

Service Unit Planning Guide



Service Unit Plan for Success

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Essential responsibilities of the service unit team

Recruit volunteers and youth reflective of the diversity of the community:

- Service unit team members
- Troop leaders and volunteers
- Girls and gender-expansive youth

Assist leaders and other troop volunteers in promoting the delivery of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience:

- Provide service unit networking and discussion via service unit meetings
- Support all volunteers throughout the service unit meetings and other communication and support initiatives
- Coordinate youth-planned service unit events
- Participate in council and community events
- Recognize and appreciate volunteers

Year Overview



Important Dates – add your service unit events here!

July GSSNE Office Closure– Independence Day	August National S’mores Day Fall Product Program Kick-Off
September Girl Scouts Love State Parks Fall Product Program Girl Scout New Year’s Eve – Sept. 30	October Girl Scout Year starts – Oct. 1 International Day of the Girl – Oct. 11 Founder’s Day – Oct. 31
November Fall Product Delivery GSSNE Office Closure – Thanksgiving	December GSSNE Office Closure – extended winter break
January GSSNE Office Closure – New Year’s Day GSSNE Cookie Rally	February Cookie Program National Girl Scout Cookie Weekend World Thinking Day – Feb. 22
March Girl Scouts Week – Week of Girl Scout Birthday Girl Scout’s Birthday – March 12	April Early Renewal – April 1 – June 15 Volunteer Award Nominations Girl Scout Volunteer Day – April 22 Volunteer Appreciation Month
May GSSNE Annual Meeting	June Bridging Season begins GSSNE Highest Awards Ceremony

Membership Goals



	EY 2024	2025 Goal	2025 to Date	+/- to Goal
Girl Membership				
Adult Membership				
New Girls				
New Adults				
Girl Retention				
Adult Retention				
Girl Early Renewal				
Adult Early Renewal				
New Troops				

Work with your Regional Manager/Community Recruitment Champion to find these numbers and establish goals.

Our Service Unit goals for this membership year:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Working Together to Lead

The service unit team works together with GSSNE membership staff to ensure the service unit is growing in its mission to engage girls in Girl Scouts, support volunteers and provide opportunities for girls to grow through Girl Scouts. Meetings with the leadership team are essential to brainstorm, discuss, organize, and plan the service unit meetings, events, and programs. The service unit team should meet with their regional manager at least three times per year:

Calendar Planning Meeting (July-Aug)

- Set dates for the lead team and service unit meetings for the upcoming year.
- Begin planning and scheduling service unit events, trainings, recruitment events, and activities for the upcoming year.
- Discuss service unit goals from the previous year, the progress made, and changes that should be made for the coming year.
- Review service unit budget and discuss possible fundraising and expenses for the year.
- Develop a plan for welcoming new leaders and troops.
- Invite new prospective team members and/or discuss how to strengthen and grow the team.

Mid-Year Check-in (Nov-Jan)

- Review goals and track progress
- Plan and schedule service unit events, trainings, recruitment events and activities for the remainder of the year.
- Reflect on challenges and create strategies for improvement.
- Celebrate successes.
- Plan for volunteer recognition

End of Year (Apr-June)

- Review the previous year's progress in an end-of-year meeting and work with membership staff to identify areas of growth for the membership year.
- Plan overall recruitment strategies of the service unit; plan individual recruitment activities, set dates, and assign duties for year-round recruitment.
- Review school calendars and school profiles or statistics.
- Share membership statistics for the current and past year and share troop status and spring renewal registration statistics.
- Note returning troops, possible new leadership needs, bridging girls, graduating girls, potential disbanding troops, and other leadership needs.
- Complete end of year paperwork (financial report) and set budget for upcoming year.

