

# CREDENTIALS (SEE CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE VIII)

## CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP

A certificate of membership is issued to each girl or adult who meets the requirements for membership. Credentials that the National Board of Directors issues, other than the certificate of membership, include the Girl Scout council charter, the Girl Scout license, and the federation certificate (not in use at present).

Girl Scouts of the United States of America authorizes USA Girl Scouts Overseas in communities outside the U.S.A. where there is no chartered Girl Scout council. These troops are known collectively as USA Girl Scouts Overseas.

## MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

**Membership as a Girl Scout** is granted to any girl who:

- has made the Girl Scout Promise<sup>8</sup> and accepted the Girl Scout Law;
- has paid annual membership dues;
- meets applicable membership standards.

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

- accepts the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution;
- has paid annual or lifetime membership dues;
- meets applicable membership standards.

**Lifetime membership as a Girl Scout adult** is granted to any person (18 years of age or older or a high school graduate or equivalent) who:

- accepts the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution;
- has paid lifetime membership dues of 25 times the annual membership dues; lifetime membership dues of 13 times the annual membership dues shall be offered to any girl who is a registered Senior Girl Scout at the time of her high school graduation or equivalent, and be available to her before the girl's current membership expires;
- meets applicable membership standards.

## APPLICABLE MEMBERSHIP STANDARDS

Membership standards are not credentials. They are included here only for ready reference in relation to membership requirements. Applicable membership standards are as follows:

### Girl Scout Membership Levels

Kindergarten–1	Girl Scout Daisy
Grade 2–3	Girl Scout Brownie
Grade 4–5	Girl Scout Junior
Grade 6–8	Girl Scout Cadette
Grade 9–10	Girl Scout Senior
Grade 11–12	Girl Scout Ambassador

### Girl Scout Adults

Minimum age—18 years of age or a high school graduate or equivalent.

## MEMBERSHIP DUES AND PROCEDURES FOR REGISTRATION

In order to be a member of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States of America, a person must register with and pay annual or lifetime membership dues to Girl Scouts of the United States of America. This is done locally through the Girl Scout council or USA Girl Scouts Overseas committee with which she or he is affiliated or through national headquarters if she or he has no council affiliation. Girl Scout councils account for membership dues in the custodian fund and transmit to GSUSA within two months of receipt all monies received for membership dues. These funds are not to be invested by the council for the purpose of generating income for the council.

The **Girl Scout membership year** is October 1 through September 30.

**New members** of Girl Scout troops/groups, both girls and adults, pay \$12\* when they initially become members of the Movement.

**Continuing members** of Girl Scout troops/groups, both girls and adults, pay \$12\* when they renew their membership at the beginning of each membership year.

**Nontroop-affiliated girl and adult members** on both local council and national levels also pay \$12\* dues each membership year.

\* By action taken by the National Board of Directors on January 20, 2012, Girl Scout annual membership dues are raised to \$15, effective with the 2014 membership year, beginning October 1, 2013.

24 8. See page 23, "Flexibility in Wording for Spiritual Beliefs in the Girl Scout Promise."

**Lifetime members** pay 25 times the annual membership dues at the time they become lifetime members.

When a member transfers from one troop/group or position to another or to another local council, the member does not re-register until her/his current membership expires at the beginning of the next membership year.

The national organization determines the system and method for registering members through Girl Scout councils. Each Girl Scout council verifies the accuracy of the troop/group and/or individual member information and forwards it with the membership dues directly to national headquarters.

National Board members, National Board standing committee members, other national volunteers, and other adult members who have their contact only with the national organization use registration forms received from the national organization. They forward the completed registration forms and dues directly to national headquarters.

USA Girl Scouts Overseas use registration forms received from the national organization. They also forward the completed registration forms and dues directly to national headquarters.

The membership dues of one person may not be transferred to the credit of another person. Membership dues are not refundable.

Adults serving in more than one Girl Scout position pay membership dues only once annually.

## GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL CHARTER

A Girl Scout council charter is a credential issued by the National Board of Directors of Girl Scouts of the USA in accordance with the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA, Article VII and Article VIII. A Girl Scout council charter defines the relationship between a council and Girl Scouts of the USA. It binds the elements of Girl Scouting across the nation into one large and cohesive Girl Scout Movement and gives us a common purpose.

A Girl Scout council charter is issued by the National Board of Directors of Girl Scouts of the USA to an organization exclusively devoted to the Girl Scout Movement in the United States, granting it the right to develop, manage, and maintain Girl Scouting in a specified area of jurisdiction, which is established by the National Board of Directors, and to call itself a Girl Scout council. A Girl Scout council charter is issued for no more than four years.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR A GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL CHARTER

**To receive and retain a charter, a Girl Scout council agrees:**

- to subscribe to the purpose, adhere to the policies, and be guided by the standards of Girl Scouts of the USA.
- to develop, manage, and maintain Girl Scouting throughout the areas of its jurisdiction, in such manner and subject to such limitations as prescribed in the Constitution, Bylaws, and policies of Girl Scouts of the USA.
- to participate in the activities and business of Girl Scouts of the USA.
- to make reports of its work to Girl Scouts of the USA; pay its charter fee, have at all times a registered board of directors; and make sure that all persons affiliating with the council meet individual membership requirements.

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## CONDITIONS FOR A GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL CHARTER

**The work of a Girl Scout Council shall be based on the charter criteria.**

The charter Criteria are:

- A chartered Girl Scout council maximizes delivery of the Girl Scout mission by engaging and supporting volunteers to provide a nationally consistent quality leadership experience that achieves positive girl outcomes and reaches increasing numbers of girls.
- A chartered Girl Scout council advances the movement through strategic governance and leadership that employ effective systems and structures to deliver the Girl Scout mission.
- A chartered Girl Scout council advances organizational impact by growing resources, effectively promoting a unified national brand and standing up for girls on issues that affect their well-being.

**In addition, a Girl Scout Council must:**

- comply with federal, state, and local laws as well as Girl Scouts of the USA policies.
- regularly review and file with Girl Scouts of the USA bylaws, articles of incorporation, and board-adopted strategic priorities.

- provide the following documents to Girl Scouts of the USA:

Audit and Management Letter	Annually
990 Form	Annually
Current Board Member List	Update when changes occur
Board Minutes/Board Packets	After each board meeting
Name of CEO and Board Chair	When there are changes
Headquarters Address	When there are changes

- forward membership dues to Girl Scouts of the USA in a timely manner (within two months of receipt).
- participate in an annual review process with Girl Scouts of the USA and implement any agreed upon follow-up.

**The Charter, when issued to a Girl Scout council, will confer the following rights:**

- the right to be identified with the Girl Scout Movement in the United States of America, which is directed and coordinated by Girl Scouts of the USA, a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.
- the right to use the words "Girl Scouts" as part of the designation of the council (whether or not incorporated).
- the right to use Girl Scout program and the right to use Girl Scout insignia in connection with that program.
- the right to use the trademark "Girl Scouts" and the service mark as defined in Girl Scouts of the USA's *Graphic Guidelines*, on products or merchandise obtained and used for the day-to-day operations of the council, including stationery, office supplies, items with council and camp names, and symbols, brochures, newsletters, and such items as Girl Scouts of the USA may hereinafter designate. Any other use of marks or insignia owned by Girl Scouts of the USA on products or merchandise must be approved by Girl Scouts of the USA. This includes but is not limited to merchandise to be sold by the council. This right is nonexclusive and nontransferable.
- the right to develop, manage, and maintain Girl Scouting throughout the jurisdiction of the council.
- the right to receive services from Girl Scouts of the USA.
- the right to respond to requests for proposals (RFPs) that are sent out from time to time by Girl Scouts of the USA.
- the right to raise funds in the name of Girl Scouts within the council's jurisdiction.

- the right, through delegates elected to the National Council of Girl Scouts of the USA, to participate in the business of Girl Scouts of the USA.

