



Service Unit Team Resource Guide

Table of Contents

Welcome/Council Support Staff	3
The Bigger Picture.....	4
The Service Unit	5
Member Support Team.....	6
Program Team	8
Logistics Team.....	10
The Service Unit Lead Team	12
The Year Plan.....	13
Engaging the Service Unit	14
Managing Conflict and Sensitive Issues	15
Service Unit Funds.....	16
Volunteer Appreciation Ideas for Service Units	17
Forms and Resources.....	19

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

Our Mission

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage,
confidence, and character, who make the
world a better place.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Welcome! Thank you for being a service unit volunteer.

Your commitment to join this service unit holds immense value to the staff at Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania. Our council provides Girl Scout programming to 27 counties, and none of it could be possible without people like you who have seen, experienced, and believe in the benefits of our leadership experiences. On behalf of our staff, your team of local volunteers, and every girl that your dedication will impact, I sincerely thank you.

As you review and reference this guide, remember that our council is here to support you as you move through every season of Girl Scouting. Our priority is to provide a positive experience for every Girl Scout, and as a volunteer, that includes you.

Again, thank you for stepping up to support Girl Scouts throughout your community.



Tamica Mickle
Chief Operations Officer, Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania

Council Support Staff Roles

As a service unit volunteer, there will be many occasions when you will engage with Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania staff. For your reference, this is a list of Girl Scout staff positions that work closest with our volunteers to assist with service unit initiatives and answer questions.

	Staff Position	Role
Member Support	Membership Staff	Membership staff engages with members to support the volunteer experience and member recruitment and retention. They work with the Girl Scout engagement chair and the member support lead to achieve membership goals. They work with troop mentors to ensure new troop leaders are welcome and connected to the service unit and assist with setting up recruitment events within the community.
Member Support & Program	Member Services Specialist	Member services specialists work to place registered girls into available troops within a service unit. They oversee event and resource registration, including registrations for council-sponsored camp sessions and camp reservations.
Member Support & Logistics	Volunteer Relations Coordinator	The volunteer relations coordinator navigates conflict brought to council's attention that needs mediation. They consult with invested service unit parties, as needed, and engage with the service unit logistics lead in cases of troop or service unit account financial audits.
Logistics	MagNut Program Coordinator/Cookie Program Coordinator	The MagNut and cookie program coordinators work closely with service unit MagNut and cookie chairs to assist in the facilitation of product programs in the service unit.
Logistics	Volunteer Finance Specialist	The volunteer finance specialist works with the service unit logistics team as council's subject matter expert in volunteer finances. The service unit logistics lead assists the volunteer finance specialist in gathering finance records and reports from troops to ensure good Girl Scout financial health.
Program	Girl Program Specialist	Girl program specialists plan and implement council programs for Girl Scouts and support volunteers in facilitating the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to ensure dynamic experiences for girls. They can consult with the service unit program team on day camps, service unit trips, or high-adventure opportunities.
Program	Outdoor Program Specialist	Outdoor program specialists facilitate council-sponsored camp sessions and outdoor opportunities. They lead outdoor activity certification and provide training opportunities for camp and outdoor experiences. Outdoor program specialists can work closely with the service unit program team as they plan a service unit camp.

The Bigger Picture:

Relationship of Service Units to the Organization

Service unit team members are integral volunteers in the Girl Scout organizational structure. These roles communicate regularly with council staff and local troop volunteers to bring Girl Scout opportunities to their communities.

Organizational Structure:

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)

WAGGGS is the largest voluntary movement dedicated to girls and young women in the world, representing 10 million girls and young women from 150 countries who are working to make the world a better place. Girl Scouts of the USA celebrates its involvement in WAGGGS through World Thinking Day celebrations, adopting WAGGGS program opportunities, and by visiting and volunteering at WAGGGS world center sites across the globe.

Girl Scouts of the USA

Headquartered in New York City, Girl Scouts of the USA is a national organization supporting the work of more than 100 councils across the US for more than 100 years. Today, Girl Scouts of the USA is 2.5 million strong with more than 1.7 million girls and 750,000 adults like you helping to build girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania

Covering 27 counties of western Pennsylvania, Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA and operating under the direction of a local board of directors and overseeing all service units and troops within its coverage boarders.

Service Units

Service units are local communities of Girl Scouts. Service unit teams are made up of volunteers who support the work of troop volunteers within that local community. They are a first line of support for troop volunteers and help ensure that Girl Scouting is active and accessible in their community to continue to grow the Girl Scout mission.

Troops

Troops are a volunteer-supervised group of girls comprised of at least five girls and two registered, approved, and trained troop leaders. Troops may be a group of Girl Scouts in the same program level or a group of Girl Scouts across multiple program levels.



