



Volunteer Policy Manual

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Volunteer Policies

Forward

These Volunteer Policies were adopted by the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest - Southern New Mexico & West Texas, Inc. "GSDSW" and supersede all previous policies. No one other than the Board of Directors has the authority to alter, amend or modify the provisions in this handbook.

By the terms of its charter, Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest – Southern New Mexico & West Texas, Inc. and all its members are required to adhere to the policies of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. as stated in the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* and are guided by the standards of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. as stated in *Safety-Wise*.

1. Adult Leadership:

- 1.1 All adult volunteers shall be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement and shall individually pay the applicable membership fees.
- 1.2 Each applicant for a volunteer position is required to complete an application form, a code of conduct, and authorize a criminal background check.
 - 1.2.1 Individuals who have past due or “non-sufficient funds” checks outstanding to the Council, or who have had their checks referred to a collection agency may not serve in a volunteer position.

2. Volunteer Development:

- 2.1 Training
 - 2.1.1 Volunteers are required to take all training applicable to the job within a designated period of time for each position.
- 2.2 Recognition
 - 2.2.1 Outstanding service to Girl Scouting will be recognized by the Council as approved by the Board of Directors.
- 2.3 Resignation
 - 2.3.1 Any volunteer may resign from his or her position upon written notification to the appropriate individual.

2.4 Release

- 2.4.1 The Council may release a volunteer for any reason from his or her position including but not limited to restructuring of volunteer positions, the elimination of the volunteer position in which a person serves, the inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, the refusal to comply with Council or GSUSA policies, the refusal to support the mission and values of the organization and the Council goals, or membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with those of GSUSA.
- 2.4.2 Adults engaging in the following behaviors will be released from acting in an official Girl Scout capacity:
 - 2.4.2.1 Possession, sale or use of illegal drugs.
 - 2.4.2.2 Drinking or being under the influence of alcohol during Girl Scout activities where girls are present.
 - 2.4.2.3 Misuse of any prescribed or over-the-counter drugs at any Girl Scout activity.
 - 2.4.2.4 Child abuse and/or neglect.
 - 2.4.2.5 Carrying firearms (guns and ammunition) during Girl Scout activities, except when in possession by a sworn officer of the law, certified firearms instructor or licensed wildlife control personnel, or with approval by the Chief Executive Officer.
 - 2.4.2.6 Misuse of Council monies which include, but are not limited to, troop funds, Girl Scout product sales receipts, program event fees, or service unit funds.

2.5 Conflict Resolution

- 2.5.1 The Council will maintain conflict resolution procedures for all volunteers.

2.6 Harassment

- 2.6.1 The Council expressly prohibits any form of harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin or disability.
- 2.6.2 The Council is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy and equitable treatment.
- 2.6.3 The Council is committed to an environment free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.”

Any volunteer who feels that she or he has been subjected to harassment of any type should promptly report the incident to the appropriate employed staff member.

3. Membership / Troop Organization

- 3.1 Membership shall be extended to all girls and adults regardless of socio-economic status, racial, ethnic, cultural or religious background or disability.
- 3.2 To register a troop, there must be at least five (5) girls registering from more than one family. Exceptions may be made in extenuating circumstances due to the girl population of the area. This decision will be made by the CEO or designee. *Safety-Wise* adult/girl ratio should be met at all times.
- 3.3 At least two (2) adults are required to register with each troop and be present at every troop meeting and activity. At least one registered adult must be female and not related to the other adults. Refer to the Girl Scout Program Standard in *Safety-Wise*.

4. Camping and Traveling

- 4.1 Troops planning trips, camping events, or other activities will conform to current standards and procedures as outlined by *Safety-Wise*.
- 4.2 A certified First Aider and an adult who has had Girl Scout Troop Camp Training or comparable training must accompany troops on camping trips.
- 4.3 Age-level travel approval guidelines:
 - Daisy: Within 60-mile radius of their city or 120-mile radius with a family member
 - Brownie: Limited to a 300 mile radius of Council boundaries
 - Junior: Within Council and neighboring states
 - Cadette: All continental states
 - Senior: All states and international travel
 - Ambassadors: All states and international travel
- 4.4 All trips outside the normal meeting place must be approved by the authorized Council personnel at least two weeks (three months for extended trips which require additional insurance and 1 year for international travel which requires additional insurance) prior to a trip or activity event. If timelines and guidelines are not adhered to, the trip will be postponed. If a trip or activity/event is denied and a trip taken, all insurance is void and the leader's position will be in jeopardy. Activities and events are not approved until troop representative signature and authorized Council signatures are obtained.
- 4.5 Activities and event forms submitted during non business hours will not be recognized as submitted until the next business day.

- 4.6 All assisting adults must have a volunteer application, code of conduct, and background check on file with Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest and be a registered member of GSUSA.
- 4.7 All drivers must be over the age of 21 and able to provide a current driver's license and proof of insurance for the vehicle to be used.
- 4.8 Adults may not be considered for the adult/girl ratio if they have a tagalong with them.
 - 4.8.1 A tagalong is defined as a child that is five years old or younger. Children over the age of five and not registered in the troop / group will not be permitted to participate in Girl Scout troop / group trips. All children not registered as Girl Scouts are not covered by the Girl Scout insurance and thus create an uninsured risk of liability for the council and its members.
- 4.9 No more than two adults with tagalongs (i.e. leaders or co-leaders) may accompany the troop / group trip or activity.
- 4.10 For troop / group trips outside of the local area or council wide event, no more than two adults beyond what is required by *Safety-Wise* for adult/girl ratio may accompany troop / group on trips.

