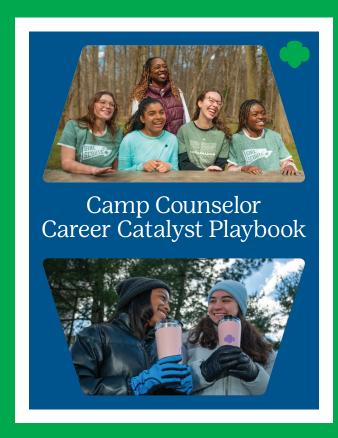
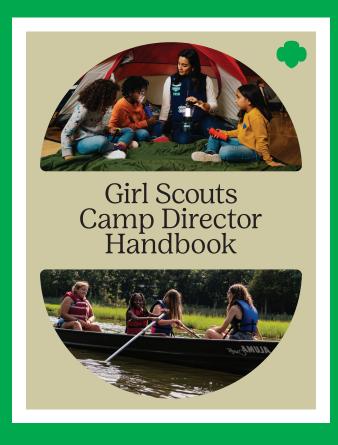




## Girl Scout Camp Resources







# Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Handbook for Girl Scouts



#### Welcome to Girl Scout camp!

We're excited to have you as part of Girl Scouts' counselor-in-training (CIT) program.

The CIT program has two levels—CIT 1 and CIT 2—which typically take about two weeks each to complete, giving you hands-on experience and training to become a Girl Scout camp counselor. Throughout, you'll fulfill the CIT program requirements and explore what it takes to be a counselor at camp, from caring for campers to leading activities. The requirements aim to build your skills in different areas of leadership within the camp setting—and this CIT handbook contains information to help you meet each one. Along the way, we hope you learn a lot, make new friends, and have some fun!

Your time as a CIT will be filled with good times, challenges, and opportunities for growth. A few things to have in mind at every turn:

- You are still a camper and under the supervision of camp **staff.** You should never be left alone with minors.
- Girl Scouts are always prepared. You will learn camp rules, emergency procedures, and the role you play in maintaining safety at camp.
- Communication is key! How you present yourself verbally and nonverbally (e.g., how you dress, your body language) matters and is an opportunity to show your leadership skills in action.
- Personal boundaries are important for you and younger campers. Displays of affection and physical contact are discouraged.





#### CIT Level 1

CIT 1s explore what being a counselor at Girl Scout camp is all about. As a CIT 1, you'll learn how to engage campers of all ages. You'll interview, observe, and assist camp staff; lead group activities including songs and games; and make a difference with other CITs. You'll be a role model for younger campers as you develop your leadership skills.



CIT 1 P	CIT 1 Program Breakdown	
Purpose	Requirements	
Prepare to become a camp counselor by being a role model to and assisting with group activities for younger campers	Live and work in a camp community by role modeling, fostering a sense of belonging, and taking care of yourself.	
	<b>2. Interview, observe, and assist camp staff</b> throughout five activity sessions, in order to understand different	
Skills You'll Develop	areas of camp.	
<ul><li>Positive behavior modeling</li><li>Game and activity leadership</li><li>Teamwork</li></ul>	<b>3. Practice and lead songs and games</b> daily with campers. Work with your CIT unit to develop a resource outlining songs and games.	
<ul><li>Problem solving</li><li>Accountability</li></ul>	<b>4. Do a service project with your CIT unit.</b> Leave your camp a better place than it was before, for example by pulling weeds, building a new buddy bench, or reorganizing an area of camp.	
	<b>5. Reflect on your experience</b> through daily self-reflection, group reflection, and staff evaluation at the end of camp.	

#### 1. Live and Work in a Camp Community

At camp, you're living, working, and having fun with others: in community with other CITs, as a role model supporting different camp units and camper activities, and as part of the camp-wide community.

This requirement emphasizes acting as a role model, working well with others, and helping to build an inclusive camp community no matter what you're doing—all while making sure you take care of YOU!

#### **Camp Traditions**

Traditions such as the Girl Scout Promise, final campfires, and other time-honored practices help shape the Girl Scout experience at camp. They can nurture a sense of togetherness and belonging among campers, CITs, and camp staff. As a CIT, you're responsible for helping carry out your camp's traditions. What are some traditions at your camp?



#### Being a Role Model for Younger Campers

Remember, other campers look up to you! Throughout the summer, campers will be observing what you say and how you act. You can show them how to have a great time at camp by:

- Focusing on the fun. You can show campers that often, no matter the circumstances, we can find something fun or enjoyable about an activity we're participating in. Focus on what's going well over what's not going well. If you demonstrate this perspective, campers are apt to as well.
- Offering support and comfort. You can help other campers feel safe and secure. When they see you handling a situation calmly, it can reassure and help them keep their nerves in check.
- Following instructions. When you listen to your camp counselors and staff, you set a powerful example, and other campers are more likely to do the same.
- Working collaboratively. We all need to work together as a team. When other campers see you cooperating with others, it reinforces their sense of unity and safety.
- Showing patience and understanding. Taking time to, for example, explain things to campers in ageappropriate ways that they can follow is worth a lot.

#### **Building a Culture of Belonging**

At camp, various situations may arise that require good communication skills to address conflict, uncomfortable feelings, or even happiness. Camp staff often create community contracts or circle practices to foster communication that supports a culture of belonging.

> A community circle can be used for all different purposes, including to debrief an activity or project, share favorite moments, process an event, or even,

campers' (and your own!) communication skills. You'll learn more about this and find team-building and camp-wide activities and ideas on page 14.

Team building helps build

Did You Know?

Community **Circles** 

in the case of restorative circles, resolve an issue. Everyone in the group has a role to play in circles, which might take place daily as a way for the group to touch base on events, challenges, and/or successes. Circles can vary in how they look and function, with group members sharing in sequence or following a popcorn or fishbowl style.

Community Contracts

A community contract is a set of guidelines a group agrees to follow. In the context of camp, it lays out expectations and establishes standards for accountability among campers and staff. After a community contract is made, it should be posted where the group can refer to it as issues arise and periodically to see if it needs to be updated.

#### Caring for Yourself at Camp

Two major skills that can help you care for yourself this summer are:

#### **Coping Skills**

Coping skills ground us in the present and can help us manage stressful situations. When done regularly, the behaviors become habits. Though what works best for you may vary, here are some techniques to try:

- Use a coping toolbox. Carry a set of small objects to help in times of distress. You might include objects such as fidgets, scented hand sanitizer, textured stickers, a small notebook, menthol lip balm, and puzzles. Noise-canceling headphones may help those who are sensitive to sound.
- Try a 5-4-3-2-1 mindfulness exercise. Take one or two deep breaths. Use your senses: list five things you see, four things you hear, three things you feel, two things you smell, and/or one thing you taste. This can help increase your awareness and stay present by redirecting your focus when you're anxious.
- Shake it out. If you're able, shake out your worries by slowly shaking out your right hand (say "one"), then your left hand (say "two"), then your right foot (say "three"), then your left foot (say "four"). Then repeat over and over, increasing the speed of your one-two-three-four until you can't go any faster!

Want more ideas? Try meditation or breathing exercises. Work on a crossword puzzle or Sudoku. Count backward from 100 by 7s. Dance around the room for one minute or the length of a song you know by heart. Name all the colors you see around you. List animals found in a zoo. Label objects in the room by their first letter, from A to Z.

#### Time Management

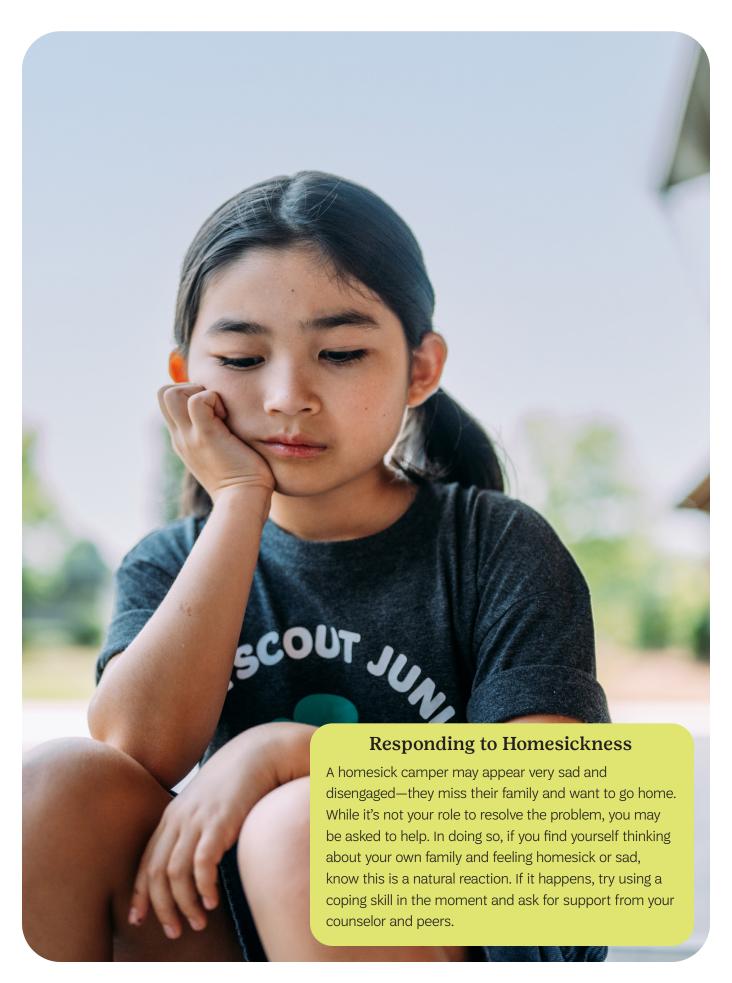
Camp staff know a lot about time management—how long it takes to get from one area to another, how long cleanup, setup, and breakdown takes, and how to effectively manage their time so activities run smoothly.

