



# Adult Volunteer Manual

**Building girls of  
courage, confidence,  
and character,  
who make the world  
a better place.**

# **Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council**

## ***Manual for Adult Volunteers***

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# CONSTITUTION of Girl Scouts of the United States of America

## **PREAMBLE**

### **The 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.*

### **The 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.*

### **Beliefs and Principles**

*We, the members of Girl Scouts of the United States of America, united by a belief in God and by acceptance of the Girl Scout Promise and Law,*

*And inspired by the aims of the Founder of the Scout Movement, Lord Baden-Powell, and of the Founder of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States, Juliette Low,*

*Do dedicate ourselves to the purpose of inspiring girls with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism, and service that they may become happy and resourceful citizens.*

*We believe that the motivating force in Girl Scouting is a spiritual one.*

*We affirm that the Girl Scout Movement shall ever be open to all girls and adults who accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law.*

*We maintain that the strength of the Girl Scout Movement rests in the voluntary leadership of its adult members, in the cooperation and support of the community, and in the affiliation with Girl Guide and Girl Scout Movements of other countries through the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.*

## **FOREWORD**

The volunteer personnel policies and practices of the Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council (GSSJC) are established upon the principle that successful accomplishment of Council goals and objectives is based upon qualified and trained volunteers. It is essential that volunteers be utilized in positions that provide job satisfaction and clear-cut responsibilities in order to provide quality Girl Scout program to girls.

The purpose of this manual is to bring together basic volunteer policies of the Council and guidelines for implementation of sound volunteer administrative practices.

## **Definition of 'VOLUNTEER'**

A 'volunteer' is an individual who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement, performs a service at the direction of and on behalf of the Council. A 'volunteer' must be appointed prior to performance of the task. Unless specifically stated, volunteers shall not be considered as 'employees' of the Council.

## **Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities**

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to GSSJC, its staff, and its clients. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal colleagues, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the Council.

A volunteer who is an employee of GSSJC for more than 150 hours per year may not hold administrative positions within the Council during that calendar year without CEO approval. An administrative volunteer is one who fills a position on the service unit or Council level, including event and committee chairs and committee members, excluding resident camp, day camp, and pre-approved temporary positions. Volunteer positions at the troop level may be held by employed staff. (Operating Procedure)

## **Membership**

All girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall be registered as members with Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) and individually pay the annual membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime members or working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity. (National Policy)

The Girl Scout membership year is October 1 to September 30, as approved by the National Board of Directors, January 1979.

Membership as a Girl Scout is granted to any person who:

- meets GSUSA membership standards;
- has paid annual membership dues based on the membership year, which is October 1 to September 30 or is a Lifetime Member;
- agrees to abide by GSUSA Policies, Standards and Guidelines, GSSJC Policies and Operational Procedures, governmental and affiliated organization regulations and standards, and the Constitution of GSUSA.

## **MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES**

### **Management of Records**

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer with the Council, including volunteer application, status of Criminal Background Check, Conflict of Interest, signed position description or volunteer agreement, record of training and awards received. Volunteers and appropriate staff shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate

records and information to the Volunteer Development Department in a timely and accurate fashion. Volunteer personnel records shall be accorded a confidential

### **Conflict of Interest**

Committee members and officers must act solely in the interest of GSSJC rather than in their own personal interest, the interest of other board members, or the interest of others. Members and officers must have an undivided allegiance to the Girl Scout mission and may not use their position or information they have about GSSJC or the Council's assets in a manner that allows them to secure a financial or any other benefit for themselves, their relatives, or another member (family or business). No person who has a conflict of interest with any activity or program of the agency, whether personal, philosophical, or financial, shall be accepted or serve as a volunteer with the Council. Volunteers may be asked to sign a Conflict of Interest Statement (GSSJC C-145).

### **Speaking on behalf of the Council**

Only the president / chair of the board and the CEO and/or their designees are authorized spokespersons for Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council. (board of directors policy)

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary, privileged, or sensitive information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a staff member, volunteer, client, or other person, or overall GSSJC business. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the Council.

### **Dress Code**

Although a Girl Scout uniform is encouraged, it is not required for participation in most Girl Scout activities. The uniform may be worn when appropriate at Girl Scout activities and is recommended for Council meetings and official functions. Attention should be given to correctness and proper placement of insignia. Purchase of a uniform is at the volunteer's expense.

