

Delegate Manual 2025-2026

July 2025

Dear Service Unit Delegate,

Congratulations on your appointment to the position of a service unit delegate! You are a key player in the democratic process and have an important role as the voice for more than 11,000 girls and nearly 4,800 adults in Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council.

Your role is to convey the interests and concerns of the membership you represent to help guide our board of directors into the next era of Girl Scouting. By being well informed about the governance issues affecting the council, you will set the long-term direction and ensure the future stability of the council for our girls.

You will successfully fulfill your two-year term by completing the required training and participating in two Delegate Forums and one Annual Meeting of the Council each year.

We sincerely thank you for actively participating as a service unit delegate as we continue to build girls of courage, confidence, and character who will make our council and the world a better place!

Yours in Girl Scouting,



Alexis Howze
Vice President of Membership Services

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Service Unit Delegate/Alternate

Communication liaison between the board of directors and the service unit.

Reports to:

Membership Manager

Term:

Elected for a two year term by the service unit.

Qualifications:

- Register as Girl Scout adult member and approved volunteer (successfully completed the background check).
- Adhere to GSUSA and GSOH policies and procedures.
- Complete all required trainings within six months of initial appointment to the position.
- Believe in the mission and goals of the Girl Scout organization.

Responsibilities:

- Represent the service unit at the Delegate Forums and Annual Meeting.
- Report back to the service unit all information provided at the meetings.
- Give guidance to the board on any feedback from the service unit.
- Participate as an active member of the service unit team.

By accepting the position, I agree that:

- I have registered as a member of Girl Scouts of the USA and successfully completed the background check, and/or renewed the background check when required.
- I will make any changes to my personal information on my record including information that may affect my background check.
- I will or have completed the delegate training as outlined on the GSOH website found here.
- I will attend meetings as required to stay informed and provide feedback for the board of directors.
- I acknowledge that this is a voluntary position and that Girl Scouts does not provide monetary or other compensation.

Governance and Management Functions in Girl Scout Councils

Governance

The governance functions of the council are those that relate to developing a vision for the future and the oversight of the council's corporate, legal, and fiscal responsibilities. The chair of the board has primary responsibility for governance, and these functions are carried out by the volunteer board of directors and officers, with appropriate involvement by the delegates. The board of directors has responsibilities including policymaking, fund development, and strategic planning. In carrying out their responsibilities, they comply with state and federal law, our charter with GSUSA, our Code of Regulations, and our established board policies.

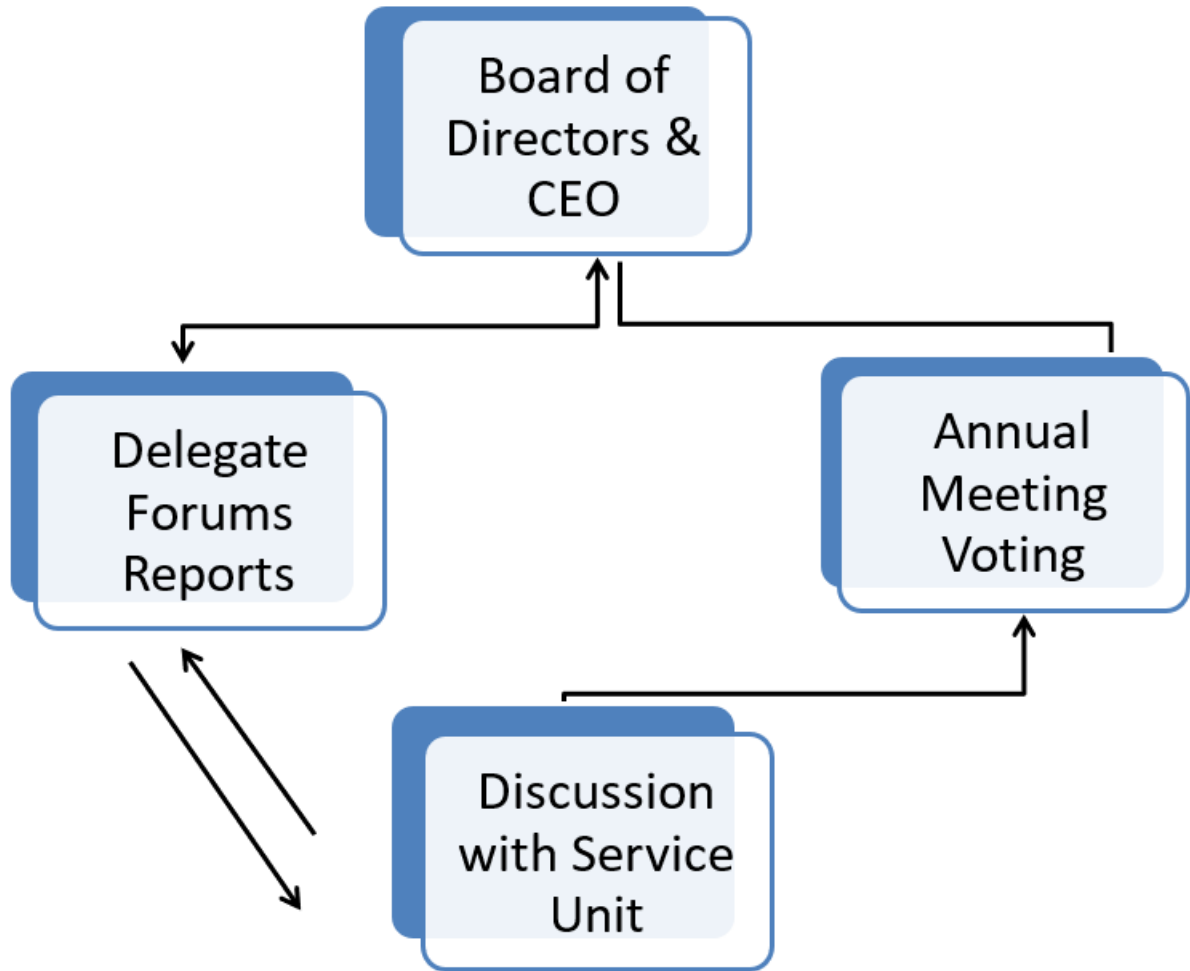
Examples of the board's tasks are:

- Defining the council's goals and objectives.
- Ensuring the future of Girl Scouting within the jurisdiction.
- Employing and supervising the chief executive officer.
- Establishing the council's personnel policies.
- Overseeing the budget, including transfer of major dollars from one fund to another.

The president and CEO is the staff member who works closely with the officers and board of directors. The president and CEO is not a member of the board and does not vote. Additional staff members provide information and support for the board and its committees.

Members of the board of directors and the council nominating committee are elected by the members of the corporation ("Delegates") at the Annual Meeting of the Council, held in the spring. Council delegates are elected by their service units for a two-year term and 10 girl-at-large council delegates are elected for a one-year term. Council delegates attend two Delegate Forums and the Annual Meeting of the Council each year. At Delegate Forums, the council delegates receive reports from the board of directors, provide input to proposals from the board, and may make proposals to the board regarding the board's governance responsibilities.

Communication Cycle



Communication between the delegates, the board of directors, and the service units works this way:

- Starting at the top of the flow chart, the board of directors determines the slate of topics for the delegate forums.
- Going around the circle to left, the delegate receives the information and asks questions at the Delegate Forums to clarify the topics.
- Following the meeting and continuing around the circle, the delegate takes that information back to their service unit to discuss it with the members. They will get a consensus or feelings about the information on the issues while at the same time find out if there are any other governance issues that need taken to the board.
- There are two arrows between Delegate Forums and Discussion with Service Unit Volunteers because there are two delegate forums each year. Depending on if the issue was discussed at the fall or spring meeting, the delegate will vote at the Annual Meeting of the Council based on the wishes of their service unit or come back to the spring delegate forum for more discussion.

If there were governance issues brought forth at the service unit that need to go to the board, those go back to the board at the next delegate forum.

Management

The president and CEO is employed by the board of directors and has primary responsibility for the management functions of the council.

These include organizing and directing council operations in conformity with goals, policies, and standards established by Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and the council's board of directors.

This involves:

- Hiring and supervising staff.
- Developing and administering the budget.
- Ensuring that membership and program opportunities are provided for girls.
- Training is provided for adults throughout the council's jurisdiction.
- Helping the board carry out its fundraising plans.
- Ensuring that girl members are served in programs and facilities that are safe.

Many volunteers (troop leaders, service unit team members, product program volunteers, program volunteers, camp maintenance volunteers, and many others) along with the full-time staff members carry out the management work of the council.

This involves:

- Tactical planning (developing annual objectives, action steps, and activities which support the council's goals).
- Recruiting, registering, and serving girls in a wide variety of settings.
- Recruiting and training adults.
- Developing programs.
- Product program management.
- Maintaining our camps in safe condition.

The Delegate Role

Council delegates should have the capacity and time to do the job well.

Plan to:

- Keep informed of national and council policies, standards, and decisions.
- Communicate with those you represent to be sure they understand issues emanating from the board, and to be sure you are aware of their opinions on such issues.
- Keep informed of other governance policy issues that concern your constituency and be sure that these concerns are heard.