**In accepting a Charter, a Girl Scout Council assumes the following obligations**

- We understand and agree that, in carrying out the terms and other obligations of the charter, we will act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of Girl Scouts of the USA and that the rights and responsibilities granted in the charter are limited to the aforesaid Constitution and Bylaws.
- We also understand and agree that the rights and responsibilities granted by the charter cannot be delegated, nor can the jurisdiction for which the charter is sought be changed without the written authorization of Girl Scouts of the USA.
- By agreeing to adhere to the policies of Girl Scouts of the USA, we understand and agree to operate as a council in accordance with and to be limited by policies so identified, published, and distributed to councils by Girl Scouts of the USA, accepting them as binding on the council, on all its members, officers, employees, and those affiliating with it.
- By agreeing to be guided by the standards of Girl Scouts of the USA, we understand that as a council we have committed ourselves and those affiliating with us to follow and be guided by the standards published from time to time by Girl Scouts of the USA.
- We understand and agree that it is the council's responsibility to see that each person affiliating with it meets at all times the individual membership requirements established by Girl Scouts of the USA, and to register with Girl Scouts of the USA all girls and adults participating in Girl Scouting within its jurisdiction, whether in pathways or in any other capacity, except those adults working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity.
- We understand and agree that the charter, if accepted may be revoked or terminated by Girl Scouts of the USA under the provisions of its Constitution, that the rights conferred by the charter cease to exist upon termination or revocation of the charter, and that upon revocation or termination of the charter, the council can no longer and, therefore, will not exercise any of the rights granted to it therein.
- We understand and agree that the council's articles of incorporation and bylaws which are attached to the Girl Scout Council Charter Agreement are a part of this agreement. Furthermore, we agree that any changes or amendments to these documents will be filed with Girl Scouts of the USA in a timely manner.

# REWRITTEN

- We understand and agree to pay the council's charter fee as indicated on the Girl Scout Council Charter Agreement.

## PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND ISSUING GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL CHARTERS

The council is issued a charter, and the charter is renewed subject to the steps outlined in the charter procedures:

1. Council engages in the Strategic Learning process or a similar strategy process resulting in selection of key priorities and the development of a tactical plan and goals that are in alignment with GSUSA priorities and goals.

Key components of the strategy process include:

- Externally focused situational analysis to learn the status of the council as it compares to the needs and interests of girls, its competitors, nonprofit sector trends, community priorities, and needs.
- Full analysis of all internal data including financial, girl participation, volunteer engagement, and community support.
- Alignment of systems, processes and resources to support resulting priorities.
- Ongoing evaluation of progress with the ability to make mid-course corrections as needed.

2. The council completes an Annual Review to evaluate its performance compared to key national benchmarks and its own goals. The review is completed in collaboration with a national staff member and involves a review of progress on charter measures and council goals. Results of this review are reported to the council Board of Directors and forwarded to GSUSA to be included in a report to the National Board.

3. Once every three years, the council compiles information from the three previous years and takes the Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT). This compiled information is used as input to the strategy development process. As in all other years, the review is completed in collaboration with a member of the national staff, and a full report is provided to the council Board of Directors and forwarded to GSUSA.

4. Following action by the National Board of Directors every three years to reaffirm a council's charter, a letter is sent from the National Secretary to the Chair of the Board and the CEO of the council confirming this action. GSUSA processes the charter agreement and a charter certificate is sent to the council.

5. If multiple key indicators show shortfalls or negative trends, an On-Site Review may be initiated by the council or GSUSA to review key indicators and identify action plans and support needed. The review team can include national staff, national

volunteers, and council representatives from the council being reviewed. The review team delivers an in-person report to the council Board of Directors following the review. A written report of the action plan is forwarded to GSUSA.

6. A Viability Review may be initiated by Girl Scouts of the USA if there is evidence or reason to believe one or more of the following circumstances exists:

- a. Action that threatens to undermine the mission and/or damage the brand.
- b. Risk of financial failure or failure to meet financial obligations.
- c. Corporate malfeasance.
- d. Disregard for mission-critical GSUSA policies, priorities and goals or other direction given by the National Board or CEO.
- e. Governance system in violation of US law, council bylaws, and/or GSUSA policies; and is not consistent, visible, or effective.
- f. Performance against national benchmarks and council goals continues to be consistently and critically below standard after an On-Site Review has been conducted.
- g. Any act or omission, or any course of conduct that, in the opinion of the National Board of Directors, is not in the best interests of Girl Scouting.