If you ever need help with time management, you might try to:

- Watch the time. A watch or timer can help you stay on track.
- **Keep to-do lists.** Keeping track of tasks is key. If you're feeling overwhelmed by the list, complete a simple task first. This can bring some relief and build momentum to help you tackle the big priorities.
- **Be flexible.** Things happen at camp! Be patient with yourself and others. Be realistic about what can be accomplished. Include buffer time to reduce obstacles and potential stress.
- **Set priorities.** When there's a lot to do and not enough time, it can help to evaluate your priorities. Consider which tasks must happen now and which can be postponed. A matrix like the one below can be helpful in determining clear short-term goals and planning immediate and long-term goals more effectively.
- **Ask for help.** Sometimes we feel overwhelmed because we're trying to do too much. Once you have identified your priorities, ask for someone to help you complete them, or to take on a small task so you don't have to worry about it!

#### **Priority Matrix**

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Do First	Do Next
Not Important	Do Later	Postpone



#### 2. Interview, Observe, and Assist Camp Staff

Camp staff are responsible for caring for a group of campers and leading them in activities, from arts and crafts to canoeing. This requirement is about experiencing what it takes to be a unit counselor (see the role's responsibilities to the right). Throughout the camp session, you'll need to work side-by-side with unit counselors and camp staff over five or more activity sessions. Through the five sessions:

1. Conduct one or more interviews with camp **staff.** Talk to camp staff about their career paths, and camp experiences.

#### 2. Observe two or more activity sessions.

Watch and learn! You're simply there to see and understand what the staff member is doing-not to assist.

#### 3. Assist with two or more activity sessions.

Know what's expected, about any Safety Activity Checkpoints or other safety requirements, and how the area is set up. Note that camp staff may evaluate your performance.



#### Sample Unit Counselor **Job Description**

As a Unit Counselor, you'll be responsible for supervising campers while helping them learn life skills and participate in camp activities. Your responsibilities will include but are not limited to:

- Creating and implementing camp programs and activities
- Supervising Girl Scout campers who may range from 5 to 17 years old
- Working with the camp staff team to uphold camp standards, maintain the cleanliness and neatness of camp, and record daily and weekly paperwork

Candidates must be comfortable working and living outdoors, be dedicated to child development, enjoy problem solving, work well with others, and have good energy for the role.

#### After each session, reflect on what you **experienced.** For example:

- What preparation (materials, setup, etc.) was needed for the activity or for camp staff's role?
- What went well during the activity? What could be improved for next time?
- What did you learn from camp staff about their role? What do they do to lead the activity and/or in their role? Did they share any tips or advice?
- If campers were part of the activity, were they engaged? Were there any problems—and if so, how were they managed?
- If you assisted, how did you perform? What's something you did well? How might you improve?
- What did you learn that you'd like to explore more?
- What questions do you have?

#### 3. Practice and Lead Songs and Games

Every camper at Girl Scout camp is a Girl Scout, and camp staff bring the Girl Scout camp experience to life.

This requirement is about understanding what it means to be a camper at Girl Scout camp, including what's developmentally appropriate for each age of participant in the camp setting. Throughout the camp session, this knowledge can sharpen your sense of what campers need and how to support them as you lead them in songs and games. You'll also create a song and game box with your CIT unit. After camp, this is a resource you can use as a CIT 2, counselor, or in any kind of career involving childcare.

#### Supporting Campers of All Ages

Girl Scouts are ready for fun, friendship, and new adventures at camp. They look at our world and take action to change it for the better. They develop the skills and confidence to say "I know I can do this!" So how does it happen? It's all part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), and it's what makes Girl Scout camp a unique experience.

Learn more about the GSLE below and what it looks like at each Girl Scout level on the following pages.



#### The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

#### What Girl Scouts Do (A Variety of Activities)

**Discover:** They find out who they are, what they care about, and how to use their unique talents.

**Connect:** They collaborate with others, both locally and globally, to learn and expand their horizons.

**Take Action:** They do what Girl Scouts always do: make the world a better place.

#### **How They Do It (The Girl Scout Processes)**

Girl-led: Girl Scouts follow their own lead, no matter their age. From selecting badges to organizing activities, Girl Scouts follow their dreams and grow their skills—and the confidence that comes with that.

**Learning by doing:** Hands-on activities are fun, but they also empower Girl Scouts to shape their experience. Girl Scouts unlock their "I got this" attitude and discover they can always try again.

**Cooperative learning:** Girl Scouts understand the power of friends you can learn and grow with. Teamwork and collaboration can help with any challenge that comes their way.

#### Who They Do It With (Supportive Adults and Peers)

With the help of supportive adults and older peers like you who help bring these three unique processes to life, campers try new things and see how good it feels to lead from the heart.

#### The Daisy Girl Scout Experience at Camp: K-1 (Ages 5-6)



#### Supportive Adults (& CITs!) **Girl Scout Processes** Variety of Activities ■ Are curious, imaginative, and ■ View their camp staff and ■ Show independence by going CITs as caring role models, active. to camp. authority figures, and "fun ■ Want to get outdoors, try new ■ Are learning group purveyors." things, be creative, and make cooperation, sharing skills, and friends. ■ Are generally comfortable with what it means to be part of a **Daisies** direction and clear rules. team. ■ Take longer getting ready, ■ Love and learn best from moving from place to place, ■ Can be easily frightened by and eating. being alone, the dark, and physical and participatory animals. activities and games. ■ Need time to rest and recover. ■ May need help understanding ■ Understand some letters and what they need. numbers ■ Plan a mix of outdoor, make ■ Provide clear direction. ■ Engage Daisies with a variety believe, and other camp ongoing guidance, and conflict of quick, participatory activities that keep them activities. resolution support. Staff and CITs creative and active. ■ Introduce GS traditions, songs, ■ Listen to campers' feelings and games to build spirit, and stories with interest, and ■ Help them to choose what to sisterhood, and belonging. reassure them that they're safe. ■ Include transition time, ■ Have them work together countdowns for tasks, and ■ Make time to address basic in small groups or one large needs (e.g., water breaks, rest (nap or quiet time). group. bathroom stops).

#### The Brownie Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 2-3 (Ages 7-8)



#### Variety of Activities

#### Supportive Adults (& CITs!)

#### **Girl Scout Processes**

## ■ Want to try new things and learn skills with friends.

- Are growing and ready for more physical activities.
- Love to build and experiment.
- Want to feel accomplished in what they do.
- Are developing a sense of self and their interests.
- Need and welcome guidance.
- Want to behave well, and can take direction and complete tasks.
- Are deepening their friendships.

- Are taking initiative, especially with tasks like dressing and grooming.
- Are starting to see others' points of view but are still largely focused on themselves.
- Perform well through organized, hands-on activities with friends.

#### Include badges and activities that are active, moderate in duration, and focused on trying new things.

- Explore all camp offerings, including horseback riding, canoeing, swimming, and large group games.
- Encourage campers to try new foods, and teach things like rolling sleeping bags and shoelace-tying tricks.
- Include time to rest and reset.

- Provide clear expectations.
- Help campers make decisions and set goals. (Try a checklist or kaper chart!)
- When something doesn't go as planned, assure campers they still learned something!
- Support the group's social dynamics, but also encourage new connections, collaboration, and traditions that build sisterhood.
- Encourage "bite-sized" choices and multiple opportunities for leadership.
- Have campers work in pairs and small groups.
- Do activities that emphasize "we" instead of "me" to build cooperation and teamwork.
- Support routines and give reminders, especially for wake-up and bedtime.

# Staff and CITs

Brownies

#### The Junior Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 4-5 (Ages 9-10)



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	Variety of Activities	Supportive Adults (& CITs!)	Girl Scout Processes
	Want to be busy, learn new things, and grow.	Are getting closer to or entering puberty.	Are developing a deeper sense of self and others.
	Can stay engaged for longer periods of time.	■ Can identify and monitor their basic needs yet are still too	Are learning independence and how to lead others.
Juniors	Have the fine and gross motor skills for sports and skill building.	young to fully self-supervise.  • Are developing their own opinions but are self- and	<ul> <li>Are silly and childlike while also responsible and thoughtful.</li> </ul>
L	Have an understanding of the world that has expanded beyond themselves.	group-conscious. They want a best friend and to be part of a group.	<ul> <li>May be nervous about what others think and sensitive to criticism.</li> </ul>
		Look up to staff, CITs, and older campers.	
	■ Encourage campers to try new things and follow their	■ Help campers explore independence and feel	■ Encourage campers to make decisions and lead.
	interests.	supported to try and fail.	■ Use brainstorming games to
Staff and CITs	<ul> <li>Try physical activities such as zip lines, horseback riding, and</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Listen, ask questions, and be mindful of campers' needs.</li></ul>	get everyone to share their opinions.
and	canoeing.	■ Support them in navigating	■ Encourage campers to
aff	<ul> <li>Earn badges and incorporate service.</li> </ul>	friendships and resolving conflicts as group dynamics	persevere through challenges.
St	■ Be goofy as a way to inspire	shift.	<ul> <li>Offer various opportunities for leadership.</li> </ul>
	campers' love of camp!	<ul> <li>Still share reminders about personal hygiene, cleanliness, and routines.</li> </ul>	

#### The Cadette Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 6-8 (Ages 11-13)



#### Variety of Activities

#### Supportive Adults (& CITs!)

#### **Girl Scout Processes**

#### ■ Are ready to go, seek new challenges, and explore.

- Can experience more that Girl Scouts has to offer, like field trips, overnight travel, and outdoor adventures.
- Learn best by diving in and doing things themselves, which they very much want to do.
- Are undergoing physical and emotional changes with puberty.
- Want independence but need an authority figure to guide them.
- Value the opinions of their peer group more than those of adults.
- Are anxious about fitting in, especially as romantic relationships may begin.