Volunteers are representatives of Girl Scouts in their community and role models for girls and other adults. Personal appearance, public conduct, and attitude should exemplify the best in Girl Scouting. All volunteers are expected to be neat, clean, and appropriately dressed when participating in Girl Scout Activities. Volunteers are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout Membership Pin when they are not in uniform. When conducting Girl Scout business, volunteers should refrain from wearing items that advertise or endorse products, businesses, or other organizations that do not reflect the mission of Girl Scouting. (Operating Procedure)

## **RECRUITMENT, APPOINTMENT AND PLACEMENT**

The Council provides systems for the recruitment, appointment, and placement of adult volunteers which ensure job satisfaction to the volunteer and the most effective use of human resources to the Council.

### **Position Descriptions / Volunteer Agreement**

Volunteers should receive a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position which they are expected to fill. Prior to any volunteer assignment, a position description or volunteer agreement must be developed for each volunteer position. This form will be given to each accepted volunteer and utilized in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Position descriptions should be reviewed and updated at least every two years, or whenever the work involved in the position changes substantially. All position descriptions shall include: a summary of the position, tasks specific to the position, additional responsibilities/expectations, qualifications, organizational relationships and accountability.

The signed position description will be maintained in the volunteer's file in Volunteer Records.

### **Selection**

“Each adult volunteer is selected on the basis of ability to perform the volunteer position, volunteer and Council need, ability and willingness to attend training, and qualifications for membership in the Girl Scout Movement.

“There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer by reason of disability or on the basis of age. Furthermore, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, or socioeconomic status. In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, affirmative action policies and procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of underrepresented population groups -” (National Policy, revised in 2006))

Volunteers will receive some type of appropriate interview prior to selection.

“Members of the Board of Directors should be selected so the group can reflect the points of view of various community resources within the territory covered by its charter, such as ethnic, racial, educational, civic, religious, and socio-economic.” (National Policy)

### **GSSJC's Statement on Pluralism**

The Girl Scouts of San Jacinto is a pluralistic movement, committed to understanding our similarities and differences, building relationships and promoting a dialogue of acceptance and respect. Each individual involved must uphold the basic tenet that Girl Scouting is for all girls. (Board Policy)

## **Placement**

Volunteering is a privilege, not a right. Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of the Council. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the Council will take precedence over the needs of the individual. Individuals not placed in a position for which they applied may be recommended for other positions and they may request reassignment.” (National Policy)

## **Criminal Background Check**

As appropriate for the protection of the girls we serve, volunteers in certain assignments may be asked to submit to a criminal background check. Volunteers who do not agree to the background check will be refused appointment. Criminal Background Check Policy (GSSJC F118) details Council procedure and lists offenses which disqualify volunteers from appointment. Confidential records are maintained at the Girl Scout Center.

## **Appointment**

A letter of appointment will be provided for each volunteer. This letter is signed by the persons designated to make the appointment and should include position description or volunteer agreement outlining the position and the term of office or duration of assignment.

Reappointment to the same position or placement in a new position will be made after consideration of the individual’s contribution to their job, the plans for their development, their personal preference and the plans and projections for the position and department. Reappointment is based on past performance, adherence to Council and GSUSA policies and standards, support of the Girl Scout purpose, values, and Council goals, as well as positive relationships with the community, parents, and other volunteers and employed staff. There will be mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and time commitments. Leader reappointment is contingent upon completion of the appropriate age level training and submittal of a troop financial report. Leader re-appointment is automatic, providing adult is “in good standing” with the Council.

There are many important and interesting jobs for adults in Girl Scouting. The opportunity to change positions or to take on additional tasks is always possible. Care should be given to time commitments when accepting multiple volunteer positions.

## **Release**

Situations may arise that make it necessary to release an individual from a position. The Council may release an individual because of, among other things, restructuring of positions, elimination of the volunteer position in which the individual serves, the volunteer’s inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, or the refusal to comply with Council or GSUSA policies. Release from the position does not cancel membership with GSUSA unless it is determined that she or he is unable to meet the membership requirements. Should it be necessary to release a volunteer, the situation must be dealt with fairly. (GSSJC F-417)

## **Resignation**

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the Council at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision. A minimum of two weeks notice is requested. Exit interviews, where possible, should be conducted with volunteers who are leaving their positions. The interviewer should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position, solicit suggestions the volunteer may have to improving the position, and explore the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity with the Council.