## PROCEDURES FOR A CHARTER VIABILITY REVIEW

The review can begin with a minimum of five (5) days notice. The communication concerning the review will include the specific concerns that need to be addressed and a timeline for the review. If circumstances warrant, the Viability Review can be initiated immediately. The Viability Review Process includes the following steps.

1. Following National Board action, GSUSA staff advises the council that a Viability Review will take place. GSUSA defines the scope of the review based on presenting issues and appoints an appropriate review team which will include council and national personnel. The review team is constituted based on the circumstances warranting the review. The council shall cooperate with the Viability Review and provide requested information.

2. Results of the review, including the prescribed action plan, are shared in a face-to-face meeting with the council Board Chair, CEO and subsequently with the council Board of Directors. The Viability Review team presents the findings with the expectation that the council takes immediate corrective action. In most cases Girl Scouts of the USA will develop the corrective action plan.

**3.** GSUSA monitors the execution of the prescribed action plan to ensure progress. Possible monitoring actions include:

- a. Monthly review meeting (on site/phone) with a member of the National Staff to evaluate progress.
- b. Placement of a monitor in/with the council to provide on-the-ground support to the Board and the staff and to measure the report progress.
- c. Immediate targeted, onsite support, as needed to key functions, i.e., staff development for membership staff, financial management and can include placement of interim staff in key roles.
- d. Provide documentation to GSUSA in a timeframe prescribed.

**4.** If there is a cause for urgent action, GSUSA may request an immediate meeting of the council Board of Directors or take other appropriate action to address the situation and agree on an action plan for moving forward.

### PROCEDURES FOR NON-ISSUANCE OR REVOCATION OF CHARTERS

**1.** The National Board of Directors takes action on the recommendations of the CEO of Girl Scouts of the USA, if any of the following circumstances occurs in a council:

- A. Deficiency in respect to its resources, finances, personnel, administrators, manner of supervising the program, effectiveness in its attempt to reach and serve all girls within its jurisdiction or otherwise, such that, in the opinion of the National Board of Directors, it appears that such council is unable adequately to develop, manage, or maintain Girl Scouting within its jurisdiction; or
- B. Any act or omission, or any course of conduct that, in the opinion of the National Board of Directors, is not in the best interests of Girl Scouting; or
- C. Failure to comply with any policy, credential standard, or directive issued or established by or under the authority of the National Board of Directors; or
- D. Violation of any term, condition, or requirement of its charter.

**2.** In the event that charter revocation or non-issuance is contemplated, notice of reason will be provided to the council along with a reasonable time period for response. A time and location will be provided where the council can review and discuss the issue(s) with a team representing the National Board.

**3.** Following the meeting, the National Board will in its sole discretion, take action that it deems appropriate including revocation or non-issuance and will communicate the action to the council with follow-up measures. The decision of the National Board shall be final.

### STANDARDS FOR A GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL JURISDICTION

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The requirements of local council charters are established by the National Council. The National Board administers the requirements for such credentials and may establish standards, procedures, and interpretations regarding requirements. The National Board sets council jurisdictions and has determined that it is in the best interests of Girl Scouting to establish minimum criteria for council jurisdictions except as prohibited by law. These criteria include an available girl population in the range of 100,000 or more and an aggregate household income in the range of \$11 billion or more except in cases where these criteria cannot be met even within an entire state or states. Other criteria which will be considered include regional identification, diverse population, anticipated population growth or decline, established transportation patterns, state or municipal boundaries, geographic barriers, and media markets. The standard will enable local councils to have sufficient resources to support membership growth and diversity, differentiated program opportunities, and specialized council staff.