Service Unit Activities

July-September

<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Recruitment and registration		Work with council staff to coordinate and host fall recruitment activities.
		Request recruitment supplies and materials from council.
		Recruit troop and other volunteers to assist with each recruitment activity.
		Communicate regularly with council staff about youth and adult placement.
Retention and Troop Support		Promote and follow up with existing members during on-time renewal campaign.
		Work with council staff on troops in transition (disbanding, leadership change).
		Mentor new leaders through onboarding process.
		Schedule any dedicated events for new leaders/troops
Fall Product Program		Attend council training for the Fall Product Program.
		Plan and communicate appropriate dates for training and distribution of materials to troops.
		Encourage and support troop participation in the program.
		Arrange for delivery of products.
Service Unit Events		Plan a girl-led event schedule to support the Girl Scout program (investiture/rededication, camporee/encampment, thinking day, bridging, badge workshops, cookie rally, community service.
		Promote events at service unit meetings and through service unit communications.
		Form a Girl Advisory Board for event planning or use other methods to engage youth members.
Service Unit Management		Schedule meetings, reserve space if needed, and communicate dates/times/places to volunteers.
		Recruit new team members to fill vacant positions.
		Encourage new team members to receive appropriate training for position.
		Develop communication plans and processes for the year.

Service Unit Activities

October-December

<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Done</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Recruitment and registration		Communicate with council staff to make sure troops have completed membership registration.
		In partnership with council staff, plan additional open houses and recruitment events where there is low participation.
Retention and Troop Support		Ensure that girls and adults have renewed their memberships to participate in the cookie program and Girl Scout year and all active troops have two Troop Leadership Team members.
		Connect with and support Juliettes in the service unit.
		Promote the Volunteer Toolkit as a resource for troop leaders.
Product Program		Arrange for delivery of fall product.
		Attend council training for service unit cookie program leads.
		Hold troop cookie manager training(s).
		Plan and communicate appropriate dates for training and distribution of cookie program materials
		Encourage and support participation in the Cookie program.
		Reach out to new leaders with additional support during the cookie program.
Service Unit events		Plan a youth-led event to support the Girl Scout program
		Promote current events at service unit meetings and through service unit communications.
Service Unit Management		Recruit service unit team members to fill vacant positions.
		Encourage new team members to receive appropriate training for their positions.
		Encourage troops to celebrate Juliette Gordon Low's birthday (Oct. 31).
		Complete mid-year assessment in December.

Service Unit Activities



January-March		
<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Done</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Recruitment and registration		Support winter/spring council recruitment activities.
Retention and Troop Support		Plan to support the spring renewal (Early Bird) campaign.
		Promote spring renewal and incentives
		Promote training for adult volunteers.
		Identify bridging troops and encourage collaboration for bridging awards.
		Plan for volunteer appreciation events and volunteer recognition award nominations
Cookie Program		Support recruitment of booth sale sites.
		Assist in securing council booth site agreements.
		Host a cookie rally or attend GSSNE's.
		Encourage and support participation in the product program.
		Reach out to new leaders and troop cookie managers with additional support during the cookie program.
Service Unit events		Plan the spring event schedule to support the Girl Scout program.
		Promote current events at service unit meetings and through service unit communications.
Service Unit Management		Review Volunteer Essentials with all leaders, focusing on money management and trip processes in preparation for spring travel.
		Encourage troops to celebrate Girl Scout Week (March 12).

Service Unit Activities

April-June		
<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Done</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Recruitment and registration		Participate in spring kindergarten/pre-k registration events.
		Support start-up troops in schools/areas without troops
Retention and Troop Support		Encourage participation in spring renewal
		Identify troops in transition and begin the identification of new leadership.
		Host a leader/volunteer appreciation event.
		Nominate volunteers for recognition awards
Cookie Program		Distribute rewards.
Service Unit events		Plan the spring event schedule to support the Girl Scout program.
		Promote current events at service unit meetings and through service unit communications.
		Reserve a site for service unit camping.
		Host bridging or end of year celebration event
Service Unit Management		Attend the council Service Unit Team wrap-up.
		Complete end of the year assessment and annual report.
		Start planning process for next year.
		Recruit service unit team members to fill vacant positions.
		Check in with regional manager to schedule a summer planning meeting.