The Service Unit

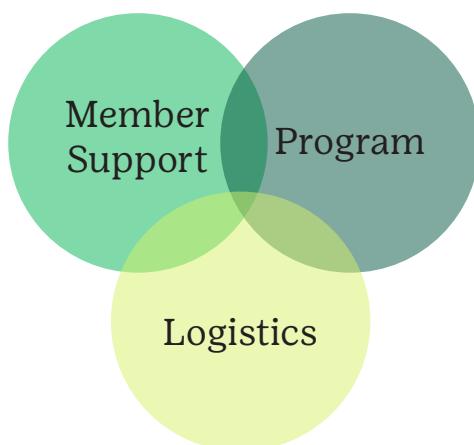
A service unit is the volunteer-led aspect of the council's structure that provides the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls, directly supports members, and serves as a communication hub for girls, families, and volunteers. The service unit is the local face of Girl Scouts, showing their community the impact and reach of Girl Scouts.

The service unit team is there to support girls and volunteers locally—from finding troop meeting locations and connecting troops and community service organizations to organizing local events, celebrations, and opportunities that are girl-led and include Girl Scout programming.

There are three main areas of responsibility for the service unit:

- member support
- program
- logistics

Each area has its own team to drive service unit success. Each team will include a team lead and support roles. The member support, program, and logistics teams work closely to provide a collaborative, supportive system for volunteers and members of the service unit.



Though member support, logistics, and program have unique focuses, there are areas of overlap that encourage collaboration. For example, the service unit's responsibility to locally facilitate council's product programs will offer more benefits to the Girl Scouts and volunteers when the service unit's product program role in the logistics team works with the member support and program teams.

- The service unit cookie chair will work with the member support team to verify membership for cookie program participants
- The service unit program team can partner with the cookie chair to coordinate a service unit cookie rally to kick off the cookie season.

By having these shared responsibilities, service unit volunteers can work together to create a successful, local Girl Scout community and overall strong service unit health.

Service Unit Volunteer Role Agreements

Service unit team volunteers are nominated and appointed to their team roles by council staff and other local volunteers. To prepare for success, service unit team volunteers submit a volunteer agreement designed to help volunteers and council staff check in on the expectations of each role before the new Girl Scout year begins. Council staff will review volunteer agreements, ensure appointed volunteers are registered and cleared, and work with volunteers to introduce them to or update them on any role training and other information and resources.

Member Support Team

The member support team of the service unit focuses on engaging volunteers in their area, including encouraging membership renewal and creating a positive, welcoming environment for new and returning volunteers.

- ◆ Low time commitment OR peak time is 1-2 months a year
- ◆◆ Average time commitment OR peak time is 3-4 months a year
- ◆◆◆ High time commitment OR peak time is 4 months or more a year

Roles:

• **Member Support Lead:**

Lead and support the member support team and ensure team members have been trained and understand their role. Increase awareness of the Girl Scout mission and program through communication with schools, places of worship, and local businesses. Have a working knowledge of membership campaigns and promotions. Assist with placing girls in troops that match their preferences and needs, ensure troops properly disband and remaining girls find continued Girl Scout opportunities in the service unit, and remind leaders to keep their troop information accurate by updating their troop information in the Troop Catalog.

◆◆◆ **Peak Time: Ongoing**

• **Girl Scout Engagement Chair:**

Lead and coordinate public-facing events and activities for the purpose of educating, promoting, and inviting girls and volunteers to join Girl Scouts. Create a plan with council staff and the member support lead for sustainable membership growth. Collaborate with the service unit event chair and council staff to host welcome events and activities, especially during peak membership seasons in the fall and spring. Work with service unit site coordinator for Girl Scout school engagement efforts. Help form new troops where gaps exist to ensure that Girl Scouts is available for every girl.

◆◆ **Peak Time: Aug.-Oct.; Mar-May; Average Time Commitment 3-4 months a year**

• **Troop Mentor:**

Welcome, support, and empower new troop leaders as they get started in their Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Mentor them throughout their first year by helping to plan their first meetings and attend (when possible). Support a positive experience for first-year troop leaders and their empowerment to deliver a Girl Scout experience to girls year after year. Train and assist troop leaders in the use of the Volunteer Toolkit and promote national and council training opportunities in gsLearn or live/in-person to continue their growth in troop leadership.

◆◆ **Peak Time: Aug.-Oct.; April-June; Average time commitment: 3-4 months per year**

• **Site Coordinator:**

Maintain and manage school and community partnerships that support and engage with the Girl Scout mission. Support and collaborate with troops looking for local resources for activities and places to hold events, meetings, and program opportunities. Maintain and manage local school partnerships and keep an updated list of key contacts for the designated school(s). Build a team of volunteers to help sustain school and community partnerships with other youth serving organizations.