Except as provided above, all councils who do not meet the basic jurisdictional requirements will be expected to work in close collaboration with their neighbors in a way that brings benefit to all. Annual charter-related conversations will be driven by each council's performance against charter criteria and standards and by work with neighboring councils to develop joint programs, share services, and/or collaborate in a way that improves Girl Scouting in each of the jurisdictions. The National Board retains the right to initiate merger proceedings in any jurisdiction when the National Board deems it appropriate in the best interests of Girl Scouting and will, on a case-by-case basis, work with councils that do not meet the jurisdictional requirements to develop plans for jurisdictional changes as necessary and in accordance with the law.

### PROCEDURES FOR CHANGING A GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL JURISDICTION<sup>9</sup>

In all matters concerning jurisdictional lines, the National Board of Directors has the authority to make the final decision, either during the term of a charter or upon issuance of a new charter.

<sup>9</sup> All actions taken must be consistent with state law.

## SECTION I

When two or more Girl Scout councils agree to combine jurisdictions to create a new council:

1. Each council's board of directors must approve the decision to engage in the jurisdictional change, which must be carried out in compliance with the council's bylaws and the laws of the state in which the council is incorporated.
2. The councils develop a plan and timeline for carrying out the proposed changes in jurisdiction.
3. Each council's board of directors must vote on the plan of merger, consolidation, or other corporate reorganization and distribution of assets, and refer it to the council's membership for a vote according to the laws of the state of incorporation.
4. Following the completion of the process to establish the new council, an Application for a Charter for a New Girl Scout Council is submitted to Girl Scouts of the USA for action by the National Board of Directors.
5. Following approval of the National Board of Directors, Girl Scouts of the USA processes the application, makes the necessary changes in the official records, and notifies each council chair of the board and CEO of the approval of changes in jurisdiction. The councils notify their membership of the changes in jurisdiction.

## SECTION II

When two or more Girl Scout councils agree to transfer a part of one council jurisdiction to another council:

1. Each council's board of directors must approve the jurisdictional change.
2. An Application for Change in Girl Scout Council Jurisdiction is completed by each council and sent to Girl Scouts of the USA.
3. Girl Scouts of the USA records the changes in jurisdiction in the official records. Notification of the decision related to the changes of jurisdiction is sent to board chairs of the councils involved. The councils shall notify their membership of the changes in jurisdictions.

**Note:** This process may be initiated by a single Girl Scout council, by several Girl Scout councils together, or by an individual community within a Girl Scout council. If an individual community within a Girl Scout council wishes to be removed from the council's jurisdiction and added to that of another council, the community initiates the request by sending it, in writing, to its own council board chair.

## SECTION III

The following steps are taken if or when agreement cannot be reached between the boards of directors of the Girl Scout councils to combine or transfer jurisdiction:

1. A board chair of at least one affected council must notify Girl Scouts of the USA that their boards are unable to reach agreement on the combination or transfer of jurisdiction.
2. A national team, including a National Operational Volunteer, will invite all affected councils to provide information on how the requested change will impact the delivery of Girl Scout program. Community leaders from the affected councils also may be invited to provide their reaction to the requested change. A summary of the data collected will be shared with each council board involved in the process.
3. Using the data provided from council and community sources, the national team will develop a recommendation for jurisdictional boundaries and forward it to the affected councils. The national team completes an Application for Change in Girl Scout Council Jurisdiction pursuant to the recommendations.
4. After the Application for Change in Girl Scout Council Jurisdiction is completed, the CEO of Girl Scouts of the USA reviews the application and recommends action to the National Board of Directors.
5. Following action by the National Board of Directors, Girl Scouts of the USA records the changes in jurisdiction in the official records of Girl Scouts of the USA. The action of the National Board of Directors shall be considered final. Notification is sent to each affected council board chair. The councils shall notify their membership of the change in jurisdiction.