Service Unit Budget

	Proposed Budget	Actual	+/-
Carry-over Balance (from prior year)			
INCOME			
Interest Income			
Event Registration			
Service Unit Camp Registration			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			
Total Income			
EXPENSES			
<i>Suggested expenses include: start-up funds to support new troops; resources the service unit can check out to troops such as Journeys and Girls Guide to Girl Scouting books; early renewal incentives; adult recognitions; adult volunteer end-of-year event; new troop support; assistance to girls participating in destinations, camp, Take Action Projects, and Highest Awards</i>			
Administration			
Engagement + Recruitment			
Programs/Events – Service Unit Camp			
Programs/Events – World Thinking Day			
Programs/Events -			
Service Unit Meeting Expenses			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			
Total Expenses			
GRAND TOTAL (income minus expenses)			

Service Unit Budget

Budget tips

The treasurer and service unit team work together to develop an annual budget to support the team's Plan for Success. A possible suggested breakdown of a yearly budget for a Service Unit:

- 1. Program services—60%** This includes all expenses for providing programming for girls such as service unit events and other activities.
- 2. Volunteer development and recognition—20%** This includes informal and formal recognitions such as years of service pins, numeral guards, and other expenses associated with the support of leaders.
- 3. Resources—10%** Appropriate uses for money would include expenses such as providing resources for new troops (Journey book), maintaining service unit libraries, and providing assistance to existing troops as needed.
- 4. Administration of the service unit—10%** This includes expenses for administrative costs including photocopies, paper, postage, and meeting place rental fees.

Mid-Year Assessment

GOALS

Review each goal in the Plan for Success
Identify what helped you meet the goals.

What will you do differently to achieve the remaining goals?

TEAM

I'm proud of our team because:

I would like us to change:

Mid-Year Assessment

ACTION STEPS

Steps we are taking to reach our goals:

Who is responsible for coordinating these steps and when?

IDEAS

Great ideas for the remainder of this year:

RECOGNITION

Who in your service unit would you like to nominate for volunteer awards?

What steps need to be taken to qualify for the Service Unit of Excellence?

Year-End Assessment



GOALS

Review each goal in the Plan for Success
Identify what helped you meet the goals.

What will you do differently to achieve the remaining goals?

TEAM

I'm proud of our team because:

I would like us to change:

Year-End Assessment



COUNCIL SUPPORT

I appreciate Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England because:

I wish Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England would:

IDEAS

Great ideas for next year:

RECOGNITION

Who in your service unit has earned a recognition or award this year?

Who would you like to see nominated for next year?

Service Unit Contact List



Service Unit Manager	Community Recruitment Champion
First, Last Name: Phone: Email:	First, Last Name: Phone: Email:
Service Unit Fall Product Program Coordinator	Service Unit Cookie Product Program Coordinator
First, Last Name: Phone: Email:	First, Last Name: Phone: Email:
Program Ambassador	Outdoor Advocate
First, Last Name: Phone: Email:	First, Last Name: Phone: Email:
Public Relations Coordinator	Juliette Coordinator
First, Last Name: Phone: Email:	First, Last Name: Phone: Email:
Finance Coordinator/Treasurer	Recognitions Coordinator
First, Last Name: Phone: Email:	First, Last Name: Phone: Email:

While the official service unit roles are Service Unit Manager, Community Recruitment Champion, Product Program Coordinator (Fall & Cookies), Public Relations Coordinator, Program Ambassador, and Outdoor Advocate, additional optional roles have been added to increase volunteer opportunities for the service unit

Service Unit of Excellence

Complete the required number of items from each section

Community Engagement & Membership Growth

Complete the first requirement AND at least two other tasks from the list.

1. Participate in at least three activities to increase visibility of Girl Scouts in your community:
 - Host a “bring a friend” recruitment event
 - Host a fall new member kick-off event
 - March in a local parade
 - Promote local recruitment events by distributing flyers at schools, community centers, and local businesses, and promote on social media outlets.
 - Host an open house for your service unit
 - Lead a Girl Scout activity at a community fair
 - Host a community service day (park clean-up, tree planting, food drive)
 - Any additional community engagement activities
2. Reach the regional goal for youth retention
3. Reach the regional goal for adult retention
4. Increase youth total number of adult volunteers by at least 2%
5. Increase your total number of youth members by at least 2%

Specific membership goals will be provided by your Regional Manager

Volunteer Support & Mentorship

Complete the first requirement AND at least two other tasks from this list.