5. Money Management / Money-Earning

"All money raised, or earned and other assets received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be authorized by a Girl Scout Council or Girl Scouts of the United States of America and used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Such monies and other assets become the property of and are administered by the Girl Scout Council or Girl Scout of the USA. Such assets are not the property of individuals, geographic units, or communities within a Girl Scout Council."

(Found in the 1997 edition of the GSUSA Blue Book of Basic Documents, page 24.)

5.1 Bank Accounts

- 5.1.1 All troop bank accounts, including savings accounts for older girls, must be in their local communities, addressed to their local program center or an adult signer on the account, and in the name of "Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest", "Girl Scout troop # _____". The bank statements will be distributed to their respective troops. Every age level, whether troop or group must have their own bank account. All troop bank accounts require two (2) authorized signers, not from the same family. Three (3) authorized signers on a signature card are recommended. Two (2) signatures are required on each check. Authorized signers must be adults registered with the troop.
- 5.1.2 Service unit bank accounts require two (2) authorized signers, not from the same family. Four (4) authorized signers on the signature card are recommended. Two (2) signatures are required on each check. Authorized signers must be adults registered as service unit team members.

- 5.1.3 Service units / troops must submit an annual year-end financial report to the Council by the fourth Thursday of June.
 - 5.1.3.1 Copies of all receipts or invoices for money transactions, including but not limited to cash withdrawal must be submitted with the end of year financial paperwork.
- 5.1.4 In the event a troop / group disbands, money raised, earned, or received in the name of Girl Scouting becomes the property of Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest.
 - 5.1.4.1 If members of a disbanded troop / group join other troop(s), the funds will be apportioned and disbursed to their new troop(s).
 - 5.4.1.2 If no members join another troop, the funds will be designated for council financial assistance after a period of one year.
- 5.1.5 In the event a troop / group disbands, equipment purchased with money raised, earned, or received in the name of Girl Scouting becomes the property of the council for distribution to other council troops / groups.

5.2 Sponsorships

- 5.2.1 Sponsorships assist troops in many ways. A sponsor may provide a meeting place, books, uniforms, or financial assistance. A troop may have one financial sponsor per year, e.g., an organization, service club, business firm, religious group, etc.
 - 5.2.1.1 A troop / group may accept a sponsorship of no more than \$500 per year in cash.
 - 5.2.1.2 Cash sponsorships should be made out to Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest and submitted to the Council for processing, after which a check will be sent to the troop / service unit.
 - 5.2.1.3 Finding a sponsor is adult driven; girls do not participate in soliciting a sponsor.
 - 5.2.1.4 A Troop Sponsorship Form must be completed and submitted to the Council.

5.3 Money-Earning

- 5.3.1 Girl Scout troops are financed by dues, money-earning activities, and a share of money earned through council-sponsored product sale programs (Refer to *Safety-Wise*).
- 5.3.2 Service unit / troop financing and money-earning activities must conform to the standards and finance practices as outlined by the Council Finance policies and in accordance with *Safety-Wise*.

- 5.3.3 All registered Girl Scouts shall be allowed to participate in the product sales of Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest provided they adhere to the Council's Product Sales guidelines.
- 5.3.4 The troop earnings portion of the Fall Product and Cookie Programs sold by individual girl members / Juliettes will be managed by the Council.
- 5.3.5 Money-earning projects are valuable program activities for girls. Planning and participating in money-earning projects gives girls the opportunity to learn important skills, such as budgeting, goal setting, good business practices, and public relations.
 - 5.3.5.1 Raffles, drawings, games of chance, the direct solicitation of cash, and the sale or endorsement of commercial products are examples of inappropriate money-earning activities (Refer to *Safety-Wise*).
- 5.3.6 Service units / troops may not conduct any money-earning project other than the Fall Product and Cookie Programs, unless it is to support planned special projects, such as an extended trip, community service project, etc.
 - 5.3.6.1 All girls participating in money-earning projects must be registered members of Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest.
 - 5.3.6.2 Troops must participate in Fall Product and Cookie Sales Programs to be considered for any other money-earning project.
- 5.3.7 A money-earning project application and budget must be submitted to the Membership Manager for review and approval by authorized Council personnel at least three (3) weeks before the money-earning event.
 - 5.3.7.1 The Council will take into consideration Council fundraising activities such as Product Sale Programs or other Council Campaigns.
 - 5.3.7.2 The event may not coincide with a local United Way campaign black-out period.
 - 5.3.7.3 Incomplete applications or applications submitted past the deadline will be denied. Applications may be resubmitted in accordance with the above policies.
 - 5.3.7.4 A service unit / troop conducting an approved money-earning project must submit an evaluation report on the project to the Council within two (2) weeks after the project. Failure to submit a report may result in denial of future money-earning projects.

6. Child Abuse

- 6.1 A person who suspects child abuse can be held criminally liable in the state of New Mexico and the state of Texas if he or she fails to report such information to the local authorities.

- 6.2 Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest requires all volunteers and staff to immediately report suspected cases of child abuse to the Chief Executive Officer or the Board Chair and the local law enforcement agency in which the child resides within 24 hours of receipt of the information.

The New Mexico Abuse Hotline is:
(800) 797-3260

The Texas Abuse Hotline is:
(800) 252-5400

- 6.3 If the abuse occurred during a Girl Scout activity, an incident report must be filed with the Council.