◆◆ **Peak Time: Aug.-Oct.; March-May**

The Member Support Team in Action

The member support team's goal is to bring new members to Girl Scouts and help retain members over time by working closely with council's membership staff. They also work closely with council's member services specialists to place girls into troops and communicate troop availability. Troop mentors will work alongside council's new troop leader coordinator and girl program and outdoor program specialists to support and guide volunteers in delivering the Girl Scout programming.

Year-at-a-glance:

Fall:

The member support team is helping troops and members prepare for the new membership year by ensuring that troop Troop Catalog information has been updated. They're relaying membership to the logistics team for the start of the MagNut program, the fall product sale. Girl Scout engagement chairs engage new girls at school fall open houses and similar events, and troop mentors are helping to ensure new troop leaders have a successful start to their Girl Scout year.

Key Dates:

- Oct. 1: Start of the new Girl Scout membership year and MagNut Program
- Oct.-Nov.: Council-wide Town Halls events

Winter:

The member support Team continues to grow the local community of Girl Scouts by re-engaging members who were delayed in their renewal, and they continue to connect new girls with Girl Scout troops locally. The site coordinator relays community sites and locations for potential cookie booths to the service unit cookie chair.

Key Dates:

- Jan.: Plan and carryout mid-year recruitment efforts
- Feb. 1: Adult Award nominations due to council

Spring:

The member support team works in tandem with council staff to launch early renewal initiatives and to ensure that troops are renewing and planning for the coming membership year. The Girl Scout engagement chair works with council's membership staff to engage rising kindergarteners in Girl Scouts through new Daisy troops. Troop mentors are welcoming new leaders and helping them to become familiar with the local service unit, establish parent meetings, and design year plans for the coming year.

Key Dates:

- April 1: Spring renewal available in MyGS
- April-June: Early bird renewal campaign, dates to be announced
- May: End-of-year meetings for team leads and council staff

Summer:

The member support team ensures troop and members have completed early membership renewals and updated troop information in the Troop Catalog. The team engages rising kindergarteners in Girl Scouts and coaches new leaders to prepare for the upcoming Girl Scout year. Troop mentors communicate updates and archiving details for the Volunteer Toolkit.

Key Dates:

- Early July: Troops age-up in MyGS and the Volunteer Toolkit; volunteer agreements due to council
- Early Aug.: Year plans in the Volunteer Toolkit are archived
- August: On-time renewal begins

Program Team

The service unit program team develops and supports opportunities that implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, National Program Portfolio, council-sponsored programs, and local events and activities.

- ◆ Low time commitment OR peak time is 1-2 months a year
- ◆◆ Average time commitment OR peak time is 3-4 months a year
- ◆◆◆ High time commitment OR peak time is 4 months or more a year

Roles:

• **Program Lead:**

Lead and support the program team. Ensure team members are trained and understand their role. Have a working knowledge of the Safety Activity Checkpoints in order to guide volunteers in their submission of Trip & High Adventure Activity forms. Stay attuned to the council's activity calendar year-round to relay council program opportunities to troops and members.

◆◆◆ **Peak Time: Ongoing**

• **Event Chair:**

Collaborate with helper volunteers across the service unit to enthusiastically plan, coordinate, and execute service unit events with input from the girls to choose the exciting, hands-on activities that interest them the most and are focused on the four pillars (outdoor, STEM, life skills, and entrepreneurship) that form the foundation of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Collaborate with the logistics team and member support team to provide programming for the girls that create skills, knowledge, and lasting memories.

◆◆ **Peak Time: Aug.-Oct.; Mar-May; Average Time Commitment 3-4 months a year**

• **Camp & Outdoor Chair:**

Build a team to help manage and execute all aspects of a successful camping experience through an overnight, day, or twilight camp for the service unit. Work with the service unit program lead to ensure all safety and health guidelines are followed according to local and national Girl Scout policies, the host site, and other governing bodies as appropriate. Coordinate with the event chair to plan outdoor service unit events that align with the outdoor pillar of Girl Scouts, ensuring girls have the opportunity to challenge their skills, learn new things, and develop an enduring love for our natural world.

◆◆ **Peak Time: Driven by event dates**

The Program Team in Action

The program team works closely with council's girl program and outdoor program specialists to facilitate day camp, twilight camp, and overnight experiences for their service unit. The program team helps volunteers stay apprised of outdoor skills and certification opportunities through council and engages with council's customer care and member services specialists for camp property and activity registrations. The service unit program team delivers year-round program opportunities and should plan on at least one service unit event per season that is girl-led and focused on Girl Scout programming.

