

Unlocking Leadership

Service Unit Team

Troop Mentor Orientation Manual



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 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 be allowed to fall, dust herself off, get up, and try again!

Through Girl Scouts, girls:



Discover

Find out who she is, what she cares about, and what her talents are.



Connect

Collaborate with other people, both locally and globally, to learn from others and expand her horizons.



Take Action

Do something to make the world a better place.

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



By participating in the GSLE, girls walk away with 5 key outcomes:

- ❖ Develops a strong sense of self
- ❖ Displays positive values
- ❖ Seeks challenges and learns from setbacks
- ❖ Forms and maintains healthy relationships
- ❖ Learns to identify and solve problems in her community


Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Troop Mentor Position Description | 4 |
| Setting up a Mentoring Structure | 6 |
| Helping New Troop Leaders Work with Caregivers | 7 |
| Additional Tips and Wrapping Up the Year | 9 |

Partners in Mentorship

Mentor

- Make a positive difference
- Expand your Girl Scout network
- Reshape your leadership journey
- When you teach, you learn
- Leave a legacy



Mentee

- Get valuable advice and assistance
- Gain a fresh perspective
- Take part in the leader community
- Learn from another's experience
- Share ideas and ask questions

95% of volunteers see themselves as role models for the girls they serve.

Statistic from Girl Scout Voices Count surveys

Troop Leader Mentor Position Description

Pathway:

- ☐ Long-Term Direct Service ☒ Long-Term Indirect Service
☐ Short-Term Direct Service ☐ Short-Term Indirect Service

Time Commitment:

Duration 1 ☒ year(s) ☐ month(s) ☐ week(s) ☐ day(s)
For 3 hour(s) per ☐ year ☒ month ☐ week ☐ day

Summary:

The nature of this position requires the individual to welcome and support inexperienced troop leaders while integrating them into the service unit.

Reports to:

Membership Delivery Manager

Support:

The Service Unit Troop Leader Mentor will receive full support, guidance and encouragement from the Service Unit Administrator and the Membership Delivery Manager. She/he will have access to relevant learning opportunities and materials and will undergo the training/learning and orientation to Girl Scouting that will enhance her/his knowledge and confidence to work successfully with other adults and will enrich her/his Girl Scout experience.

Responsibilities/Tasks:

- Ensures each new troop leader is introduced and welcomed into the service unit
- Provides new troop leaders with direction for holding successful troop meetings
- Monitors the start-up of new troops and advises leaders on establishing parental support and effective parent communications
- Provides ongoing support to new leaders
- Ensures new troop leaders are aware of council/service unit program resources and adult learning opportunities
- Remains informed about, and complies with, the most current policies, procedures and guidelines of GSBDC and GSUSA
- Commits to mentoring new troop leaders in the service unit(s) assigned through monthly check ins and support
- Help service unit leadership facilitate group learning opportunities during service unit meetings/gatherings

Core Competencies-Required:

- Girl focus: Able to assist new leaders in girl/adult partnership, girl leadership progression, cooperative learning and learning by doing methods.

- 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
- Fostering diversity: Understand, embrace and appreciate differences – different types of people, cultures, levels of experience, decision making, etc.
- Computer skills: Access to email and the internet

Additional Competencies, Skills, or Requirements-Preferred:

- Be a registered adult member of GSUSA and have all Girl Scouts of Black Diamond volunteer paperwork on file
- Complete appropriate screening as outlined in the volunteer policies and procedures
- Accept the principles and beliefs of Girl Scouting and support local and national Girl Scout policies
- At least two successful years as a troop leader or member of the service unit team within the past five years.
- Able to coach technology-based resources available to leaders and troops
- Ability to work with adults
- Ability to communicate in a professional manner
- Demonstrated group and interpersonal communication skills
- Ability to keep records effectively
- Willingness to keep informed of and attend meetings as required
- E-mail and internet know how

Required Training:

- All trainings in the new troop leader learning path
- Service Unit Troop Leader Mentor review completed and returned

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.