- Are ready to lead yet often choose activities to please the group (not actually what interests them).
- Are self-focused—most aware of themselves.
- Thrive in a supportive group of friends who help inform their self-image and views.

#### ■ Explore all of camp, such as climbing adventures, kayaking, and backpacking overnight.

- Build in time for informal discussions among campers.
- Give encouragement and honest praise. Role-model your enthusiasm for camp!
- Be supportive of campers in different phases of change, for example by offering private spaces for dressing, validating feelings, and helping campers regulate their emotions.
- Offer healthy snacks between meals and encourage campers to get enough sleep.
- Involve the group in proactively setting rules and boundaries.

- Involve campers in group decisions, activity planning, and problem solving.
- Encourage campers to work with people outside their usual group.
- Avoid activities that may fuel comparison or require physical competition.

# Staff and CITs

Cadettes

#### **Leading Songs**

Girl Scouts sing at camp for the pure joy of it! Singing happens at mealtime, when doing dishes, while hiking, in celebration, and around the campfire. There are songs to grow team spirit, to quiet campers, and for every final campfire.

#### **Tips for Song Leading**

- Song choice matters. Lead songs and games you love! Incorporate songs that add magic and memory making to moments of fun, friendship, and celebration. Consider a song's appropriateness (message, language, culture, tempo), and never use songs to tease or punish others.
- Change it up! Don't overuse songs—send campers home with a whole cadre of new songs to sing. Use songs to fill time gaps, for example when waiting for an activity to start.
- **Be prepared.** Know the words and tune of each song and have a few extras at the ready. If you want others to help lead, let them know ahead of time. When possible, share the song's history or origin.
- **Sing confidently.** Sing strong and be confident in your voice. Most importantly, HAVE FUN!
- Use a teaching method. Check out some ideas below.



Call and Response	Visual Aids	Break It Down	Actions or Movements	Repetition	Interactive Games
Sing the song all the way through. Then sing a line for the group to repeat, line by line. This helps campers learn the melody and lyrics gradually.	To make it easier for campers to remember the words, you might use lyric sheets or pictures to represent the lyrics.	If the song has complex or fast sections, break it into parts and teach each one separately before putting it all together.	Use hand gestures or simple actions to represent the lyrics. For example, acting out the animals mentioned in a song can keep campers engaged.	To reinforce campers' memory of the song, repeat it multiple times, gradually increasing the tempo as they become more familiar.	Use a game or activity such as musical chairs or a scavenger hunt to teach lyrics and add an element of excitement.





#### Facilitating Camp Games and Activities

Using what you know about campers of different ages, you can plan and lead activities that suit their interests and needs. Check out some tips and ideas on the following pages!

#### **Team-Building Activities**

Help campers learn to work together, communicate, and build trust as a team. Start with activities that are simple and give everyone personal space, so people feel comfortable. As the group's bonds strengthen and confidence grows, the activities can become trickier and involve the group working more closely together.

- **Get creative.** Arts, music, and drama bring campers together to express themselves and discover hidden talents. You might do anything from creating SWAPs to painting, from campfire improv to building bird feeders.
- Play together. Sports such as soccer or basketball keep campers active while working toward a shared goal. Games can include anything from board games to video games to outdoor activities such as tag.
- **Try bonding activities.** Bonding activities promote cooperation and teamwork. Once the group members know one another, activities such as a trust walk or human knot can strengthen relationships. These types of activities might also give group members a chance to learn more about one another. One example is a "Lineup" activity, where the group organizes themselves alphabetically or by birthday, favorite color, or another characteristic without talking.
- **Explore Camp.** Take on new adventures as a team. From archery to kayaking, outdoor activities can help campers plug into nature together! Activities like hiking and canoeing help campers develop a love for the great outdoors while moving their bodies and having fun as a group.

#### **Large Group and All-Camp Activities**

Foster a sense of camp community and belonging among all campers.

- Tour the world, via map. Campers use a map to travel "around the world" and complete a different challenge (earning a passport stamp) at each place or "stop" around camp. The first group to collect all the stamps wins a prize.
- Find the counselor. In their units, campers follow clues to find their counselor. Each group is given a starting clue that leads them to a counselor who isn't their own. This counselor will give them a clue to find another counselor who will give them the next clue, and so on, until the campers finally reach their own counselor, at which point the group brings their counselor back to the starting place where everyone gathers to celebrate.
- **Hold a camp field day.** Set up activity stations with quick events such as "Duck, Duck, Goose" (or the water version, "Drip, Drip, Drop"), a water balloon toss, kickball, tag, and other outdoor games that let kids run and play together. Campers can rotate in groups or roam freely.

#### Other Large Group and All-Camp Activities

- Talent show ■ "Capture the Flag" ■ Trivia
- Kickball Open mic ■ Bingo
- Dance party Campfire ■ Karaoke



#### Tips for Facilitating Games and Activities

- When planning, assign roles, such as facilitator, notetaker, and timekeeper. Make sure everyone knows the rules, expectations, and their role.
- Keep your introduction fun and quick. Don't talk too long. (Plan out what you'll say ahead of time.) If you can, act out the rules or share key information in another creative way.
- Give time updates. Set an end time, let everyone know what it is, and give timely reminders like "30 minutes to go!" and "5 minutes left!"
- Share clues. It's never a bad idea to give extra information if a group needs guidance. For example, during a scavenger hunt you might tell the group where the final location is.
- **Have options at the ready.** If a game or activity isn't engaging the group, try something else.
- Stay in bounds. If your activity includes space for campers to roam freely, station adults at any exit points to make sure no one wanders.

#### **Camp Song and Game Box**

Throughout the camp session, you'll learn, observe, teach, lead, and participate in many different songs and games. A great way to remember them is to build a song and game box (or binder). Make a list with at least 10 songs and games for each level, Daisy through Cadette. Of course, the more you include, the more useful the resource will be!

#### 4. Do a Service Project

Part of being a Girl Scout is making a difference in the world, and that means leaving camp a better place than when you arrived. To meet this requirement, you'll need to plan and create a service project with your CIT unit. Find out what your camp needs by talking to your camp director, ranger, and any other camp staff member.

After meeting with camp staff, use all you've learned about teamwork, your campers, and your camp's needs to decide on one project for your CIT unit. For example, you might:

- Pull weeds from a garden
- Plant a rain garden to curb erosion
- Paint a fence to preserve the wood
- Build new benches for the program area

Work with your CIT unit to make a plan that includes a to-do list, materials list, timeline, list of roles, and anything else you'll need for the project. Then follow your plan to complete the service project with your team.

#### Go Team: Tips for Teamwork

- Listen generously. Value each person's point of view without judgement.
- Say what you mean—but don't say it meanly. Your perspective is valuable, so share it with kindness and in a spirit of collaboration.
- Be "for" each other. This helps build trust and makes it easier for everyone to feel safe, be honest, and take risks.
- Honor commitment. If someone fails. it doesn't mean they're not committed. Help others feel safe to make mistakes and ask for help.
- Acknowledge and appreciate. Recognize others and their effort, especially when plans go awry.





#### 5. Reflect on the Experience

At Girl Scout camp, each day often begins and ends with reflection. This can get you thinking about what you've learned, how you've grown, any challenges faced, and what you're excited for. Engaging in reflection can also help you develop critical thinking capacity, self-awareness, and mindfulness.

As a CIT, you're expected to reflect on your own, for example by journaling or meditating daily. You'll also reflect with camp staff and your CIT unit, finding ways to support one another while at camp.

At the end of the camp session, you'll need to reflect on all you've accomplished while at camp as well as meet with the CIT director. Consider:

- What have you learned from your experiences as a CIT?
- What was your most meaningful experience or moment? Why?
- What are you most proud of from the camp session? What did you accomplish?
- Where do you think you could improve? How do you plan to do this?
- How could the program be improved? Will you continue on to CIT 2 programming?

#### As part of your daily reflection, think about...

- What camp staff and/or activities did you support?
- What did you participate in?
- What was your favorite and why?
- What age group(s) did you work with?
- How do you feel about how you performed?
- Do you have any questions? Is there anything you'd like to explore more?

Once you complete the CIT 1 programming, continue your leadership path at camp and become a CIT 2!

#### CIT Level 2

Congratulations! You've completed the CIT 1 programming and are ready to learn more about being a camp counselor through Click here to enter text.Girl Scouts' CIT 2 programming. This coming camp session, you'll plan and lead activities for younger campers, including a service project. You'll assist camp staff as you practice managing schedules, learn effective group management techniques, and help resolve conflicts. You'll continue to serve as a role model for younger campers and develop your leadership skills.





#### CIT 2 Program Breakdown

#### Purpose

Prepare to become a camp counselor by leading activities and assisting staff to support campers.

