



**Service Unit  
Team Manual**

# Unlocking Leadership



## Service Unit Team Guide to Volunteer Support

**“The ultimate responsibility for the Girl Scout movement rests with its members.”**

—*Blue Book of Basic Documents*

### **What is the purpose of a Service Unit?**

A Service Unit is a dynamic support system that, through diverse methods and the support of local communities, provides the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls and adults. It is the embodiment of the Girl Scout movement within the local community and has the responsibility to:

- Extend and retain membership of girls and adults
- Provide direct program and administrative support to girls and adults
- Educate the community about the benefits of Girl Scouting
- Act as a communication center for Girl Scouts

### **What is the purpose of a Service Unit Team?**

The purpose of the Service Unit Team is to recruit, develop and support volunteers to implement effectively the Girl Scout Leadership Experience with girls. The Service Unit Team works together and in partnership with community engagement and recruitment teams to assess the needs of volunteers and girls in the communities, develop a plan to address those needs, implement the plan, and ensure there is ongoing communication between volunteers, the Service Unit Team and regional staff.

### **Getting Started**

Regardless of the pathway in which girls participate, the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is primarily delivered by the 2,000 adult volunteers in Girl Scouts of South Carolina Mountains to Midlands. Volunteers rely on the support of the Service Unit, experienced volunteers, educational materials and council-wide communication tools to understand their role and to implement it effectively.

As a member of the Service Unit Team, your role as an individual, as well as a team member, is critical to a volunteer’s success and ultimately the experience of the girls participating in Girl Scouts.

This guide will assist you in being a member of an effective team that ensures volunteers are prepared to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and that girls are working towards becoming girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. This should be used as a foundation for Service Unit Team development and can be used when recruiting new members to the team, when facilitating Service Unit Team meetings, creating Service Unit plan of work, and when implementing the critical fall membership campaign. It is important to remember that, while there are key strategies that can be used in providing support to volunteers and girls, there is flexibility to work as a team to best meet the varied needs and interests of each community within the council.

The guide is divided into the following sections:

- The Role of the Service Unit Team
- Year Round Recruitment
- Retention

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# The Role of the Service Unit Team

## The Essential Responsibilities of the Service Unit

Within Service Unit, there are essential responsibilities that must happen in order to ensure we are working towards the mission and goals of the organization. These functions are carried out through appointed and trained administrative volunteers, who work together as the Service Unit Team. Before the Service Unit Team can work to support girls and adults, each member must know and understand the role of the Service Unit Team and, equally important, they must understand the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, Council goals, and council program and service delivery priority areas.

### Recruit volunteers and girls reflective of the diverse community:

- Service Unit Team members—at a minimum, Service Unit Manager, Fall Product Manager, Cookie Program Manager, Financial Manager, Membership Manager, and Delegate
- Leaders and volunteers for the troop and series pathways
- Girl membership at all grade levels

### Provide support to leaders and other troop volunteers to promote the delivery of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and member retention:

- Required and enrichment training
- Service Unit networking and discussion groups
- Support to all volunteers through a variety of communication methods, including Service Unit meetings
- Progressive opportunities for girls and adults within the Service Unit, community and council-at large
- Volunteer recognition

### Partner with the community to communicate the benefits of Girl Scouts and develop partnerships that support the achievement of goals:

- Engage parents through committee volunteer positions, Service Unit events and ongoing communication
- Identify potential partners in the community for progressive opportunities for girls

## Getting Your Team in Place

Who are these 2,000 volunteers? We all know that Girl Scout support does not come from one place or one person. It takes a team of committed volunteers to help leaders understand the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and ensure that girls are having a meaningful experience. The key to a successful Girl Scout year is having the right people in place to provide support to girls and adults. Placing adults in the position that fits them is important, whether it is in a troop leadership position or a Service Unit Team position.

Having the right volunteers in the following areas can make the difference in a volunteer's experience.