## **Harassment**

The Council prohibits all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is intended to or actually interferes with a person's work performance, or that is intended to or actually creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

The Council expressly prohibits any form of harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or disability. Sexual harassment and other types of harassment are forms of misconduct that undermine the integrity of the organization. It is against the organization's policies for any volunteer or employee, male or female, to harass another volunteer, employee or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex.

Any volunteer who feels that she or he has been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, Council staff member, or any agent of the organization, should promptly report the incident to a supervisor. Appropriate measures will be taken to review and resolve the situation in a confidential and expeditious manner.

## **Conflict Resolution / Dispute**

A volunteer should attempt to resolve a position-related problem with the person to whom she/he is accountable. Every effort should be made to resolve the problem at this level. When a volunteer cannot resolve a problem with the person to whom she/he is accountable, the volunteer should request a meeting with the person at the next supervisory level.

Conflict resolution is based on the fundamental values of respect for the individual and fairness so members of the organization can air their grievances and have avenues to solving them. Every volunteer may expect a resolution in accordance with Girl Scout Promise and Law and GSSJC Policies and Operational Procedures. Informal counseling by volunteer and staff personnel is the first step in resolving a situation

involving a conflict or dispute. Questions or concerns may be addressed to the Volunteer Relations Committee.

## **Child Abuse**

The Council supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts, and it is against the Council's policy for any volunteer, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any girl member.

The Council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the Council any volunteer implementing Girl Scout program who is found guilty of child abuse or neglect or who has been convicted of child abuse or neglect. Registered sex offenders are not eligible for membership in Girl Scouts of the USA and may not participate in any capacity with Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council. Any adult living on the premises with a registered sex offender may participate only as a parent.

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Training**

Formal training for adults as well as individual on-the-job guidance and direction broadens understanding of the philosophy, aims, and program of the Girl Scout movement and increases the knowledge and skills needed to do the job with competence and satisfaction. The timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

Every adult Girl Scout volunteer must be willing to take training for each position undertaken. The Council must provide the opportunity and availability of this training. Training and guidance should be continually available; however, the volunteer is responsible for her/his own learning. Records for Council conducted trainings are kept at the Girl Scout Center. The individual volunteer should maintain her/his own personal training records as well. The Council can provide proof of training for all courses delivered through the Volunteer Development Department

### **Advantages**

Advantages to volunteers include support in their position, training and other learning opportunities. Volunteers are encouraged to enhance and develop their skills while serving with the Council. As appropriate, the Council will assist volunteers in broadening their skills through assignment to new volunteer positions involving additional and/or greater responsibilities. Other advantages for volunteers include Council publications, tools for recording volunteer experience, liability insurance, and supplementary accident insurance. as part of national and/or Council membership, plus the opportunity to build lasting friendships and the ability to use or develop new skills.

## **SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION**

### **Supervision / Accountability**

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

### **Volunteer/Staff Relationships**

Staff is employed to provide full-time managerial and specialist expertise, research capability, and continuity to support the delivery of program to girls through volunteers. The partnership relationship of volunteer and staff, in fact, reinforces the reality that both volunteers and staff have equally valued and valid contributions to make to our movement. Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the Council. It is essential that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

### **Lines of Communication**

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments. Accordingly, volunteers should be included in and have access to all appropriate memos, materials, and meetings relevant to the work assignment. Lines of communication should operate in both directions, and should exist both formally and informally. Volunteers should be consulted regarding all decisions which would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

### **Standards of Performance**

Standards of performance shall be established for each volunteer position. These standards should list the work to be done in that position, and provide measurable indicators of whether the work was accomplished and appropriate timelines for accomplishment of the work. Creation of these standards will be a joint function of staff and volunteer(s) assigned to the position, and a copy of the standards should be provided to the volunteer(s) along with a copy of their position description at the beginning of their assignment.

### **Evaluation / Assessment**

All adult volunteers are entitled to the opportunity for regular review and evaluation of their performance. Evaluations are made with respect to the individual's contribution to their job (in relation to achievement of goals set), the plans for their development, and personal preference and compliance with GSSJC policies and procedures.

A periodic conference between the volunteer and the volunteer's immediate supervisor is encouraged. Evaluations should include a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project with which the volunteer is connected. The evaluation session is an opportunity for both the volunteer and the supervisor to examine and improve ways of work. When appropriate, documentation is kept in the volunteer's file in Volunteer Records.