#### Skills You'll Develop

- Conflict management
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Group leadership
- Persuasion and influencing
- Planning

#### Requirements

- 1. Care for younger campers. Spend at least half your time with younger camp units under the supervision of camp unit staff, supporting individual campers and camper groups.
- **2. Assist camp staff** throughout five activity sessions, to better understand the responsibilities of working in camp areas ranging from arts and crafts to the climbing wall.
- 3. Plan and lead camp activities for campers of different ages and different group sizes.
- 4. Lead younger campers in planning and executing a service project that leaves camp a better place than before.
- 5. Reflect on your experience, including through daily selfreflection, group reflection, and a staff evaluation at the end of camp.



#### 1. Care for Younger Campers

Being a CIT or camp staff member is all about caring for campers. At camp, you're helping shape campers' actions and character. When they observe you demonstrating kindness, cooperation, and empathy, they're likely to follow suit. This creates a positive camp environment and teaches campers valuable life skills such as how to navigate social interactions, resolve conflicts, and contribute positively to their communities.

When a challenging situation occurs with an individual camper or a group, know that you aren't responsible for

#### Tips for Supporting Individual Campers

Consider their age and experience. Support campers using what you've learned about campers of different ages.

**Praise what they do well.** This builds trust and makes it easier to deal with problems when they occur.

**Avoid threats.** Phrase things positively—for example, try "please walk" instead of "don't run!"

Find out WHAT and WHY. How someone acts is usually rooted in something deeper—active listening can help you learn more.

Ask for help. We're a team at camp. Please reach out to camp staff when you have questions or need help.

resolving the issue—but, rather, for supporting the camper(s). No matter the situation, your goal should be to try to ensure that everyone is having what is ultimately a positive experience. In order to do this, it's important that you understand your role, including your limitations as a CIT, so: what to do, what not to do, and who to escalate any issues to.

#### Conflict Resolution

Most campers' actions are positive—
they're excited to be there, they're willing
to try new things, and they want to
make new friends. Sometimes, though,
a camper might present particular
challenges—for example if they're having
a hard time making friends, if they're
finding camp a bit intimidating, or if they
just have a personality that can make
the camp experience more trying. Some
actions campers can control and others
they cannot.

Conflict is an unavoidable part of life, and it happens at camp, too. You might need to address a specific problem with a camper, find yourself working with a camper unit when a disagreement arises between two younger campers, or end up navigating conflict in your own relationships with other CITs. To help resolve conflict, you can engage in and



encourage positive communication, practice active listening, and seek assistance as needed. When you have these skills, you can support both yourself and campers in sorting out conflicts.

Remember that campers come from a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences. There's not only one way to act or behave at camp, and we need to make sure we meet campers where they are. Throughout camp, focus on safety and lead with compassion, inclusion, and empathy.

#### Do's and Don'ts in Caring for Campers **DO: Positive Ways DON'T: Inappropriate Ways** ■ Model what you want to see—campers are ■ Avoid yelling or shouting, name calling, labeling, using sarcasm, teasing, humiliating, or belittling. watching your every move. ■ Have realistic expectations for the age and Avoid giving attention only or mostly to abilities of your campers. undesirable behaviors. ■ Clearly explain rules and the reasoning behind ■ Try not to make up new rules on the spot—i.e., them—kids don't mind following rules if they without first having a group discussion. make sense! ■ Avoid inconsistency in or unfair enforcement of ■ Be consistent: rules apply to everyone. rules. ■ Know your campers' names. Avoid engaging in any physical contact.

#### **Supporting Small Groups**

As you support campers, you'll observe how friendships and groups form and shift. You can help campers navigate these developing and changing relationships. For example, you can:

- Demonstrate effective communication skills and be a role model.
- Observe the group's interactions and encourage positive communication and collaboration.
- Celebrate and build on what's working well and help campers reflect on what can be improved.
- Intervene when necessary to provide support for conflict resolution.
- Nurture an atmosphere of safety and acceptance of all campers.

There are many different activities you can use to support what your campers are experiencing or may need. For example, icebreakers at the start of the session can help campers get to know one another. And when difficult situations arise, group processing or reflection activities might help. Check out the chart and activities that follow for specific ideas.



	Group Management Activities
Type of Activity	Helpful if you need to
Icebreakers	Help campers feel comfortable, learn more about one another, and build friendships.
Decision making	Help campers consider the options and choose which is best or most important to the group.
Brainstorming	Encourage campers to think creatively and allow everyone in the group to share ideas, from practical to silly, for anything from skits to community service projects.
Reflection and Processing	Moments for processing and reflection happen all the time at camp. A group might meet at the start of, throughout, and at the end of the day. Taking time to consider what they've experienced can help campers to better understand what they've learned and how this knowledge can help them in the future.



#### Ice Breakers / Get-to-Know-You Games

- **Learn names.** Names are an important part of personal identity. Make sharing and remembering everyone's names into a game. For example, each person might turn their name into an acronym of their interests, such as "Kiwi, Adventures, Tennis, Elephants" for K-A-T-E. Or they could pair their name with a fun movement, like "Samantha spins" or "Laura leaps."
- Explore interests. Discover what group members have in common while having fun. For example, play "Human Bingo," where each person gets a bingo card with squares containing fun facts or interests (such as "Has been camping," "Loves pizza," or "Plays an instrument"). Everyone moves around the group to find people who match the squares and see who can get bingo first!
- **Show and tell.** Encourage group members to get to know one another on a deeper level by sharing objects or photos. For example, hold a traditional "Show-and-Tell" where campers bring something special to share. You could also offer a selection of objects or photos for campers to choose from.

Campers can then explain why their chosen object is special and how it connects to their life or personality.

■ Warm up with an activity. Break the ice by getting everyone involved in an opening activity. For example, hold a "Rock-Paper-Scissors" tournament where everyone pairs up, and winners from each match keep

playing against other winners. Or try anything else, from a craft to a sport, while encouraging the group to take risks, show their talents, and have fun together.

#### **Decision Making**

- Weigh options. Explore the benefits and disadvantages of each option to better understand which might work best. For example, create a simple "Pros and Cons" list with what's good (pros) and what's not so good (cons) about each option. Or ask "Would You Rather" questions to help the group choose among multiple options.
- Vote openly as a group. Let everyone share their preferences before voting. This can be as simple as having the group raise their hands or move to different sides of the room to share their opinion. Or help the group to see everyone's input and decide collectively by sticker voting, where each camper adds stickers to posters with the available options to show their top choice(s).





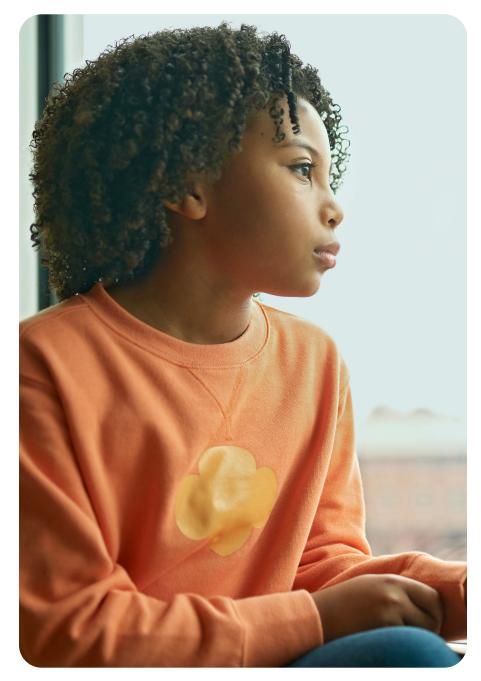
- Vote privately. Campers may feel more comfortable voting privately, which enables them to share their true preferences without influence or pressure from others. You might simply have the group close their eyes before voting, or share their preference on slips of paper that you can tally afterward. These methods ensure that everyone's vote is private while still leaving the decision open to the whole group.
- **Gauge interest.** Use a scale to understand how campers feel about any idea or prompt. For example, ask a question, such as, "Do you want to go swimming today?" Have campers respond by either turning their thumbs up (agree), to the side (unsure), or down (disagree). You could also have them show any number of fingers (such as 0 for disagree, 5 for strongly agree). This method allows everyone to share their feelings in a simple, non-verbal way, and can be adjusted for the group's abilities.

#### **Brainstorming**

- Brainstorm individually and as a group. Support the group in brainstorming on their own, in pairs, in small groups, or together as one large group. Or combine these techniques with an activity such as "Think-Pair-Share," where group members think of ideas on their own, then share in pairs, and finally come together to combine their thoughts for even more ideas.
- Generate lots of ideas. Come up with as many ideas as possible without worrying about whether they're good or not. For example, use an activity such as "Fishbowl," where one person shares an idea and others listen. Then, the others can "jump into the bowl" with new ideas or build on what has been said, creating a flow of ideas. Alternatively, simply have everyone write down ideas on posters or slips of paper.



- **Visualize your ideas.** Organize the group's thoughts in a way that's easy to see and understand. For example, try "Spider Mapping" to see how ideas connect like a web: write a main idea in the center of a page and draw lines out to smaller ideas.
- **Turn it into a game.** Add a playful twist to brainstorming. For example, play "Roll the Dice" by assigning each number on a die to a different topic or category, such as "Outdoor activities," "Favorite foods," "Animals," or "Travel destinations." Roll the die, then have the group brainstorm ideas related to the number rolled.



