity and insurance does not need to be purchased for the Cadette.

Additional children (non-Girl Scout or not in the right age group) at troop or service unit meetings:

- These children are considered tagalongs.
- There are two options for troops/SU to consider:
- Set up at supplemental supervised unit and purchase additional insurance. This means that you have an adult (who has completed the background check) who watches all of the tags in a separate room or area. This adult is separate from the adults that are watching the girls in the troop and fulfilling the adult/ girl ratios.
- They do not attend.

Non-registered adults at meetings:

- If they are interacting with girls and/or fulfilling girl/adult ratios, they must complete a background check.
- Additional insurance needs to be purchased if they are not registered members.
- If they are waiting for their daughter, they may sit to the side or in a different room or area. They do not interact with girls during the meeting and additional insurance does not need to be purchased. These adults do not count in the girl/adult ratios and cannot assist with activities.