## **SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION**

### **Insurance**

All registered members are protected under Girl Scout Activity Accident Insurance, Basic Coverage. This plan provides supplemental coverage for medical expenses resulting from accidents to members traveling to and from and participating in approved, supervised Girl Scout activities, i.e. day camp, troop camp, weekend trips (of two nights or less) and regular troop meetings.

Liability insurance is carried by the Council to protect the Council and persons acting for the Council, including troop/group leaders and all other Girl Scout volunteers (whether registered members or not).

“All drivers must show proof to the adult(s) in charge of Girl Scout activities that any motor vehicle used to transport Girl Scouts is duly licensed, has a current state inspection sticker, is properly insured, and that the driver has a valid driver’s license. Drivers under 18 years of age must present written permission from their parents/guardians to transport girls, and the adult in charge must obtain written consent from parents/guardians of girls riding in the car.” (*GSSJC Operating Procedures, Health & Safety F-433*)

Any serious accident or fatality must be reported immediately to the chief executive officer by calling the 24 hour phone number at the Girl Scout Center – (713) 292-0300 or 1-800-392-4340.

### **Expenses**

Volunteers may deduct un-reimbursed expenses incurred as a volunteer on their personal tax returns in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service regulations. Adults are encouraged to keep a record of expenses incurred during Girl Scout work, i.e. cost of uniforms, beginning and ending mileage, etc. Volunteers should consult with their tax advisor regarding specific allowable deductions.

Financial scholarships are available for adults needing assistance to carry out their Girl Scout responsibilities for membership, training and/or program activities. Information may be obtained from the volunteer supervisor, staff advisor, Girl Scout Center, or by obtaining a copy of *Financial Assistance Guidelines* (GSSJC F-132).

### **Regional, National, and International Events**

A listing of these events is usually published on the GSUSA website. Adults are encouraged to apply for those events that may be of interest and for which they possess the proper qualifications. The sponsoring Council or GSUSA makes the selections for these events. Verification of membership is required from GSSJC. Additionally, there are events or trainings which GSSJC determines will further its ability to meet Council goals. Participants are recommended by the officers, coordinators, and persons designated by the president of the Council/chair of the board and are endorsed by the Council Adult Educational Opportunities Committee within budgetary considerations. Application information and guidelines for adults attending Adult Educational Opportunities are available at the Girl Scout Center.

In the year of the National Convention, the Council elects a predetermined number of delegates to attend (based on the membership count).

## **Recognition**

There are many ways in which adult volunteers may be recognized, such as personal notes of thanks, words of commendation in the presence of co-workers, presentations made by a special person, invitations to report on a successful venture, or opportunities to move to a more responsible position. Presentations may be made at any appropriate occasion.

The Council recognizes the service of all active Girl Scout adult volunteers by awarding Years of Service pins for the number of volunteer years of service in multiples of five. It is the member's responsibility to submit their information to their service unit administrator or complete *Volunteer Years of Service Pin Order Form* (GSSJC F-61). This pin is provided as a gift in appreciation for volunteer service.

The Council encourages recognition be given to individual adults and organizations according to what each has done to promote and further ideals and principles of Girl Scouting. For further information, refer to *Adult Recognitions Award Nomination Form* (GSSJC F-54)

## Volunteer's Bill of Rights & Responsibilities

### **It is your right:**

- to be assigned a task that is worthwhile and challenging
- to receive the orientation, training and supervision needed to do the job
- to feel that your efforts have real purpose and contribute to the organization's mission
- to be treated with respect and as an equal partner within the organization
- to be trusted with confidential information necessary to carry out your assignment
- to be kept informed about relevant matters within the organization.
- To be provided opportunities for continuing education.
- to be provided a variety of experiences.
- to be heard: to have a part in planning, to feel free to make suggestions, to have respect shown for an honest opinion.

### **It is your responsibility**

- to take on only the amount of responsibility you can handle.
- to take the necessary training to prepare you for your responsibilities.
- to meet time commitments or to provide notice so alternative arrangements can be made.
- to perform the tasks assigned to you to the best of your ability.
- to provide input on ways your tasks might be better performed.
- to follow organizational policies and procedures.
- to respect those confidences entrusted to you.
- to be open-minded and respectful towards opinions shared with you.