#### **Processing** and Reflection

- Create space to share feelings. When your group checks in, find out how they're feeling in the moment and about the activity or day in general. You might find a creative way to do this, such as asking them to choose an emoji related to their mood, describe how they feel as a type of weather, or simply share one "feeling" word for a group pulse check.
- **■** Encourage individual reflection. Make time for campers to think quietly about their own experiences. For example, you might have the group write in journals, either free-form or by responding to a prompt, such as, "What aspect of nature do you feel connected to today, and why?" Or you might lead campers through a guided meditation, have them doodle, or do anything else that gives them time to reflect on how they feel, what they've observed, and what they've learned.
- **Support the group through tough moments.** Groups encounter all different kinds of challenges—from tensions that grow during a difficult hike to conflict between certain group members. When a challenge occurs, encourage positive communication and active listening. Allow everyone involved time to share their feelings and their ideas about possible solutions. Use calming or grounding activities such as breathing exercises, group stretches, or reflection circles that help the group calm down, focus, and work together to find solutions.
- **Reflect on the past, present, and future.** Organize processing and reflection time to consider both what has happened and how it can help in the future. For example, use a structure such as "Rose, Bud, and Thorn," where campers share something positive that's happened (rose), something challenging (thorn), and something with the potential to grow or improve (bud). Another reflection technique is "What? So what? Now what?" to discuss what happened, why it matters, and what can happen or change as a result.

#### 2. Assist Camp Staff

In the CIT 1 programming, you learned the basics of being a member of camp staff through observing, conducting interviews, and shadowing. Now, as a requirement for the CIT 2 level, you'll assist unit counselors and camp staff in their roles over five activity sessions, supporting areas from arts and crafts to rock climbing. You might help with tasks like guiding campers to their next activity, doing a head count, getting campers' attention when counselors need to give directions, and most of all being a role model for campers. Remember that you should always be with a staff member when working with campers.

After each activity session, reflect on your experience. For example:

- What preparation (materials, setup, etc.) was needed for the activity?
- What went well during the activity? What could be improved for next time?
- What did you learn from camp staff about their role? What do they do to lead the activity? Did they share any tips or advice?
- When were campers most engaged? Were there any problems with engagement—and if so, how were they managed?
- How did you feel in taking on this particular leadership role?
- How do you think you performed? What's something you did well? How can you improve?
- What else did you learn from the activity session? What questions do you have? What did you learn that you might like to explore more?



#### 3. Plan and Lead Camp Activities

As you know, counselors support campers every day at camp. This includes keeping them entertained and having FUN.

Now you get to try your hand at planning and leading your own camp activities to engage younger campers.

#### The Benefits of Camp Activities

Girl Scout summer camp is filled with longstanding traditions and activities through which campers can develop skills as individuals and create lasting memories with friends.

- **Community and social time:** Group games, shared meals, team sports, and other group activities teach campers social skills, cooperation, and teamwork.
- Outdoor adventures: Hiking, archery, canoeing, kayaking, and other outdoor activities help campers develop a love for the outdoors. And as they learn outdoor survival skills and how to do things like cook over a campfire and build shelter, they develop self-confidence and feel a sense of accomplishment.
- **Independence:** Exciting challenges such as backpacking, completing ropes courses, and orienteering support campers in trying new things, navigating obstacles, and recognizing that it's okay to fail (and learn from it!).
- **Creative opportunities:** Art, music, drama, and other creative activities can help campers express themselves. Creating skits, songs, and even friendship bracelets nurtures creativity and promotes self-discovery.
- **Character and value development:** When teamwork, fair play, and sportsmanship are encouraged in activities, it can help campers develop leadership skills and a sense of self.
- **Memory making:** Traditional activities like flag ceremonies, camp songs, and campfires can foster a camper's sense of belonging, strengthening their connection to camp.

#### How to Plan a Camp Activity

- 1. Explore what's possible. As you know, at Girl Scout camp you can do a variety of things—earn a badge, complete the Girl Scouts Love the Outdoors Challenge, summit the climbing wall, and more. Talk to camp staff to get clear on the activities that are available to campers at each age level.
- **2. Choose an experience.** Use what you know about the number and age(s) of campers (find tips on page 9) you're working with to help you decide what to do. Do you want campers to learn a skill, just have fun, or something else? What's an activity that's a good match?
- **3. Adapt as necessary.** Does your chosen activity need to be changed at all? Does it suit your

- campers' ages, abilities, interests, needs, and experience levels as is? If you can, offer a variety of activity levels so all campers can build their skills.
- **4. Decide on the details.** Many activities require specific supplies and preparation. Make a plan for your chosen activity. For example, when and where will you do it: on the playfield, in the lodge, or somewhere else at camp? Who will lead and support the experience? What materials will you need?
- **5. Gather what's needed.** Track down, with help from camp staff, any art supplies, sports equipment, or other materials you'll need to carry out the activity.

#### 4. Lead a Service Project with Younger Campers

Girl Scouts do what they can to improve their communities and the world. They help other people, animals, and the environment by engaging in acts of service and kindness. For this CIT requirement, discover how you can give back and lead campers in a small service project to make your camp a better place.

First, talk with your camp director or the ranger to find out what the camp needs maybe painting a small shed, clearing a trail, or building a bench. Then use what you know about campers to help them work as a team, be part of the planning process, and continue this Girl Scout tradition. Work with your CIT director and camp staff to review your plan and fit the project into the camp schedule. Then lead the team to complete the project!



#### Tip: Include Campers in the Process!

Including campers can sometimes seem like a hassle, but the experiences and satisfaction they'll gain are well worth it. When working on your service project with campers:

- Brainstorm as a group. Use the decision-making activities on page 22 to inspire ideas as you plan the project together. Allow the group to drive the brainstorming. (Don't lead with your own ideas!)
- Let everyone share their ideas. Make sure everyone has input.
- Include everyone in preparations. When you plan, create a list of materials and anything else you'll need to complete the project. Have campers help decide and gather what you need.
- Consider campers' strengths and knowledge. Newer campers may need more help knowing what to do, while those more familiar may be able to guide themselves and even help their peers.
- Understand your campers' abilities. Remain aware of your campers' abilities, age, and the speed they can work at. Divide the project work logically (i.e., not necessarily equally—but, rather, based on individuals' abilities, energy, etc.).
- Have fun with it! Get involved, get creative, and get silly. Encourage your campers to think outside the box to make a difference for your camp.

#### 6. Reflection and Evaluation for CIT 2

Learning and improving is an ongoing process in life and in Girl Scouts. More than just a program requirement, reflection can help you process your experience at camp and feel better prepared to take on any challenges.

As a CIT, you're learning how to be a leader in a camp setting. You're expected to reflect on your own, in a group setting with other CITs, and as part of your final evaluation with CIT staff. You'll debrief with camp staff regularly, too, when you assist or lead activities.

For your final performance conversation, reflect on all you've accomplished as a CIT 2. Consider:

- What have you learned from your experiences as a CIT?
- What was the most meaningful experience or moment? Why?
- What are you most proud of this camp session? What did you accomplish?
- Where do you think you need improvement? How do you plan to make these changes?
- How could the program be improved? Do you want to return as a camp counselor?

#### As part of your daily reflection, think about...

- What activities did you assist or lead? What was your favorite and why?
- What age group(s) did you work with?
- What camp staff did you support?
- What did you learn?
- How did you feel? How did you perform?
- Do you have any questions or things you'd like to explore more?



#### Once you earn the CIT pin, keep going!

As a CIT 2, you've experienced what it's like to be a camp counselor at Girl Scout camp. However, the skills you've learned along the way are useful not just at camp, but at school, work, and anywhere else you take the lead. You can use what you've gained to:

- Apply for Girl Scout camp positions. If you want to continue as a leader at camp, apply to become a junior counselor or camp counselor. Generally, each camp has its own application process—your camp or council staff should be able to share open positions, deadlines, and next steps to help you navigate the process.
- Thrive outside of camp. Again, communication, teamwork, problem solving, and the many other leadership skills you've learned through the CIT program are invaluable to you in various contexts, including future jobs, college applications, and resumes. As you seek new opportunities, it can be helpful to reflect on your camp experiences and identify how they can be applied.



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## Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Handbook for Girl Scout Staff



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Final Performance Conversations

# SECTION 1: Introduction for

Girl Scout Councils

#### **Chapter 1: Girl Scouts' National CIT Program**

#### Introduction

Welcome to Girl Scouts' national resource for council staff developing a CIT program. This program consists of two levels, CIT 1 and CIT 2, which take about two weeks each for Girl Scouts to complete at their council camps. The program has been designed to foster the growth of Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors toward becoming proficient camp counselors.

This guide outlines the essential components of successful Girl Scout CIT programs. Geared toward cultivating staff leadership skills (particularly in the outdoors) and mentorship, the guide outlines national guidelines from GSUSA that support a

standardized experience across CIT programs implemented by Girl Scout councils.

While GSUSA encourages council adoption of this guidance, we know it may take multiple camp seasons to adopt the requirements outlined—so understand that "requirements" is used in this resource in the same spirit as in "badge requirements."

To begin, this chapter looks at:

- CIT Program Background
- CIT 1 Requirements
- CIT 2 Requirements

#### CIT Program Background

Through Girl Scouts' national CIT program, Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors build leadership skills relevant to the camp counselor role, by caring for younger campers and planning activities in a camp setting. The program is a progression for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors and is divided into two levels—CIT 1 for Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts and CIT 2 for Ambassador Girl Scouts—each with their own progressive sets of award requirements. (See the following section for detailed program requirements.)