Year-at-a-glance:

Fall:

The program team launches the start of a new Girl Scout year with a service unit event or activity to welcome new members and engage returning members in a new year of Girl Scouting. They share the schedule of upcoming service unit events for the year with leaders and gather support volunteers for event and camp planning. The program team begins planning for larger service unit events, such as camporees and day camps that occur during the year.

Key Dates:

- Oct. 31: Juliette Gordon Low's birthday

Winter:

The program team carries out winter activities and events for the service unit and coordinates with the cookie chair for a cookie rally to kick off Girl Scout Cookie season. The program team helps troops identify ways to give back to their communities in the season of giving and engage the service unit in World Thinking Day celebrations.

Key Dates:

- Feb. 22 – World Thinking Day

Spring:

The program team leads the service unit in Girl Scout week celebrations and helps troops find ways to locally share their Girl Scout spirit. They might plan a spring outdoor service unit event and coordinate with the member support team to plan an event to celebrate all members who have completed their early membership renewal. In the spring, the program lead should have troop leaders ask girls what kinds of service unit events they are interested in for next year.

Key Dates:

- Girl Scout Week: The Saturday-Sunday of the week containing March 12, Girl Scout's founding date
- May: Service unit end-of-year meeting with volunteer support specialist

Summer:

Many service units hold camp chair-led day camps or twilight camps. They ensure troop leaders are current with summer program opportunities from council, and they facilitate service unit participation in local community celebrations, such as community days and Independence Day parades, summer festivals, and more to allow the local community to see and interact with Girl Scouts. In the summer, the program lead and event chair begin mapping out events for the service unit based on girl and troop feedback to ensure a year of robust opportunities that uphold the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Key Dates:

- Summer: Service unit bridging and awards celebrations

Logistics Team

The logistics team carries out the administrative operations for a service unit and supports troops with finance management and navigating product management. The logistics team ensures strong communication throughout the service unit about local and council initiatives and opportunities, as well as helps to identify delegates to represent the service unit at council's Annual Meeting.

- ◆ Low time commitment OR peak time is 1-2 months a year
- ◆◆ Average time commitment OR peak time is 3-4 months a year
- ◆◆◆ High time commitment OR peak time is 4 months or more a year

Roles:

• **Logistics Lead:**

Lead and support the logistics team. Ensure team members have been trained and understand their role. Serve as service unit bank account manager to track and distribute service unit funds, maintain access to troop bank account details and ensure each troop account has a team lead signer on their account, and ensure timely submission of all finance reports. Advise volunteers on their additional money-earning applications to ensure they meet local and national Girl Scout policy and will be approved. Communicate finance training opportunities and policy changes to volunteers.

◆ **Peak Time:** Ongoing

• **Cookie Program Chair:**

Oversee all aspects of the Girl Scout Cookie Program for the service unit. Ensure all troops, via troop cookie managers, receive appropriate training and have access to the necessary materials. Coordinate scheduling logistics and communication related to cookie pickup, ensure troops are prepared for council's cookie ACH sweeps, and manage cookie booths and rewards distribution. Support troops' focus on financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills.

◆◆◆ **Peak Time:** Nov.-March

• **MagNut Program Chair:**

Oversee all aspects of the service unit's participation in the MagNut Program, which is council's fall product program. Ensure all troops, via troop MagNut managers, receive appropriate training prior to the program, have access to the necessary materials, and coordinate scheduling logistics and rewards distribution. Support troops' focus on financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills.

◆◆ **Peak Time:** Aug.-Dec.

• **Communications Coordinator:**

Ensure members in the service unit are receiving key information in a timely manner and all aspects of communication are effective and engaging. Share council and service unit communication accordingly through email, social media, and any other communication channels utilized by the service unit. Update and circulate the service unit agenda to volunteers. Create and share meeting agendas and notes to maintain purpose-driven meetings and keep focus on major working knowledge on Girl Scout branding and proper use of assets like the Girl Scout Trefoil and the national and council logo.

◆◆◆ **Peak Time:** Ongoing

The Logistics Team in Action

The logistics team works closely with council's membership staff and MagNut program and cookie program coordinators to ensure the success of administrative operations such as finance, communication, and facilitating product program. MagNut and Cookie Chairs collaborate with the member support team to verify member registration for product programs, and the logistics lead coordinates with the troop mentor to help establish new volunteers with healthy financial management habits.