Service Unit Manager  
Fall Product Manager  
Cookie Program Manager  
Financial Manager

Membership Manager  
Program and Event Manager  
Delegate

The Service Unit Team uses a committee structure with the Manager as the primary connector to the council staff. Committees should work together and communicate regularly to make decisions about the direction of the functional area as it relates to the needs of the community and in relation to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and Girl Scouts of SC-MM policies and procedures.

Each member of the committee should have a defined role and a clear understanding of expectations. It is important that the committee has a shared sense of purpose and understands how they communicate with other committees, as well as fit in to the overall goals of the Service Unit and the organization.

It is never too late to recruit volunteers to support your Service Unit, whether it is for Service Unit Team positions or short-term positions. Identify volunteers you think would provide great support to new volunteers and provide dependable support to existing volunteers in the Service Unit. For example, if there is a volunteer who always reaches out to new leaders and helps them get connected to the Service Unit, she may be a great Girl Scout Leadership coach or a new volunteer mentor coordinator. Tell her why you think she would be great and don't be afraid to ask!

## Coordinating the Work of the Team

As a Service Unit Team, your role is to ensure the essential responsibilities are implemented in the Service Unit. Each appointed Service Unit Team position has a staff counterpart that appoints, trains and provides ongoing support to the volunteer position to ensure that the function of the position is implemented effectively. It is through coordinated work of the Service Unit Team that everyone comes together to ensure the **right** support is being provided for the volunteers in the Service Unit.

You can do this by:

1. Developing a Service Unit plan of work
2. Implementing the Service Unit plan of work with volunteers; referencing the plan as a "working document"
3. Ensuring ongoing communication with volunteers, Service Unit Team and staff

## Developing a Service Unit Plan of Work

Developing a Service Unit plan of work helps focus and organize the work of the Service Unit. If done correctly it will engage all stakeholders in the Service Unit, help define the most important work to do to accomplish goals, determine responsibility among volunteers, and provide a guide to help volunteers stay on track in achieving success. When developing a plan remember the following:

Service Unit assessment

- How will we engage all volunteers in providing feedback to the Service Unit?
- Are we implementing the essential responsibilities of the Service Unit?
  - What is our progress toward extending membership to girls and adults?
  - How effective is our volunteer support? How do we know?
- What are our strengths and challenges in addressing program and service delivery priorities?
- What are our main goals we want to accomplish as a Service Unit based on the assessments?

Development of the Plan

- How is the entire Service Unit Team contributing to the creation of the plan?
- Has the Service Unit Team discussed and agreed upon the actions the Service Unit will take?
- How are we working with our staff representatives to ensure they are a part of the discussion involved in planning, as well as ensure they are aware of support that will be needed throughout the year?

- What volunteers do we need to accomplish the plan and who are the best people to help us achieve our results?

## Implementing the Service Unit Plan of Work

Your plan is created; now what? Your plan is a living document and should come to life in all of your interactions with volunteers within and outside of the Service Unit meeting. It may be easy to put the plan aside and pull it out again next year when it is time to plan again, but that is not going to be beneficial to you in achieving your desired results. In order to ensure that there is ownership of the plan and that it is being implemented, consider the following:

How will you share the plan with all leaders in the Service Unit and ensure they understand its contents?

- Service Unit meeting
- Website or other social media site
- Buzz groups (small discussion groups)

How will you ensure that the goals are being accomplished and activities are being implemented?

- Review plan quarterly to check on progress.
- Ensure opportunities to evaluate Service Unit activities.
- Debrief major activities such as the fall membership campaign, adult recruitment and new volunteer support.
- Communicate on a regular basis with the Service Unit Team before Service Unit meetings, at Service Unit Team meetings or through other methods of communication (email, Facebook and other forms of social media).
- Communicate regularly with your staff representatives by contacting them to share successes and request support as well as being open to information they share with you.

## Communication

Communication is the key to the success of the Service Unit. As lives become busier, technology advances, and individuals have various preferred methods to communicate, it becomes even more important that, as a Service Unit Team, we are communicating the most important things in a variety of ways. While the Service Unit Manager holds major accountability for facilitating communication, each Service Unit Team member holds equally important responsibility in communicating with others and creating an open environment that welcomes all volunteers' voices.