■ Counselor in Training 1 (CIT 1): CIT 1 programming provides Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts with the foundational skills they need to serve as camp staff. Through observing and assisting with small group activities (such as song leading and games), CIT 1s learn the role of camp staff, how campers of all different ages behave, and what day-to-day activities are most effective in engaging campers.

■ Counselor in Training 2 (CIT 2): CIT 2 programming gives Ambassador Girl Scouts the opportunity to build on the skills they learned in CIT 1. CIT 2s must have completed CIT 1 programming. CIT 2s are given more responsibility than CIT 1s, working within different units and with larger groups of campers. They learn how to support individual campers, plan and implement group activities for small and large groups, and continue to learn how to adapt to the ever-changing atmosphere of a typical day at camp.

#### **CIT 1 Program Requirements**

Purpose: Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors prepare to become camp counselors by role modeling for younger Girl Scouts and assisting and leading small-group activities.

Requirements: Girl Scouts complete a council CIT program through which they...

- 1. Live and work in a camp community by role modeling, helping to build a culture of belonging, and taking care of themselves.
- 2. Interview, observe, and assist camp staff throughout five activity sessions to understand different areas of camp.
- 3. Practice and lead songs and games daily with campers. Develop a resource of songs and games with their CIT unit.
- 4. Do a service project with their CIT unit. Leave camp a better place than before, such as by pulling weeds, building a new bench, or reorganizing an area of camp.
- **5. Reflect on their experience**, including through daily self-reflection, group reflection, and staff evaluation at the end of camp.

Through CIT 1 programming, Girl Scouts develop these skills:

- Positive behavior modeling
- Game and activity leadership
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Accountability

#### Did You Know?

Some councils and camps offer wrangler-intraining (WIT) programs that focus on equestrian arts and how to teach them to younger campers. The CIT 1 program can be used as a strong foundation for the WIT program, as it teaches Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors the basics of working with and caring for children.

#### CIT 2 Program Requirements

Purpose: Girl Scout Ambassadors prepare to become camp counselors by leading small and large group activities and assisting staff to support individual campers.

Requirements: Girl Scouts complete a council CIT program that builds on the CIT 1 experience as they...

- 1. Care for younger campers. Spend at least half of their time with younger camp units under the supervision of camp unit staff, supporting individual campers and camper groups.
- **2. Assist camp staff** throughout five activity sessions to understand the responsibilities of working in camp areas ranging from arts and crafts to the climbing wall.
- 3. Plan and lead camp activities for campers of different ages and different group sizes.
- 4. Lead younger campers in planning and executing a service project that leaves camp a better place than before.
- **5. Reflect on their experience**, including through daily self-reflection, group reflection, and staff evaluation at the end of camp.

Through CIT 2 programming, Girl Scouts develop these skills:

- Conflict management
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Group leadership
- Persuasion and influencing
- Planning

#### **Chapter 2: Building Your CIT Program**

#### Introduction

CITs are not yet staff, but campers with additional responsibilities and opportunities for learning and growing in pursuit of one day becoming camp counselors. Depending on your council and larger program schedule, your CIT program can be planned and implemented at day or overnight camp.

To support the development and maintenance of your CIT program, this chapter looks at:

- Camp Safety and the CIT Role at Camp
- Creating Your Council's CIT Program
- CIT Registration
- CIT Accommodations at Camp
- CIT Skill Development and Training Activities
- CIT Program Schedule
- Transitioning from Camper to CIT to Camp Staff

#### Camp Safety & the CIT Role at Camp

When it comes to your camp's liability, remember that CITs are not considered staff—they are campers. However, as CITs take on additional responsibilities, it's important that they know what's required of them both in the day-to-day and in emergencies. In addition, as future camp staff and role models for younger campers, they need to learn that appearance and words matter.

#### CIT Role in Risk Management and Emergencies:

Again, CITs are not considered staff—they cannot be counted in your camper-to-staff supervision ratio and should never be left alone with minors. While CITs can lead an activity, staff must always be present to provide coaching and oversight. Teach CITs your camp's emergency procedures, enabling them to assist with camper safety and security.

**Professional Boundaries:** Both camp staff and CITs are expected to be professional when interacting with parents, staff, campers, camp visitors, and one another. Whether they're at camp, on a field trip, or in

public wearing camp attire (T-shirts, polos, sweatshirts, etc.), CITs are role models for younger campers, and what they say and do reflects on your camp as well. What's more, establishing professional boundaries is useful in limiting the types of relationships that staff have with their campers, protecting campers' personal information, clarifying roles and responsibilities in situations, and cultivating respectful relationships. At all times, CITs and camp staff should maintain professional boundaries and appearances.

#### **Creating Your Council's CIT Program**

To complete the CIT 1 and CIT 2 levels, Girl Scouts must complete the requirements outlined in this resource. Each level of a council's CIT program should:

1. Average two weeks. While it's suggested that programming be delivered across two consecutive weeks in a summer camp setting, the experience may be divided into multiple week-long experiences.

2. Include the national standards provided in this resource. By following this guidance, all CITs across Girl Scout camps receive standardized training that develops their leadership skills and prepares them for employment at Girl Scout camp. While the layout and activities of your council's program may vary, ensure that all candidates complete all of the requirements for either the CIT 1 or CIT 2 level (listed in the previous chapter).

**CIT Registration** 

CIT registration should be part of your larger process for camp registration, with the program open and available to members through your council's regular camp registration system. Historically, some Girl Scout councils have implemented an application process as part of the CIT program; while this is okay, the national recommendation is to remove this process, as it creates additional barriers to accessing the program.

Nationally, the only requirement for either CIT level is to be at the corresponding age level (Senior or Ambassador for CIT 1, Ambassador for CIT 2), and CIT 2s must have earned the CIT 1 pin. After registration, you may want to send specialized information for

the CIT program as part of CITs' camp confirmation packet.

#### **CIT Accommodations at Camp**

One of the three Girl Scout processes is cooperative learning, and the Girl Scout CIT program is a great example of this in action. (The other two processes, girl-led and learning by doing, are present as well!) Whether attending day camp or overnight camp, CITs are campers and should be organized into units with CITs of similar ages and supervised by at least two CIT-specialized staff. Together, CITs can live, learn, and have fun while becoming a source of support and joy for one another at camp.

An important difference in the expectations of a CIT and a regular camper of similar age is your camp's buddy rule. At camp, campers are not allowed to roam around camp property without supervision and must always move as part of a buddy system. This rule also applies to CITs, who must always stay with their designated buddy—though they may have more independence to move around camp as they shift responsibilities between units and activities. This is a privilege that shows staff trust CITs as they take on more hands-on responsibilities throughout the camp session.

CIT Skill Development and Training Activities  Breakdown of 2 and 3 Chapters by CIT Requirement			
Section 2: CIT 1	Section 3: CIT 2		
Chapter 4: Live and Work in a Camp Community	Chapter 10: Care for Younger Campers		
Chapter 5: Interview, Observe, and Assist Camp Staff	Chapter 11: Assist Camp Staff		
Chapter 6: Practice and Lead Songs and Games	Chapter 12: Plan and Lead Camp Activities		
Chapter 7: Do a Service Project	Chapter 13: Lead a Service Project		
Chapter 8: CIT 1 Reflection and Evaluation	Chapter 14: CIT 2 Reflection and Evaluation		

#### CIT Program Schedule

When developing your own CIT program, please feel free to substitute the included activities with others that better suit your council, camp, or CITs. While it's important that your program fulfills all requirements,

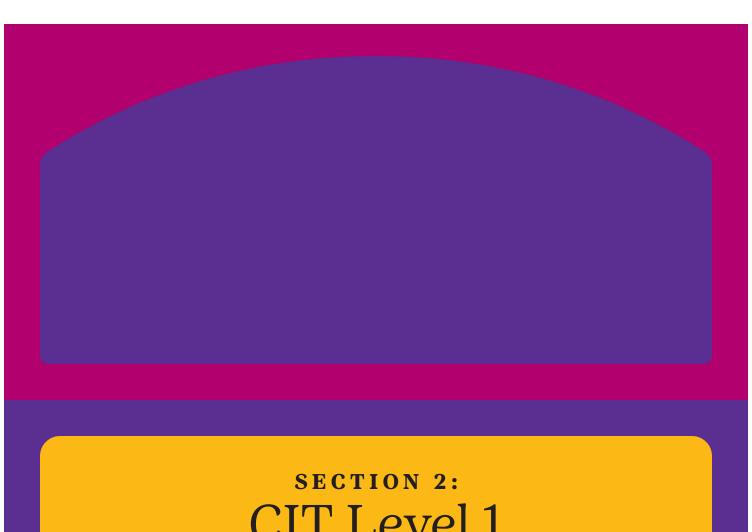
the activities, schedule, and modes of learning can vary. Below is a suggested schedule for CIT 1 and CIT 2 programming across two weeks at an overnight summer camp. This can be adjusted to accommodate your particular camp or council.