Year-at-a-glance:

Fall:

The logistics team launches the MagNut program and prepares volunteers for the upcoming cookie program. The team also works with the service unit to secure delegates through nomination and election for service unit representation at Fall Town Halls and Annual Meeting. The logistics lead assists new troop leaders with opening bank accounts, ensures a signer from the lead team is serving as an authorized signer, encourages troops to have an up-to-date Bank Account Information & ACH Authorization forms on file for council's product program ACH sweeps, and provides council resources and best practices for Girl Scout account financial health so troops start the year strong with organized finances.

Key Dates:

- Oct. 1: Fall MagNut program begins
- Mid-Nov.: Council delegate names given to council

Winter:

The logistics team supports troops with the Girl Scout Cookie Program. The logistics lead ensures troops have successfully submitted their finance reports for the reporting window of June 1-Nov. 30 on time and collaborates with council staff on finance report follow-up, as needed.

Key Dates:

- Early Jan.: Girl Scout Cookie Program begins

Spring:

The logistics team wraps up the cookie program and prepares volunteers to submit their finance report. The logistics team works with graduating troops to ensure they're spending down their troop funds.

Key Dates:

- Late March: Cookie program ends
- May: Service unit end-of-year meeting with membership staff

Summer:

The logistics lead collaborates with other team leads to shape the annual budget for the service unit for the coming year. The logistics lead collaborates with council staff to ensure spring finance reports are submitted on time, and connects with disbanding troops to ensure they've spent down the remaining balance of their troop's funds.

Key Dates:

- June 15: Finance reports due to council

The Service Unit Lead Team

Working Together to Lead

The service unit lead team, comprised of the member support lead, program lead, and logistics lead, works together 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 lead team are essential for all three team leads to brainstorm, discuss, organize, and plan the service unit meetings, events, and programs.

At a minimum, there are two-key lead team meetings to hold with council's membership staff assigned to your service unit:

Calendar Planning Meeting—July/August

- 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.

Membership and Recruitment Meeting—April/May, start of spring renewal

- 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.

Monthly service unit meetings provide an opportunity for leaders and members of the service unit team to meet on the local level. During the meeting, members bond with fellow volunteers, share both local and council updates, and acquire additional skills and knowledge. These meetings truly enhance the leaders' experience and help them succeed. If leaders from a troop are unable to attend a meeting, they're encouraged to have a registered parent attend on their behalf, so the troop is attuned to what is going on in the community. The service unit meeting is facilitated by the service unit lead team.

The purpose of service unit meetings is to:

- continue to build an atmosphere of teamwork and foster enthusiasm for Girl Scouts;
- keep area members current on Girl Scout activities and opportunities;
- share area and troop successes; and
- provide enrichment opportunities, trainings, and support for area adults and leaders.

Service unit meetings at-a-glance:

1. Welcome and introductions: Facilitate an icebreaker or team-building activity.
2. Announcements: Share upcoming local and council-sponsored events for volunteers, troops, and girls.
3. Girl Scout program-related training or activity
4. Closing activity or game

Go Virtual!

A blend of in-person and virtual meetings increases flexibility for volunteers' schedules and helps to keep the service unit connected. Consider broadcasting in-person meetings through a platform like Zoom to increase accessibility and attendance at meetings.

The Service Unit Year Plan

Summer is the time the service unit team leads start thinking about their service unit meetings for the year—when to schedule them, what to include, etc. Provide an agenda to ensure smooth transitions between topics and utilize the monthly Service Unit Agenda provided by council. In addition to the monthly agenda, below are some ideas and suggestions to highlight and general announcements you might include in your plans and on your meeting agendas each month, so your troops are set up for a successful and enriching year.