## PROCEDURE FOR CHANGING A GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL NAME

To select or change its name, a council should follow the procedure outlined below (Girl Scouts of the USA will provide guidelines for a council to select or change its name):

1. The council submits a proposed name (and up to two alternates) to Girl Scouts of the USA for review.
2. Girl Scouts of the USA notifies the council that the name(s) are consistent with the guidelines. The council starts proper legal proceedings to effect the change in name in the state in which the council is incorporated.
3. When the council receives permission or approval from its state of incorporation to use the new corporate name, the council notifies Girl Scouts of the USA that the corporate name has been approved by the state on a specified date and sends the amended articles of incorporation to Girl Scouts of the USA.

# REWRITTEN

## CRITERIA AND STANDARDS FOR AN EFFECTIVE GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL

The criteria and standards for an effective Girl Scout council are established by the National Board of Directors to delineate the way in which Girl Scout councils are expected to fulfill their charter requirements. Essential to the charter criteria and standards is the expectation that all Girl Scout councils fully support and promote the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. Leadership development is how we achieve our mission and is critical to the advancement and stewardship of the Girl Scout brand.

The criteria cover broad areas of a council's responsibility. Standards are developed to support and further define each criterion. They are the foundation on which the work of the council should be built. Measures have been developed to gauge performance and where appropriate, checklist items have been developed to further define both measures and standards.

### CRITERION I: MISSION DELIVERY

**A chartered Girl Scout council maximizes delivery of the Girl Scout mission by engaging and supporting volunteers to provide a nationally consistent quality leadership experience that achieves positive girl outcomes and reaches increasing numbers of girls.**

#### STANDARD 1

Girl program throughout the council provides the benefits of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and demonstrates the Girl Scout Promise and Law in action.

#### STANDARD 2

Based on a thorough understanding of the populations within its jurisdiction and consistent with its strategic priorities, the council attracts and retains an increasing number of girl members representing all segments of its population and geographic areas.

#### STANDARD 3

Using the National Program Portfolio, with enrichments that meet the needs and interests of girls in the jurisdiction, the council provides pathway options through which girls participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

#### STANDARD 4

Through a comprehensive volunteer management system the council attracts, develops/trains, and retains diverse volunteers who support the Girl Scout Mission and deliver program to girls.

#### STANDARD 5

Requirements that ensure the protection of the health, safety, and security of participants are evident in all program delivery, including program delivery using electronic means.

### CRITERION II: GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

**A chartered Girl Scout council advances the movement through strategic governance and leadership that employ effective systems and structures to deliver the Girl Scout mission.**

#### STANDARD 1

The council utilizes an integrated strategy development and management planning system to maximize its capacity to deliver on the Girl Scout mission.

#### STANDARD 2

The council actively seeks to strengthen the stakeholder involvement and interaction to ensure that the membership is involved in influencing major policy decisions and helping to set strategic direction.

#### STANDARD 3

The council has a board of directors and board development committee that is elected or appointed in a manner consistent with the bylaws, has the experience and skills necessary to provide leadership and direction to the council, and reflects the diversity of the jurisdiction.

#### STANDARD 4

The council board of directors ensures compliance with policies, standards, and procedures as related to its stewardship responsibilities.

#### STANDARD 5

The council fulfills its corporate obligations as required by local, state, and federal law, and through the rights and obligations defined in the Girl Scout council charter agreement.

# REWRITTEN



## **STANDARD 6**

The council's human resources policies and practices attract, develop, and retain employed staff reflecting all areas of its jurisdiction and all segments of its population.

## **CRITERION III: RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**A chartered Girl Scout council advances organizational impact by growing resources, effectively promoting a unified national brand and standing up for girls on issues that affect their well-being.**

## **STANDARD 1**

The council builds a culture of philanthropy by accepting and carrying out their responsibility to increase funds raised to support the council's work, and they do so using methods in keeping with Girl Scout policies and standards.

## **STANDARD 2**

The council board and management demonstrate financial leadership to provide for the perpetuation of Girl Scouting within its jurisdiction.

## **STANDARD 3**

The council leverages the Girl Scout Brand to educate and engage diverse audiences in support of the Girl Scout Mission.

## **STANDARD 4**

The council advocates individually, regionally, and as part of a national movement on issues that affect girls' well-being.