Delegates are required to attend a number of meetings throughout the year to fulfill the duties of their position. These include:

- Annual Meeting of the Council
- Any special council meeting called by the board chair
- Delegate Forums
- Service Unit Meetings

Annual Meeting of the Council

A council delegate is required to attend the Annual Meeting of the Council in the spring. If the delegate is unable to fulfill this obligation, the alternate delegate will attend. At this meeting delegates do the following:

- Determine general policy direction for Girl Scouting.
- Amend the Articles of Incorporation and Code of Regulations.
- Take action requiring membership vote.
- Conduct business that may come before the council.
- Elect officers, board, board development committee, and national council delegates.

Special Meetings

Any special council meeting called by the board chair upon written request of two-thirds of the board of directors or one-third of the corporate members for a specific purpose.

Delegate Forums

Delegate Forums are regularly scheduled twice a year, usually in October and then later in either February or March. Additional meetings may be held if desired by the delegates. A Delegate Forum is one of the four governmental blocks into which the board has divided the 30 counties of Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council, Inc. The members in that part of the council meet with others to hear and discuss council governance on which the board needs input as well as other council governance matters

Service Unit Meetings

The delegate role at service unit meetings is to discuss agenda items with the members and bring opinions and concerns about policy issues to Delegate Forums. After the Delegate Forums, Annual Meeting of the Council, and any special council meetings, the delegate reports back to the service unit on action taken.

The strength of the Girl Scout movement rests in its adult volunteers. Government of the organization, at the national and local levels, rests with these volunteers. A framework of elective, representative government provides for orderly ways of work.

Election of Delegates

Each service unit is entitled to elect two delegates and two alternates no later than October 1 of each year. Service units with girl membership exceeding 300 registered girls as of September 30 of the prior year are entitled to elect one more delegate and one more alternate.

At Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council, Inc., all registered members 14 years of age and above within each service unit are eligible to elect and be elected as delegate members of the council.

The service unit delegate and alternate delegate election should be held in April or May for the following membership year. The number of delegates and alternate delegates to be elected will be determined by the total girl membership on September 30 from the previous year.

The Alternate

Alternate delegates may take the place of delegates when delegates are unable to attend the Annual Meeting of the Council, Delegate Forums, or other special meeting of the council, and/or perform other duties.

Volunteer Personnel Policies

All volunteers who serve in the delegate position should have an understanding of the volunteer personnel policies. Please read through the next three pages and reference them when needed.

We maintain that the leadership of the Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council, Inc., rests in the strength of its adult volunteers.

All volunteers are selected on the basis of qualifications for membership, ability to perform the job and willingness and availability to participate in training for it. All volunteers will be governed by policies adopted by the board of directors. These will periodically be reviewed.

Diversity, Pluralism and Anti-Racism

Girl Scouts advance diversity, pluralism, and anti-racism and actively identify and oppose racism by removing systemic barriers to participation in our Movement and in the communities in which we live.

Membership

All volunteers participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall meet GSUSA membership standards, and shall agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council, Inc.

All girls and adults shall be registered members through the council with GSUSA and individually pay the applicable membership dues, except those adults working as temporary advisors or consultants.

Selection

"Every adult volunteer is selected on the basis of qualification for membership, ability to perform the volunteer position, and willingness and availability to participate in training for it." (Reaffirms GSUSA policy.)

Placement

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of the council. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the council will take precedence over the needs of the individual.

Agreement/Appointment/Reappointment

Operational volunteers shall be appointed for a term not to exceed one year, unless otherwise negotiated or indicated by term of office. A volunteer agreement will be completed at the time of appointment/election to a volunteer position.

Reappointment/re-nomination takes place only after completion of a satisfactory performance review and mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and a time commitment.

Training

Upon accepting a position in the Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council, Inc., every volunteer must complete training appropriate for the position within six months of appointment.

Performance Appraisal

Each operational volunteer shall be provided with the opportunity for regular review and evaluation.

Uniforms

Members of the Girl Scout Movement are readily identified by uniforms worn for official functions. A uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scout activities but is suitable for almost all Girl Scout functions. Volunteers are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout pin when they are not in uniform. (GSUSA standard)

Grievance

A grievance is a complaint that policies and/or procedures related to a volunteer's position are not being administered properly as applied to her or him. The grievance procedure is a systematic process to ensure the objective hearing and orderly handling of volunteer grievances. The grievance procedure may be used by all operational volunteers. Every volunteer may expect a fair resolution of her or his grievance without fear of jeopardizing her or his volunteer status. The council also maintains an open-door policy regarding volunteer concerns.

Many possible grievances can be anticipated and prevented by volunteer managers who understand the council's volunteer management system and who are sensitive to human relations. Likewise, many grievances can be avoided when volunteers are informed at the time of placement of the council's structure, and their place in it, who carries decision-making responsibilities, and how decisions are made.