<p>Summer</p>	<p>June—Review and Reset</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information about and promote registration for the August annual Leadership Summit. • Remind leaders that spring finance reports are due June 15. • Ensure troops with graduating girls are spending down troop funds to celebrate their achievement and that they're aware of the disband process. 	<p>July—Prepare and Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit service unit volunteer agreements, renew volunteer roles. • Follow up or work with the council's membership staff and Girl Scout engagement chair on plans for fall recruitment. • Member support team lead and Girl Scout engagement chair contact troops that have not yet renewed to ask if they're returning in the fall or if a disband needs completed. • Encourage troops to update their bank accounts, if needed, in advance of the new year. • Host recruitment events. 	<p>August—Kick off the Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a service unit kick-off event to build excitement for the new Girl Scout year. • Host recruitment events. • Help troop leaders ensure members are renewed, and have the troop mentor review the Volunteer Toolkit and how to use the "Year Plan" tool at your service unit meeting.
<p>Fall</p>	<p>September—Things are Falling into Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to promote the fall MagNut program. • Hold MagNut training held by the MagNut chair. • Introduce and welcome new leaders and troops. • Promote refresher training for volunteers in gsLearn. 	<p>October—Rolling Along</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share membership data for the new year with service unit. Remind leaders to ensure all members have active memberships in the new Girl Scout year. • Consider holding an Investiture and Re-dedication Ceremony at your October meeting. • Consider celebrating Juliette Gordon Low's birthday (October 31) at your October meeting or a service unit event. • Address fall MagNut program support needs. • Share information about upcoming council Town Halls and promote attendance. 	<p>November—Thankful for a Great Start</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Adult Award nominations to recognize outstanding volunteers. • Begin to promote the Girl Scout Cookie Program. • Cookie chair provides service unit training. • Announce the date for the Annual Meeting and hold council delegate elections.
<p>Winter</p>	<p>December—Prepare for Cookies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote the cookie program and offer support. • Remind leaders to update bank account information, if needed. • Host a service unit cookie rally. 	<p>January—Think Cookies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girl Scout Cookie Program begins! • Review cookie booth guidelines and safety. • Plan for cookie delivery and distribution. • Host mid-year girl and adult recruitment events. • Begin to share information about group, day, and resident camp programs. • Finalize service unit Adult Award nominations for council. 	<p>February—Girl Scout Traditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind volunteers to register for the Annual Meeting. • Encourage troops to celebrate World Thinking Day on Feb. 22. • Share information on upcoming end-of-year celebrations and local recognitions. • Begin planning for Volunteer Appreciation Month in April.
<p>Spring</p>	<p>March—Happy Birthday Girl Scouts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to share information about group, day, and resident camp programs. • Encourage troops to celebrate Girl Scout Week and Girl Scout birthday – March 12. • Continue to share information on end-of-year celebrations and local recognitions. • Prepare for spring renewal by having leaders discuss with families their plans for the upcoming Girl Scout year. 	<p>April—Volunteer Appreciation Month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April is Volunteer Appreciation Month and Leader Appreciation Day is April 22. Celebrate the volunteers and leaders in your service unit. • Spring renewal begins in MyGS. • Start planning for next year! Ask volunteers for input on what they'd like to see on next year's agenda. 	<p>May—Wrapping up the Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind troop leaders to complete year-end forms, such as the Troop Profile Update Form and Finance Report, due June 15. • Address questions related to finance reports and offer best practices. • Service unit lead team meets with council's membership staff for end-of-year meeting. • Promote spring renewal for members that are returning next year. Hold a service unit event for renewed members. • Host local end-of-year celebration and recognition and bridging events.

Engaging the Service Unit

The service unit is at its best when volunteers and members actively engage in its activities, meetings, and events to build a vibrant and thriving local Girl Scout community. One large piece of connecting troops and volunteers with your service unit efforts is encouraging their regular participation in service unit meetings to network with other volunteers, learn about local opportunities, and feel connected to their Girl Scout community.

Strategies for Service Unit Meeting Engagement

- Plan meeting dates and locations well in advance.
- Promote upcoming learning opportunities as far in advance as possible.
- Send out meeting reminders a few days before each meeting.
- Add a personal touch! If a troop misses a meeting, follow up with a call to one of the leaders to let them know what they missed.
- Aim for a balanced agenda to include time for introducing new faces, learning new things, talking about best practices, and asking questions.

Ask for Volunteer Support

We know our service unit volunteers, like all volunteers, are busy people leading busy lives, and many of our service unit volunteers are also troop leaders and hold other volunteer roles. Just like our troop volunteers may need support from the service unit, service unit volunteers may need support from other troop volunteers. There are a lot of opportunities for other volunteers to step forward and help service unit volunteers with events, distributing cookie rewards, and planning program experiences.

Tips for asking for volunteer help:

- Have a clear and specific ask ready—for example, instead of “Would you be willing to help with planning a winter service unit camp?” ask, “I need someone to plan meals for our camp weekend. Could you help with that?”
- Identify a potential volunteer’s strengths and match a need to those strengths. For example, you might ask a volunteer who is great at managing their troop’s finances to hold a workshop of best practices and strategies for the service unit at a meeting, freeing up the logistics lead.
- When a potential volunteer says they’ll help with a task or in a role, follow up with them immediately while they’ve freshly committed to helping to give them the information they’ll need to be successful.
- Ask your troop leaders if they have parents or caregivers in their troops who might help with service unit events and activities or in a service unit volunteer role.
- Recognize volunteers right away. Once someone says they will help, make sure to thank them. Consider giving a handwritten thank you note. For new volunteers coming into service unit roles, thank them at service unit meetings so others can thank them for stepping up and helping support the service unit. The service unit team might also recognize a volunteer’s support through an Adult Award nomination with council or other local recognition.