Suggested CIT Program Timeline					
Program	Week 1 Objectives: CITs will	Week 2 Objectives: CITs will			
CIT 1	<ul> <li>Learn about the role of CITs and set goals for the camp session.</li> <li>Learn the stages of each camper age group (Daisy through Cadette) and how they act.</li> <li>Observe and interview camp staff.</li> <li>Participate in daily camp activities.</li> <li>Learn and practice camp traditions such as flag ceremonies and campfires.</li> <li>Decide on a service project and create a plan as a CIT unit.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Lead small group activities such as songs and games every day.</li> <li>Assist camp unit staff and work with younger campers over five activity sessions.</li> <li>Develop a camp song and game box or binder as a CIT unit.</li> <li>Do the service project as a CIT unit.</li> <li>Complete CIT 1 final self-reflection and evaluation with camp staff.</li> </ul>			
CIT 2	<ul> <li>Support CIT 1s in learning about camp and set individual goals for the camp session.</li> <li>Spend half of each day with a CIT 2 buddy as assigned unit helpers, supporting individual campers and the unit as a group.</li> <li>Assist staff with two to three activity sessions.</li> <li>Plan and lead camp activities and traditions such as flag ceremonies and campfires.</li> <li>Decide on a service project for younger campers and create a plan with them.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Reflect on what you did in week one and find ways to improve as you do it again in week two.</li> <li>Lead younger campers to do the service project.</li> <li>Complete CIT 2 final self-reflection and evaluation with camp staff.</li> </ul>			

#### No matter how you set up your program schedule, make sure to:

- **Reflect.** Schedule a daily group reflection to discuss and reflect on the activities CITs participated in.
- **Evaluate.** Check in regularly with camp staff to understand how CITs have performed in their roles.
- Have fun. Organize down time and group activities for CITs—remember they're still campers!

Tip: Use your program schedule as an example, to serve as a foundation to help campers' and CITs' create personal routines at camp, such as showering, brushing teeth, and changing clothes. Helping CITs make these routines their own can contribute to their wellbeing by helping them plan ahead and approach each day with less anxiety.



# CIT Level 1

## **Chapter 3: Introduction to CIT 1**

Reference

Counselor-in-Training (CIT)
Handbook for Girl Scouts,

pages 2-3

#### Introduction

CIT 1s are Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors who are beginning their journey toward

working at a Girl Scout camp. As they complete this level, they're expected to learn the basic skills needed to serve as camp staff and engage younger campers in

camp activities. This includes knowing what Girl Scout camp is all about and what their role and expectations are as CITs.

Support these burgeoning counselors as they learn what it means to be a CIT and grow in

their responsibilities throughout
the camp session. When
challenges occur, remind CITs
of any expectations for their role
and how they should interact with

campers, staff, and other CITs. As needed, refer to your camp's Camper Behavior Management Policy (or the equivalent).

To begin, share a summary of your CIT 1 programming and requirements so CITs know what to expect from the camp session. Let them know they will be evaluated on their performance at the end of the camp session. (See chapter 8 for more information if needed.)

Then, review the following with CITs, conducting drills as possible and if necessary:

- CITs' role as campers and counselors in training (not camp staff)
  - □ Camp rules and any altered or additional rules specific to CITs
  - ☐ Emergency procedures, including what CITs are expected to do in emergency situations; this includes aquatic and equestrian emergency procedures if your camp includes LITs (lifeguards in training) and/or WITs (wranglers in training)
- Expectations regarding behavior and dress code around campers, staff, and caregivers

CITs may participate in a role-play to understand what is and what is not allowed at camp. For example,

write different camp scenarios on strips of paper (or invite CITs to brainstorm scenarios), such as instances where appropriate boundaries, safety protocols, and emergency procedures are and are not followed. Once everyone has added their ideas, a CIT can select a strip to read aloud and the rest of the group can decide if the situation constitutes a green light (all good!), yellow light (be cautious!), or red light (100% not okay!). Make sure to let everyone share their ideas before explaining any related camp rules or expectations and what the consequences could be of not following them.



# Chapter 4: Live and Work in a Camp Community

page 3

#### Introduction

CITs are part of many different camp communities:

in community with their CIT unit, supporting different camp units and camper activities, and part of Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Handbook for Girl Scouts, the all-camp community. As they transition from their past role as a camper exclusively and into their new role as CIT, they'll be tasked with leading traditions,

upholding the values of your camp community, and serving as role models for younger campers. At the same time, they'll be navigating their own experiences and relationships with each other.

During camp, CITs may also experience and/or need to process stressful situations such as:

- **■** Feeling overwhelmed or unsure of their new responsibilities—needing support to balance their responsibilities and tasks efficiently while still trying to have fun and make friends.
- **■** Facing their own changing relationships, including friendships and even romantic

relationships. CITs also may encounter situations such as favoritism, cliques, tension bullying, and other Reference

> social situations. **■** Supporting or witnessing

difficult camper situations,

such as a bathroom accident, panic attack, or injury. While it's not the CIT's responsibility to handle the issue, they'll need skills to help them process it.

Ruminating or dwelling on distressing thoughts and emotions. Instead of problem solving, ruminating takes individuals out of the present moment and exacerbates their distress. CITs can be encouraged to address issues rather than ruminate on them—consider homesickness, which can often be resolved by reflecting on enjoyable activities and positive moments at camp.

Form a community circle with CITs to discuss and do any training activities that emphasize the following.

**Camp Traditions:** Introduce the importance of building your camp community by teaching CITs the history of your camp, its traditions, and how to plan and carry them out. While traditions will vary for each camp, the CIT Guide for Girl Scouts includes a list of traditions that are common across many Girl Scout camps.

Being a Role Model for Younger Campers: Discuss the importance of role models, asking CITs to share their own role models and what qualities they admire in them. Through the discussion, create a list of qualities of a role model, such as integrity, empathy, and responsibility. Then brainstorm how CITs can exhibit these qualities throughout their time at camp. Use the list of tips in the CIT Guide for Girl Scouts for ideas. Remind CIT's that though they aren't staff yet, younger campers will be watching them and mimicking the behavior they see.

**Building Community at Camp:** Go over community contracts, community circles, and any other community communication methods used by your camp. Then support CITs to create a community contract for their CIT unit. Ask questions like: "What

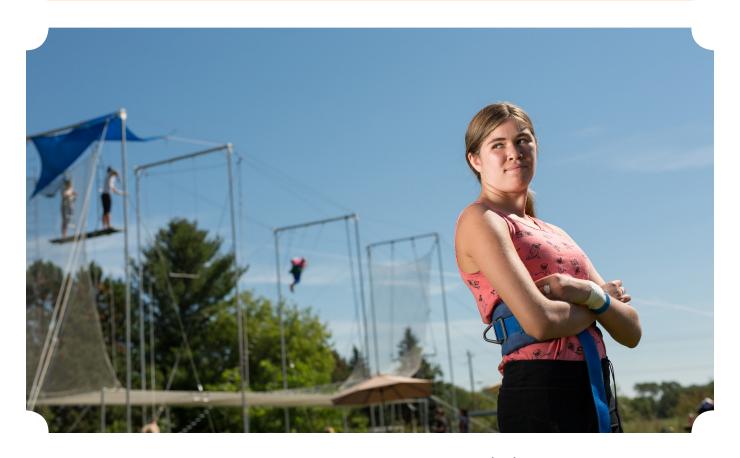
is important for you to feel comfortable and safe at camp?"; "What do you think is important for campers to feel comfortable and safe at camp?"; and "What are some guidelines you follow at school or in your troop that could be helpful here at camp?" After, post the community contract where the group can refer to it as issues arise.

Caring for Oneself While at Camp: To help CITs manage their tasks, priorities, and any stressful situations that arise, teach them about time management and how to apply coping skills. You might show them how to create to-do lists, make prioritization matrixes, or fill out a blank camp schedule with their own personal schedules, integrating daily coping skills and reflection into their routines. For teaching coping skills, what works best will vary from person to person—the CIT Guide for Girl Scouts offers several ideas, including a coping toolbox and the 5-4-3-2-1 mindfulness technique.

#### Throughout the Camp Session

Help CITs emulate and live out your camp's values every day while making camp an inclusive and fun place for all. They'll also need your guidance, feedback, and reminders to take care of themselves. Support them when they're feeling overwhelmed, and make sure to always give clear instructions (such as timing for the start and end of an activity). You can encourage them to ask for suggestions or help as needed and remember to take care of their body (hydrate, eat, shower, etc.). These things may seem simple but take time and practice to learn. Finally, support CITs in reflecting on their experiences and practicing their coping skills daily, individually, and even together as a group during a CIT community circle. Check in periodically to see if the group wants or needs to add or update anything in the community contract.

**Note:** As a Movement committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice, periodically evaluate and update your camp's traditions and practices.



# Chapter 5: Interview, Observe, and Assist Camp Staff

#### Introduction

The primary role of a CIT is to learn the skills it takes to be a counselor at Girl Scout camp. They can also gain additional training and experience to support camp activities such as horseback riding, waterfront activities, and more. Throughout

the camp session, CITs should work with unit counselors and camp staff over five or more activity sessions to understand the responsibilities of caring for campers and engaging them in camp activities. They can support any activity, from arts and crafts to canoeing.

Reference Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Handbook for Girl Scouts, page 7

Through the five sessions, CIT 1s should:

1) conduct one or more interviews with camp staff,

- 2) observe two or more activity sessions, and
- 3) assist with two or more activity sessions.

Discuss the role of a unit counselor and other camp staff positions with CITs. If needed, the CIT Guide for Girl Scouts includes a sample unit counselor job description. Some other areas that CITs might gain experience in are:

- Kitchen (culinary, food safety, daily tasks)
- Aquatics (safety, cleaning, daily tasks)
- Maintenance (daily responsibilities, overview)
- Program (daily responsibilities, cleanup, preparations)
- Camp store (daily tasks, basic operations)
- Upper management/support (daily tasks, supervising staff, ensuring safety protocols are followed, budgeting, securing vendors)
- Health (daily tasks, supervised managing collection and distribution of meds, treating injuries, communicating with parents and staff, monitoring health of camp community—though take care not to violate HIPPA)

While CIT roles and expectations will vary each camp's specialties, generally, CITs:

- Are not allowed in specialty areas without a staff member trained in the specialty.
- Must listen to instructions from staff members and follow all safety rules.
- Are role models for campers while in the specialty area.