### What does good communication look like in the Service Unit?

There is a forum for open discussion at the Service Unit meetings.

- Volunteers share success and challenges at the Service Unit meeting and opportunities are provided to problem solve.
- Diverse viewpoints are expressed and valued.
- The Service Unit talks about the council goals and priorities and how they are achieved within troop, group and Service Unit activities.
- The Service Unit involves all volunteers in developing the Service Unit plan.
- The Service Unit talks about how to involve girls in the planning, implementing and evaluating of Service Unit activities.
- A variety of communication methods are used to ensure all volunteers are engaged in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (even those not at Service Unit meetings).

### Consider the following when communicating with:

#### Service Unit team

- What is the best way for us to communicate?
- How often should we come together as a team?
- What is the purpose of us meeting as a group?

#### Service Unit volunteers

What are the ways we ensure leaders are connected to the Service Unit community and one another?

- Mentors
- Service Unit meetings
- Buzz sessions
- Council and Service Unit websites
- Social media

How do we engage volunteers in decision-making and problem solving?

- Educate volunteers on Girl Scouts of SC-MM Policies
- Ensure the appropriate Service Unit Team member is involved in solving issues with volunteers
- Encourage networking at Service Unit meetings and Service Unit events

#### Council-wide and regional volunteers

- Are we taking opportunities to learn from other volunteers in like positions by participating in regional group discussions throughout the year?
- How can we ensure that our team participates in the Fall Kick-Off and other council programs?

#### Council Staff

Volunteers and staff work together to set expectations of the working relationship, discuss accountabilities and determine the best way to communicate. Developing a relationship of mutual respect and understanding is key to the support volunteers receive to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

- Have I had the opportunity to discuss Service Unit goals with the Membership Managers and Service Unit and Troop Support Manager?
- Have I discussed the position expectations, as well as our mutually identified areas of growth and support?
- Am I being contacted regularly by my staff supervisor, not only through email but also by phone and in person?

- Am I reaching out to my counterpart to share success stories of troops and the Service Unit, problem solved and identify support resources?

## **Retention of Girls and Adults**

The support that volunteers receive and the opportunities that are available for girls within the Service Unit are a critical factor in supporting girls and adults to continue their Girl Scout experiences. While there are other factors as well, it is important that the Service Unit Team work together to assess the needs and interests of girls and volunteers, provide progressive opportunities for adults and girls, and identify ways to keep girls and adults connected. Three ways Service Units can support retention are through a re-registration campaign, reengagement of girls and adults, and the customer experience that supports progressive opportunities relating to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

### **Re-registration**

It is important to remember that girls and adults can register throughout the membership year, and a plan should be in place to ensure that this happens based on the pathway in which members participate. While some members only re-register for short-term opportunities like camp or series, it is imperative that girls and adults who have participated are extended opportunities to register. For the troop pathway, this is done through two major campaigns: Spring Registration and On-time Registration. Girls and adults should have the opportunity to participate fully in program activities, product sales, as well as be covered under the Girl Scout accidental insurance when meeting as a troop.

- Determine who will be coming back during Service Unit assessment, utilizing a variety of methods including collecting information on the Troop Participation List and Disbanding Troop Forms.
- Participate in Spring Renewal/Early Bird Registration and communicate the benefits of registration and provide support to the process.
- Connect with troop leaders and girls who have not re-registered to determine status and encourage registration during the On-time Campaign.
- Implement a Service Unit kick-off or event where girls and adults can register or where girls and adults who have registered can participate.