Managing Conflict

When we hear the word conflict, we think trouble and negativity, but conflict does not have to be bad. In fact, it can be positive. Very little change or growth ever happens without conflict. In service units, any three of the team leads might need to help resolve conflict. How you deal with conflict, or differing points of view, will have a direct impact on the outcome. Below are strategies to help reduce conflict and reach solutions that work for all involved. However, if service unit team leads do not feel comfortable or need guidance in how to handle a situation, contact your membership staff.

Strategies for Managing Conflict and Navigating Sensitive Issues

Keep it confidential—on your honor.

- Keep information about conflict confidential unless you need to consult with another involved party or council staff. Conflict can worsen when information is spread to non-involved parties.

Separate people from the problem.

- If you look at the problem as an issue to be resolved, rather than looking at the people involved as opponents, the odds of reaching consensus increase. Remain neutral to help involved parties self-resolve a present problem.

Determine each participant's position and interest in the problem, situation, or conflict.

- **What** each person wants is their *position* and *why* they want it is their *interest*. Understanding and knowing both is important to reaching a resolution. Don't only ask what outcome they are hoping for but also why that outcome is important to them.

Be an active listener.

- Throughout the meeting, be an active listener; if others are present, remind them to be active listeners as well. Remain focused on what each participant is saying and repeat it back to them to be sure you understand.

Have a plan.

- As a facilitator, it's important you seek to understand the issue and have an idea ahead of time as to what can and cannot be done to resolve the issue.

Ask the right questions.

- Questions can lead to breakthroughs in communication and increase understanding between two people. Use a good mix of closed and open-ended questions when working through difficult situations.

Strive for fairness.

- If all participants view the process as fair, they are more likely to accept the result. Keep resolution suggestions grounded in the best interests of the girls, so each party has a face-saving way to agree to a compromise.

Create an agreement.

- Be sure to wrap up by stating what each party has agreed to. Have both parties verbally agree, and if necessary, put the agreement in writing, and give each participant a copy.

Ask for help.

- If a situation extends beyond your comfort level, there is nothing wrong with asking for help. We trust that you can resolve issues that may arise, but we also understand that you may not be comfortable in every situation. Instead of letting a situation simmer for too long, ask for help from council staff so things can be resolved as quickly as possible.

Service Unit Funds

Service units can open an account under the council's EIN. Service unit funds are intended to benefit all girls in the service unit and should be used to further the Girl Scout mission. The logistics lead and another team lead are signers on the account, and the team leads should collaborate in the preparation of an annual budget in July when they are preparing for the upcoming year.

The annual budget should be used to guide the service unit's activities, but the budget may evolve over the course of the program year if priorities and opportunities shift. Team leads should collaborate throughout the year to ensure that necessary funds are available to meet the service unit's goals and may adjust the budget if needed.

Some planning questions to consider:

- What types of activities will be planned for troops in our area?
- What types of activities will be planned for volunteers in our area?
- What are the costs associated with these activities?
- How will the service unit fund these activities?

Service unit funds may be used in many ways, and a few examples of income and expenses for a service unit include:

- Purchasing local adult recognitions
- Hosting local events/activities
- Service unit meeting expenses
- Income from disbanded troops in the service unit
- Income from additional money-earning activities for the service unit

Service units may hold one additional money-earning event per membership year to raise additional money for girl experiences. Finance reports must be submitted for all service unit accounts by June 15. Finance reports should reflect a similar starting and ending balance as funds received should be spent toward service unit opportunities during the year. To promote financial transparency, each service unit meeting should have an update delivered by the logistics lead to cover service unit accounts and upcoming or pending expenses/incomes.

Volunteer Appreciation Ideas for Service Units

There would be no Girl Scouts without amazing volunteers, so we encourage service units to celebrate volunteers year-round. Every act of appreciation, no matter how big or small, lets volunteers know they are appreciated and valued for the time and energy they give to the Girl Scout Movement. Here are some ideas:

- Set time on service unit meeting agendas for team leads and other volunteers to sound off praises and acknowledgments of a volunteer's work.
- Write notes of thanks highlighting specific ways the volunteer is making an impact.
- Celebrate birthdays! Share a signed card to celebrate a volunteer's birthday or do birthday shout outs or singing at meetings.
- Use sidewalk chalk to write thank you notes with volunteers' names and words of thanks and appreciation on the sidewalk at the meeting location or at the volunteer's home.
- Be a little silly! Set up a surprise photo booth with props at a service unit meeting for volunteers to have fun and capture the moment. Share the photos on the service unit social media page—girls will love to see their leaders having fun!






Service units might also organize larger recognitions for volunteers—such as honoring them at an end-of-year celebration, holding a volunteer appreciation pizza party at a service unit meeting, or arranging for a volunteer appreciation event.