Most complaints and concerns can be resolved when they are brought to the attention of the volunteer's immediate supervisor. It is hoped that most, if not all, grievance situations will be resolved through informal conferences and communications, the goals of which are to eliminate the cause for the grievance.

If occasionally a volunteer and her or his immediate supervisor are unable to resolve a job-related difference of opinion through informal efforts, the volunteer may request a copy of the council's grievance procedures for operational volunteers. The initiation of the grievance procedure, however, will not restrict the council from taking appropriate action with respect to the volunteer.

Recognition

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

Resignation

A volunteer may initiate termination of services prior to the end of the term of appointment. A volunteer unable to complete their term should give notice to their supervisor as far in advance as possible. Membership in the Girl Scout movement may continue beyond the term of a specific position and is not contingent upon current appointment to a job.

Release

Situations may arise that make it necessary to consider releasing an individual from an assignment. Any action to release a volunteer should receive careful and detailed consideration because of the possible implications and consequences for both the individual and the council.

Possible reasons for release are:

- Restructure of volunteer positions.
- Elimination of the volunteer position in which a person serves.
- Inability or failure to complete the requirements (or perform the job) of the position.
- Refusal to comply with council or GSUSA policies.
- Refusal to support the mission and values of the organization and council goals or performance not consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Movement.
- Misappropriation of funds.
- Excessive absences or tardiness from required meetings.
- Membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with GSUSA.

An adult volunteer who is terminated from her or his position may continue her or his membership with GSUSA unless it is determined that she or he cannot meet the membership requirements related to accepting the principles and beliefs of the Movement or to support the mission and values of the organization. When this is the case, her or his membership will not be renewed.

Anti-Child Abuse Policy

The council 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 unlawful acts, and it is against the council's policy for any volunteer, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any girl member. If a volunteer suspects child abuse or neglect they should report to a law enforcement entity or child protection agency and Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland through an incident report located at ***gsoh.org***. Reporting to a parent or relative is not sufficient.

Suspected child abuse situations should be brought to the immediate attention of your Membership Manager and their Leader. The volunteer will call the child protection agency and provide the following information:

- Name, position
- Location
- Name of child
- Situation that occurred to cause you to call the agency, only speak facts on what was seen and heard
- Do not conduct an investigation, that is the responsibility of the agency
- The agency will provide next steps

Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of physically or sexually abusive behavior or bodily injury upon girl members.
- Physical neglect of girl members, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities.
- Emotional maltreatment of girl members, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the organization any staff member or volunteer who is found guilty of child abuse or neglect or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect. Local (more stringent) prevailing statutes may supersede Girl Scout policies.

When Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council is made aware of a pending investigation that is around abuse or neglect of a child, we reserve the right to suspend the member's ability to volunteer and participating in any Girl Scout activities until the matter is cleared. It would be the responsibility of the accused to provide official documentation that the case has been dropped.

Any questions about this policy or when or to whom you report your concerns should be addressed to the Vice President of Membership Services.

Sexual Abuse Training: Volunteers are required to complete GSUSA training on an annual basis. Failure to complete training will result in a suspension of the ability to volunteer with the girls. Once the training is completed, their volunteer abilities will resume.

Sexual Harassment

The council policy guarantees volunteers an environment free of 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 a personal lifestyle or sexual orientation so as to create a substantial risk that such conduct will be detrimental to the proper role model for girl members.

Each girl—regardless of her socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, physical or cognitive ability, sexual orientation, primary language, or religion—is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.”

Council Position on Concealed Carry Law

Firearms or weapons of any type are strictly prohibited anywhere on council-owned premises, whether or not permitted by Ohio law. With the exception of the police or sheriff’s personnel, Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc., does not permit its members, guests, employees, or any other individual to carry weapons, such as firearms, on their body or in their belongings while engaged in Girl Scout activities or on Girl Scout property.

Non-smoking Policy

All buildings owned, rented, leased, or loaned to Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc., are designated as “non-smoking” environments. Adults who wish to smoke must use special areas on the grounds designated as smoking areas. Extinguished smokes must be put in the trash. There is to be no smoking, including electronic or vapor cigarettes, in the presence of minors. Adults must not leave minors unattended to smoke.

Benefits

Benefits to volunteer personnel include:

- Job description.
- Accident and liability insurance as part of national/council membership.
- Continuing education and other learning opportunities.
- Supervision on the job, with annual performance evaluation.
- Tool for recording volunteer experience.
- Opportunities to explore career options.
- Right to apply for financial assistance.
- Recognition and appreciation.
- Subscription to council publications.