### **Re-engagement**

Girls and adults may want to continue even if their troop disbands and do not know how they can continue their experience. Through your due diligence during Spring Registration, you should have a good idea of who is returning and who is not, as well as their reasoning. Some reasons for not continuing may include the troop leader's not returning, moving to a different grade level and not knowing the opportunities available, or the troop not meeting the time constraints of girls. These are all opportunities for the Service Unit to reengage girls and adults using methods that best meet the needs of the members as well as being creative as volunteers and implementing strategies that highlight the strengths of the Service Units. Some ideas include:

- Identify if there are topic-based series (i.e. STEM related activities) that will meet the interests of girls.
- Recruit adults who still want to be leaders for troops or series.
- Provide Service Unit activities that girls who register as individual members can attend.
- Work with small troops to merge to provide a meaningful experience to both girls and adults.

### **Customer Experience**

As a Service Unit Team, you are ensuring progressive opportunities for girls and focusing support for adults in delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Your Service Unit plan of work should be developed to meet the needs of adults. Support includes Service Unit activities and networking opportunities for leaders; as a team, you can decide what will work best for you. Some ideas include:

- Topic related buzz sessions at Service Unit meetings
- Enrichment workshops
- Focused age level activities
- Adult training for specific age levels where we typically lose girls and adults
- Encouraging parent support



## New Volunteer Support

In your role, you want to make sure that you are ensuring the volunteers are prepared to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. When leaders are prepared and feel supported and girls have a positive experience, both are more likely to continue in Girl Scouting. To do this, you will need to understand the needs of the volunteers, girls and Communities and provide a support system so that new and returning leaders feel welcomed, prepared and want to continue their experience in Girl Scouts from year to year.

Every Girl Scout volunteer requires support and wants to know they are doing the right things, but think back to when you were a brand new leader. Did you know anything about the job when you agreed to take it? Did you feel comfortable coming into a group of people who “walked the walk” and “talked the talk?” Maybe this was you, but we know this is not the case for everyone. The more organized and deliberate in executing our plan, the better chance we have of retaining new leaders.

The table below lists the steps (actions) taken by the Service Unit Team to provide support to new volunteers as they enter the organization through the Troop Pathway and begin their Girl Scout journey. This chart has been completed with examples; however, a copy of this chart can be found in the Service Unit plan of work and should be completed by the Service Unit Team allowing for flexibility based on the needs and assets of the Service Unit.

<b>Step/ Action Taken</b>	<b>Who is responsible? Who else is</b>	<b>What resources do they use?</b>
New volunteer is recruited.	<i>Community Development Manager Service Unit team</i>	<i>1. Recruitment Marketing Materials fliers/yard signs/bracelets 2. Community Resources (School)</i>
Coaches new volunteer to complete online registration	<i>Membership Specialist Community Development Manager Service Unit team</i>	<i>1. Girl Scouts of SC-MM Website</i>
Shares new volunteer’s contact information with Service Unit team members.	<i>Membership Specialist Community Development Manager Service Unit Manager</i>	<i>1. Email 2. Service Unit Team meeting</i>
Invites new volunteer to complete new leader onboarding through gsLearn.	<i>Membership Specialist</i>	<i>1. Email 2. Orientation invitation 3. Welcome Session</i>
Sends new volunteer welcome/appointment email. Notification of approval is sent to Service Unit Manager and Community Development Manager	<i>Membership Specialists</i>	
Ensures that new volunteers are aware of resources and prepared to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience through the Service Unit’s new volunteer support system.	<i>Community Development Manager Service Unit Manager Volunteer Training &amp; Development Manager</i>	<i>1. Buzz sessions at Service Unit meetings 2. Volunteer Resources Page 3. Volunteer Toolkit access</i>
Provides ongoing support and coaching by identifying additional opportunities for learning through required and enrichment trainings.	<i>Volunteer Training &amp; Development Manager Adult Learning Facilitators</i>	<i>1. Enrichment workshop outlines 2. Service Unit Meetings 3. Roundtable information</i>
Provides ongoing support and coaching related to successful understanding and implementation of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience with the troop’s grade-level.	<i>Volunteer Training &amp; Development Manager Adult Learning Facilitators</i>	<i>1. Service Unit meetings 2. Buzz Sessions 3. Roundtable information</i>