Nominating volunteers who have made an impact for a Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania Adult Award is a great way to acknowledge and celebrate the amazing work of your volunteers. The council has six Adult Awards to celebrate our outstanding volunteers. (See next page.)

How can a service unit submit a nomination for an adult award?

- Volunteer of Excellence forms are accepted throughout the year, and nominators will be notified of the review status within three weeks of the submission.
- For all other awards, nomination forms must be received by February 1. Nominators will be notified of their nominee's review status and/or approval in March.
- Nomination forms and endorsement guidelines can be found at gswpa.org.

Adult Awards at Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania

<p>Volunteer of Excellence</p> 	<p>The Volunteer of Excellence offers service units an opportunity to recognize volunteers who have contributed outstanding service in support of mission delivery to girl and adult members at a troop level. <i>Requires a Nomination Form.</i></p>
<p>Appreciation Pin</p> 	<p>The Appreciation Pin recognizes an active Girl Scout volunteer's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This service, which has had a measurable impact on one service unit or geographic area of service, helps reach and surpass the mission-delivery goals of the area. <i>Requires a Nomination Form and two letters of endorsement.</i></p>
<p>Honor Pin</p> 	<p>The Honor Pin recognizes a registered Girl Scout volunteer's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This service, which has had measurable impact on two or more service units or geographic areas of service, allowed the council to reach and surpass its mission-delivery goals. <i>Requires a Nomination Form and three letters of endorsement.</i></p>
<p>Thanks Badge</p> 	<p>The Thanks Badge is the highest honor in Girl Scouts. It honors a registered adult Girl Scout whose ongoing commitment, leadership and service have had an exceptional, measurable impact on meeting the mission-delivery goals and priorities of the entire council or entire Girl Scout Movement. <i>Requires a Nomination Form and four letters of endorsement.</i></p>
<p>Thanks Badge II</p> 	<p>The Thanks Badge II recognizes a previous Thanks Badge award recipient who has continued to provide exemplary service in a leadership role significantly above and beyond the call of duty, resulting in a measurable impact that benefits the entire Girl Scout Movement. <i>Requires a Nomination Form and four letters of endorsement.</i></p>
<p>The President's Award</p>	<p>The President's Award recognizes the efforts of a service-delivery team or committee whose exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience surpassed team goals and resulted in significant, measurable impact toward reaching the council's overall goals. <i>Requires nomination form.</i></p>



Forms and Resources

All forms listed below can be found in the forms library at gswpa.org/forms.

Member Support	Troop Profile Update Form	Filled out annually by troop leaders to relay updates to their troop, meeting place, etc.
Member Support	New Troop Request Form	Filled out by prospective troop leaders, Girl Scout engagement chairs, and recruitment specialists, this form alerts council and the service unit of a new troop being added.
Member Support	Disbanded Troop Form	Filled out by troop leaders, member support leads, or volunteer support specialists, this form communicates that a troop has disbanded and is ready to close its finances.
Logistics	Bank Account Information and ACH Authorization Form	Required by all troops and service units to council to share bank account information and permit ACH sweep for product programs.
Logistics	Troop and Service Unit Bank Account Form	Completed by troop leaders, treasurers, and the logistics lead, this form communicates changes to bank account information and is used to open a new Girl Scout bank account.
Logistics	Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania Finance Report	Troop leaders, troop treasurers, and logistics leads submit required biannual finance for all Girl Scout accounts.
Logistics	Additional Money-Earning Activity	Troop leaders, troop treasurers, and logistics leads submit this request for approval for activities to earn additional funds to carry out the Girl Scout experience.
Program	Permission Form	Event chairs, troop leaders, and program leads ensure that all girls attending service unit and other events have a parent/caregiver signed permission form.
Program	Trip & High Adventure Activity Form	Program leads might submit Trip & High Adventure Activities Forms for service unit travel or experiences.
Program	Accident/Incident Report	If an accident that requires more than basic first aid or an incident occurs at a service unit or troop Girl Scout meeting or event, an Accident/Incident Report must be filed with council.
Program	Additional Activity Insurance Form	If additional insurance is needed for a service unit activity or travel, an Additional Activity Insurance Form must be submitted, and insurance must be purchased.
Program	Healthy History Form	All registered members must have a health history form on file with their troop leader, and that form should accompany them to all Girl Scout meetings and events.



Customer Care

800-248-3355

customer-care@gswpa.org

Live answering hours:

M-Th: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

F: 9 a.m.-noon

Girl Scout Shops

Located in Edinboro, Johnstown, and Pittsburgh

Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Friday: Closed

2nd Saturdays: 9 a.m.-noon (Sept.-May)

girl scouts 
western pennsylvania