

Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts

The comprehensive Girl Scout volunteer management system ensures that you are matched with the right opportunities, are provided efficient and effective learning and support, and are recognized for the valuable service you provide on behalf of girls. The first few steps of the process include background screening, interviewing, and placement, which you've already experienced. Now, you're in a position to assess the skills and competencies Girl Scouts has identified as most important—the ones that will lead to the best results for girls. You surely already possess many of these skills and behaviors and will develop more in the coming year, as you work more closely with girls and with your volunteer support team. After you've evaluated your skills and identified opportunities for growth, you can utilize the learning opportunities offered by your council. You'll have the opportunity to learn and grow, right along with the girls!

As an adult volunteer member, you receive the benefits that every member receives (publications from both the national office and local council, supplemental insurance coverage, and discounts that some councils have negotiated with local businesses). But in addition to that, you also have tremendous opportunity for personal development and career advancement. Girl Scouts is passionate about ensuring that your experience is a good one by offering a comprehensive system of learning and development that translates into new skills—and perhaps new opportunities in your workplace. You also have access to a network of nearly a million (that's right—a *million!*) other Girl Scout volunteers who care just as passionately about making a difference in girls' lives, and who are usually happy to assist fellow volunteers in their career and personal pursuits.

Evaluating Your Skills

Use the following checklist to determine your strengths and areas for growth, and then work with your volunteer support team to boost the areas in which you can do some additional learning and skill-building.

Focusing on Girls

- € I create a fun, interactive, girl-led series of activities.
- € I help girls set realistic and clearly defined goals and objectives.
- € I am respectful of and empathetic to girls.
- € I create a friendly environment for girls and adults.
- € I foster girl-adult partnerships that provide opportunities for girls to lead their own activities.

Demonstrating Flexibility

- € I adjust, modify behavior, and remain flexible and tolerate in response to changes, obstacles, and divergent opinions.
- € I maintain a sense of humor and emotional composure, even when under pressure or opposition.

Communicating Well

- € I express ideas and facts clearly, concisely, and accurately.
- € I communicate in a manner that's appropriate for each individual and group.
- € I use appropriate nonverbal communication.
- € I actively listen to others and incorporate their ideas and perspectives.
- € I facilitate group discussion, clarify the points of others, and encourage group responses and actions.
- € I present information that is clear, organized, and vibrant.

Fostering Diversity

- € I understand that each individual brings a unique—and important—experience to Girl Scouting and I embrace those differences.
- € I value, develop, nurture, use, and celebrate both group and individual diversity.
- € I strive for inclusiveness in all activities, removing barriers to participation for both girls and their parents/guardians.
- € I challenge the biases of others.
- € I treat others fairly.

Living with Personal Integrity

- € I demonstrate dependability, honesty, and credibility.
- € I accept responsibility for my own actions.
- € I maintain confidentiality.
- € I uphold ethical standards.

Taking Advantage of Volunteer Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts strives to provide you with just enough information to successfully manage your group of girls, and then to let you know how and where you can get additional information on certain topics when you're ready to find out more. You'll find that volunteer learning is offered in a variety of ways, so as to best meet your unique learning styles: written resources; face-to-face learning; interactive online learning—and additional methods are being developed and tested all the time!

Currently, through your council, you'll find online learning modules that you can complete on your own schedule and at your own pace, as well as face-to-face training opportunities that allow for immediate feedback on the skills learned and knowledge gained. You also have resources—like this resource and the journey adult guides, for example—to use as a reference over the next year. Read what you need now, and come back to it when you're ready for more. At this point, you have probably already completed the online Volunteer Orientation and will soon be scheduled for Leadership Essentials, which will provide in-depth focus on delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience—the outcomes/benefits we're striving to achieve for girls, the processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning), and the three leadership keys (discover, connect, and take action). Your council may also offer additional courses.

Girl Scouts of Central Indiana Learning Opportunities:

- ❖ Girl Scouts of Central Indiana Introduction
- ❖ Leadership Essentials
- ❖ First-Aid/CPR (offered in face-to-face format and online)
- ❖ Outdoor Fundamentals
- ❖ Camping Anywhere
- ❖ Outdoor Cooking

Learning opportunities ensure that you have the support you need in Girl Scouting. The volunteer learning department at your council will provide you with the instruction and guidance necessary to fulfill your role successfully as a Girl Scout volunteer—learning that will not only help you work more effectively with Girl Scouts but also may introduce new skills and behaviors into your work life, relationships, and personal development. In the end, your service will be recognized and evident to all the girls you help become confident, courageous, and character-driven young women. And that's the greatest reward of all!

View our calendar of learning opportunities at www.girlscoutsindiana.org, Parents and Volunteers, Adult Learning.

Getting Feedback on a Job Well Done

Serving as a Girl Scout volunteer affords you exceptional opportunities, both in the skills you'll gain and in the difference you'll make in the lives of girls. Everyone involved with Girl Scouts wants to ensure that you're effectively mentoring girls to become world-changing leaders, and your council staff helps you do that by measuring outcomes, evaluating your performance, continuing to give you opportunities to build new skills, and recognizing you for the tremendous work you do.

We want you to have such an incredible time working with girls that you want to stay in Girl Scouting! So, after you complete your current role, your council staff will go through a reappointment process, in which you'll talk about the positive parts of your experience as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return in this position or try something new. During this process, council staff will also (of course!) want to lavish you with praise, rewards, recognition, and thanks for all the hard work you do!

Volunteer Leader Appreciation Day

Each year, April 22nd marks the Girl Scout Volunteer/Leader Appreciation Day, a special day in which council staff, parents, and girls show their appreciation for the volunteer work you do all year. In addition, each council recognizes volunteers in unique and touching ways—you'll hear more about this in the coming year.