1. Set a growth goal for leader participation in the service unit:
 - Brainstorm and research ideas for leading successful leader meetings
 - Develop and implement a pre- and post-meeting communication plan
 - Follow the meeting outline from council with the goal of creating meetings that are consistently welcoming, interactive, enriching, and worthy of volunteers’ time and effort
 - Develop incentives for leaders to participate in monthly service unit meetings
 - Promote the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) at leader meetings
 - Schedule at least 15 minutes of structured networking into service unit meetings
2. Plan and implement volunteer appreciation or recognition at least two times a year
3. Create and implement a welcome plan to ensure a smooth onboarding for new troop leaders (e.g. send welcome communication (email, phone call, face to face) to new volunteers to introduce service unit team)

Service Unit of Excellence

Service Unit Team Building

Complete at least four of these seven tasks:

1. Add at least one new member to the service unit team by filling a vacant position or if all current positions are already filled, create an additional position that could provide value.
2. Create and execute a plan for youth feedback and engagement at SU meetings
3. As a service unit team, meet at least four times per year to plan, review goals, and collaborate.
4. Complete the Service Unit Planning Guide with your Regional Manager during a service unit planning meeting
5. Host a service unit team gathering outside of regular meetings times (dinner, tea, retreat, etc.)
6. All service unit team members complete yearly service unit training (either online or in person)
7. All service unit team members attend at least two service unit team networking opportunities:
 - Attend a council-sponsored service unit gathering
 - Reach out to a neighboring service unit to collaborate and/or plan an event together
 - Join and engage in your GSSNE Rallyhood group for service unit teams

Girl Scout Programming

Complete at least three of these five tasks:

1. Host an event to support Girl Scout Product Programs (Fall Product or Cookie Program)
2. Host an event promoting Girl Scouts in the outdoors (Outdoor Skills Day, camping trip, outdoor badge or Journey)
3. Host an event promoting STEM or Life Skills
4. Hold an event promoting Girl Scout traditions (Girl Scout Week, World Thinking Day, Girl Scout Birthday)
5. Establish a youth planning committee to advise on and plan events in the service unit

Submit verification form by June 30, annually.

Submission of Annual Service Unit Finance Report and ACH form required.

Qualifying service units will have the choice between a \$100 credit from the GSSNE shop, or a \$100 discount on a GSSNE property rental made within the following troop year (10/1-9/30).

All active members of the service unit team will receive a Service Unit of Excellence pin.

Tips for Successful Service Unit Meetings

Why is the service unit and meetings so important?

The service unit is the local volunteer support group for troops in a specific area. Yes, a ‘support group’ —a place to share concerns and find mentors. Regardless of how committed to the girls a new leader may be, without the human connection this leader is highly likely to begin to feel isolated, and eventually lost after one or two years (taking all of those girls with her).

Ways to Make Your Service Unit Meetings Friendly, Fun, and Informative

- Have refreshments where they can serve themselves and chat while they eat. Rotate hostess duties by school, troop, or level.
- Devote meeting time to hands-on activities rather than lecture or flier reading.
- Model meetings upon what a Girl Scout meeting for girls might be like. Inform people through activities that teach instead of lectures and reading.
- Have icebreaker activities that allow people to meet one another.
- Make name tags to be worn at each meeting. It’s easier to talk to someone new if you at least know her or his name. Collect the name tags after each meeting to hand out again next month.
- Have “Trivia” questions throughout the meeting. Throw prizes to the people with correct answers. This helps get the information out about Volunteer Essentials, Council Policies, Safety Activity Checkpoints, etc.
- Give out “leader bucks” and then have occasional auctions to spend them. These can be earned for attending, contributing, taking on a team position, helping with a committee, taking additional girls, etc.