Agreement

I have read the Volunteer Position Outline and agree to carry out my responsibilities as described. If for any reason I am unable to perform any of my responsibilities, the Council has the right to change my volunteer status. I will fulfill the outlined duties with no monetary compensation. I certify under penalty of perjury that I have not been convicted of any criminal offense. The Council will not knowingly accept voluntary services from a convicted sex offender. Volunteers are required to disclose to Council if they are living with a sex offender or have regular personal contact with a convicted sex offender, as well as the nature and the extent of such relationships or contacts. Volunteers who violate this procedure will be barred from any further participation in Girl Scout activities.

Name (print):_____Email:_____

Phone:_____Address:_____

Signature of Volunteer:_____Date:_____

Setting Up a Mentoring Structure

Remember what it is like to be new? A troop leader's first year is crucial. New leaders are much less likely to renew their troop for a second year if they don't have a strong support system or attend trainings. Mentoring is rewarding for everyone!

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. As a mentor, you fill that role by providing one-on-one support to the new troop leader.

Get Mentoring!

As a service unit troop leader mentor, you should check in with new troop leaders a minimum of once a month. The following timeline shows topics to discuss with your mentee during each time period.

September—November

- Get your mentee troop leader's info from your MDM
- Phone or email the new leader to introduce yourself and welcome them
- Invite your mentee to the upcoming service unit meeting and/or inform them of alternate methods of communication (email, Facebook page, virtual meetings, etc.)
- Help guide new leaders through the required trainings within gsLearn
- Promote the benefits of participating in the fall product sale, such as: give girls and leaders experience before the larger cookie sale, give the troop bank account a boost, etc.
- Check in with your mentee monthly to see if they have questions or concerns about the fall product sale, troop meetings, parent meetings, trainings, registrations, events registration, VTK, etc. Refer them to the appropriate resources or staff member as needed

December—January

- Check in with your mentee to see if they have questions or concerns about the upcoming Girl Scout Cookie Program prior to the sale and promote the benefits of participating in the sale for both girls and the troop
- Be sure they know how to contact their service unit cookie chair and the Black Diamond product sales team
- Do a troop roster check to ensure your mentee knows how to check her troop roster and make sure all girls are registered prior to the cookie sale
- Direct them to badge requirements for financial badges

March—May

- Encourage and remind new troops to register early. Help to explain the spring renewal campaign and its benefits
- Be available to answer questions related to bridging and court of awards
- Promote trainings and events
- Ask what the troop will be doing with its troop funds
- Ask if they need support completing their troop end of year report
- Express appreciation to your mentee for the great work they have done all year
- Discuss significance of VOICES survey and encourage troops to participate

June—July

- If the troop has not registered early, check in to see if they will be returning. If not, make sure they know the troop disbanding process
- Contribute to the service unit plan of work for the upcoming membership year, as necessary

Helping New Troop Leaders Work with Caregivers

One of the most important goals, especially in a new troop, is to set the expectation of caregivers 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 caregivers, 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 – caregivers 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. Be sure your mentee has asked her caregivers to complete the parent volunteer inventory form so she has a list of all the ways they can help!

Most caregivers 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 caregivers 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 caregivers about troop trips, financial income/ expenses, updates, etc. on a regular basis
- Most conflicts can be easily avoided by continual and thorough communication with caregivers. (e.g. via troop newsletter)
- Form a troop support committee to ensure the engagement of caregivers (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

Additional Tips and Wrapping up the Year

- Check in regularly with your Membership Delivery Manager and give her a status update on your mentee(s)
- If possible, visit one of your mentee's troop meetings and provide helpful guidance on how to have a great troop meeting
- Be sure to introduce your new mentee to other members of the service unit during her first meeting
- Encourage other service unit team members and troop leaders to reach out to your new mentee and help her feel like part of the service unit
- Encourage new troop leaders to attend service unit meetings regularly
- Complete the year-end new troop leader mentor report for each new leader you mentor