Meeting Attendance Tips

- Publish a calendar of meeting dates. Hand it out again at the first service unit meeting and explain that each troop should be represented at every meeting.
- Put the date of the next meeting on the bottom of your agenda.
- Meet the same day, time, and place every month.
- Send a reminder email, text or postcard prior to each meeting.
- Have event registration deadlines coincide with service unit meetings.
- Make phone calls to extend a personal invitation to leaders and be sure to explain why they should attend (meet other leaders, stay up to date, learning opportunity, etc.)
- Have a designated greeter welcome everyone as they arrive, especially newcomers.
- Have an older girl troop offer babysitting in another room as a service to leaders.
- Assign “Girl Scout Sisters” or “Leader Buddies” who call each other to see how things are going, remind one another about the meeting and ride to meetings together.
- Have a theme! Incorporate it into your agendas, recognitions, ceremonies, everything! Use it to tie your year together. (I.e.: Teach a different knot at every meeting, give everyone a new recipe at each meeting.)

Tips for Successful Service Unit Meetings



- Reward people for attending with candy, an extra handout, a special sticker on their nametag, etc. A little recognition items shows your appreciation that they made this meeting a priority.
- Have door prizes. Nothing fancy, just fun or thematic. Be sure to have one of the drawing at the very end of the meeting. Again, you must be present to win!
- Say THANK YOU! Remind leaders that what they are doing is important and how much you appreciate their making the extra effort to provide the best program experience for girls.

Meeting Management Tips

If a group member...	You might...
Talks without allowing others to participate.	Thank him/her for his/her input and ask for other points of view.
Always presents the negative side of an issue.	Ask for group reactions to the views or alternate solutions to the problem.
Talk about subjects that are not pertinent.	Call attention to the issue at hand or suggest that the topic be discussed later.
Gets lost while trying to make a point.	Draw attention back to the discussion objectives. Remind everyone that time is limited.
Engages in side conversations.	Call on the talkers by name and ask an easy question to draw them back into the discussion.
Represents the interests of another group.	Ask them who they are speaking for. Ask them to discuss how the issue compares to your group's goals.
Acts superior to the group.	Ask for other views on the issues.
States messages that are judgmental.	Ask the group for other sides of the issue that should be considered.
Acts bored or indifferent.	Try to draw them into the discussion by listing other alternatives or asking for their opinion.
Is timid or insecure.	Draw out the person next to them, then ask their opinion of the view expressed.

Tips for Successful Service Unit Meetings

Handling Conflict

Everyday conflicts are a fact of life, and conflicts may arise from time to time within your Service Unit Team and/or between Troop Co-Leaders and parents. Here are some steps to resolving conflict in a positive and helpful manner.

All parties involved must understand the following guidelines when working to resolve conflict:

- In Girl Scouts the needs of the girls should always come first, and adults should understand that it may be necessary to agree to disagree on certain aspects.
- The Girl Scout Promise and Law should be followed at all times.

It may be helpful to share these guidelines and the following steps with everyone involved before moving forward with the conflict resolution process.

1. **Identify the Problem:** Everyone involved in the conflict needs to accept that the conflict is a problem that can be solved. Each person should write down and share exactly what the issue is. An objective third party can act as a facilitator by leading discussion, rephrasing what has been said and suggesting possible solutions.
2. **Listen to Each Side of the Conflict:** Each person should have the opportunity to speak clearly and respectfully about their side of the issue. During this time, others should listen with an open mind and allow the speaker to finish without interruptions. The speaker should avoid “hot button” words such as “always” and “never” and make an effort to emphasize the facts.
3. **Identify Possible Solutions:** Everyone can make suggestions as to how the conflict can be resolved.
4. **Respond to Suggestions:** Each suggestion should be examined thoroughly and fairly. Often a combination of several different suggestions will end up being the best possible solution.
5. **Reach a Compromise:** A compromise may not mean that everyone gets exactly what they want, but everyone should be able to agree on a solution that is fair, safe, and in-keeping with the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The needs of the girls should always come first, and adults should understand that it may be necessary to agree to disagree on certain aspects.

Service Unit Meeting Agenda Template

Meeting Date/Time:

Welcome and Introductions

Service Unit Updates

- Treasurer's Report
- Previous Meeting Minutes Report
- Old Business
- New Business

Council Updates

Troop Updates

Announcements

Important Dates

Volunteer Enrichment

(i.e. Volunteer Toolkit, Kapers, SWAPs, Traditions, Grade Levels, Higher Awards, etc.)