All CITs require supervision by specialty area staff at all times.						
Specialty Area	What CITs Can Do: CITs can	Safety and Training: CITs should				
Swimming	<ul> <li>Lead the introduction of waterfront rules.</li> <li>Play water games with younger camper groups.</li> <li>Lead games and activities, such as sandcastle building, on the beach for campers who don't want to swim.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Be a strong swimmer.</li> <li>Be 15+ years of age and certified in lifeguard training.*</li> <li>Note: Some states allow watchers to be under 18, but they cannot be under 16.</li> </ul>				
Boating and Paddle Sports	<ul> <li>Take younger camper groups out on the water and be at the stern of the boat.</li> <li>Lead the introduction of waterfront rules and paddle instructions (under the guidance of waterfront staff).</li> <li>Lead games while on the water with younger campers.</li> </ul>	Meet with the waterfront director or boat specialist to go over small craft safety and more advanced paddling techniques.				
Ropes and Challenge Courses	<ul> <li>Learn about the challenge course and help with parts of setup (under the supervision of ropes staff).</li> <li>Assist with the introduction of rules and expectations of the challenge course to camper groups.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Know (or learn) how to belay and tie basic climbing knots.</li> <li>Note: A trained staff member must be present and actively supervising CITs while they're belaying.</li> </ul>				
Archery	<ul> <li>Lead games for campers not directly participating in archery.</li> <li>Assist in archery sessions with younger campers (under the supervision of archery staff).</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Know (or learn) how to handle bows and arrows and target sports range safety.</li> <li>Note: A trained staff member must be present and actively supervising CITs while they're teaching archery.</li> </ul>				
Horseback Riding	<ul> <li>Assist with the care of the camp's horses and maintain barn equipment.</li> <li>If meeting the council's WIT requirements, build on their riding skills and techniques.</li> <li>If 16+ years old, assist riding instructors.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Be advanced riders and comfortable around horses.</li> <li>Meet with the wrangler or riding director to learn about the horses, participation requirements, and the stables or barn and its setup.</li> </ul>				
Sailing	■ Assist with the care and maintenance of sailboats and equipment. ■ Take younger campers out on a free sail while the CIT skippers the boat. ■ Continue to build on their sailing skills and techniques. ■ Mote: The waterfront director should are ready to assist with beginner sailing.					
First Aid	<ul> <li>Recognize specific behavior of campers when they are feeling unwell and what steps to take next.</li> <li>Treat minor injuries.</li> </ul>	■ Know basic first aid. If there's a trained staff member, have CITs complete a first aid and CPR course.*				

\* Many programs offer hybrid courses, which require participants to watch videos and answer quizzes, so a strong internet connection and access to computers is needed.

**Did You Know?** Some councils and camps support all their CITs to become certified in first aid and CPR, just like camp counselors! Consider this when building your budget and program.

Next, explain the opportunities available for CITs to practice working in various positions throughout the camp session, including observations, interviews, and shadowing experiences.

- 1. Interview: Interviews help CITs learn more about staff roles at camp as they talk with various camp staff members about their own career paths and experiences at camp. Help CITs choose staff members for their interview(s). For example, they might interview specialty staff in an area they're interested in or a unit staff member who works with the age of campers they wish to work with. During the interview, CITs can take notes to later debrief on with camp staff and/or CIT staff.
- 2. Observe: When observing, CITs are simply there to watch and understand what the staff member is doing while on the job—they aren't there to assist. Observations can take place in any area of camp (not just camper units) and should last for at least an hour. Make sure all staff being observed are informed about it and give consent. If they'd like, observed staff can also share information about, and their role in, the activity underway. CITs can take notes to later debrief on with the camp staff and/or CIT staff. If there's time after the hour of observation, CITs may assist for the remainder of the activity. (Make sure to go over the difference between assisting and observing!)
- 3. Shadow (Assist): When shadowing, CITs assist counselors and support staff members throughout an activity. Before shadowing, CITs should meet with camp staff for an introduction to the area and the expectations for their role, to learn the participation requirements, and to see how the area is set up. They should also be aware of any related Safety Activity Checkpoints or other safety requirements. During the session, CITs can act as assistants, with their main objective to see how the activity runs. If there are multiple CITs shadowing at once, they can take turns observing and assisting, rotating about every 15 minutes. After, CITs should have a conversation with the CIT

staff who observed them to discuss any questions as well as the CIT's strengths and areas for growth.

Finally, have CITs share what roles they think they're interested in exploring and let them know how to schedule their five activity sessions, including 1+ interviews, 2+ observation sessions, and 2+ shadowing sessions. As necessary, support CITs in taking additional trainings to ensure they have any certifications and/or knowledge needed for assisting or leading an activity (especially for any specialty areas).

#### Throughout the Camp Session

CITs should work with unit counselors and camp staff over five or more activity sessions as they: 1) conduct one or more interviews with camp staff,

- 2) observe two or more activity sessions, and
- 3) assist with two or more activity sessions (details outlined earlier in this section).

While supporting camp staff, CITs can practice accountability by following directions, being reliable, maintaining a positive attitude, and taking notes to record their thoughts and questions. Camp staff supervising CITs should meet with CITs following any session to discuss their thoughts and questions and to evaluate each CIT's performance (when assisting).



## Chapter 6: Practice and Lead Songs and Games

#### Introduction

CITs should be assigned to support units of group campers (Daisies through Cadettes;
Seniors and Ambassadors are too close in age so should not be assigned CITs) in all camp activities. This way, CITs are exposed to many different types of situations, from what happens with the campers at mealtime to what can happen on a hike or even a field trip. They should be familiar with each age

group, what the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is, and why it's important at camp.

Counselor-in-Training (CIT)
Handbook for Girl Scouts,
pages 8–15

CITs are also responsible for assisting with large group and all-camp activities as well as

leading songs and games each day. They'll work as a team to develop a collection of camp songs and games using Girl Scout resources.

Gather CITs to learn about campers of different ages and stages:

- 1. Review the table (outlining the GSLE and outlining the GSLE for each Girl Scout level, Daisy through Cadette) in the CIT Guide for Girl Scouts.
- 2. Divide into four groups and assign each group a Girl Scout level (Daisy, Brownie, Junior, or Cadette) to create a visual representation (on butcher paper or posterboard, with sidewalk chalk, or anything else) of a camper of that age using the information in the CIT Guide for Girl Scouts.
- 3. Have groups share what they made with the CIT unit and explain the characteristics and needs of their camper.

Then, let CITs know they're expected to practice and lead songs and games for campers each day as well as develop a camp song and game box or binder that can be used by a CIT or camp counselor, or in any kind of childcare profession. They'll need to learn the songs and games that are important to your camp, how and when they're used, and how to teach each song or game. To prepare them:

- 1. Have the group identify camp activities (songs and games).
- Go over your camp's most important songs and games, making sure CITs learn each song the way your camp sings it and each game the way your camp plays it.

To help CITs, tips and teaching methods for leading songs and games as well as a variety of team-building and large group/all-camp activities can be found in the CIT Guide for Girl Scouts.



#### Throughout the Camp Session

The best way to teach CITs how to learn songs and games is to set the tone (no pun intended) from day one. Sing songs with them before their first meal. Play table games to make meals more fun. Gather together before bedtime for nighttime songs. If you have CIT 2s, they can support CIT 1s with song leading. CITs will also be involved in planning and leading large group activities for campers, collaborating with others, and leveraging what they know about campers to tailor activities to suit campers' interests and needs.

Finally, CITs will learn, observe, lead, and participate in all different songs and games throughout their camp session. A great way to help CIT 1s remember the songs and games they learn is to have them work together to build a song and game box or binder. This is a tool they can use as a CIT 2 or counselor, or in any kind of childcare career. While it's recommended that they include at least 10 songs and games for each level (Daisy through Cadette), the more they can include, the better and more useful the tool will be!



## Chapter 7: Do a Service Project

Reference

page 16

#### Introduction

and it's no different for CITs!

the outdoors to protect the planet and become environmental stewards. Part of being a Girl Scout is Counselor-in-Training (CIT) making the world a better place, Handbook for Girl Scouts,

During their camp session, CITs should work together in their CIT unit to plan and execute a

For over 100 years, Girl Scouts have taken action in service project with the goal of leaving camp a better place than when they arrived.

> The focus of this requirement should not be the result of the project (of course, impact and need are still important!), but instead on creating a project together

as a unit, building CITs' skills related to teamwork and problem-solving.

At the start of the camp session, introduce CITs to the importance of service in Girl Scouting. Let them know that service is a tradition as old as Girl Scouts itself and that leaving a place better than you found it is an important part of being both a Girl Scout and someone who cares about other people and the planet.

Discuss the program requirement with CITs and any initial ideas they might have for their service project. Let them know they'll be starting conversations and planning for the project soon and that the project will need to be completed by the end of the camp session.

#### Throughout the Camp Session

In the first half of the camp session, support CITs to explore camp and identify small problems or issues that they may be able to address with their service project. For example, you might ask CITs for ideas and updates as part of their daily group reflection. Help them schedule meetings with the camp director, ranger, and any other staff who can share with them what's important to the camp and what kind of service project might be most useful.

About halfway through the camp session, support CITs in deciding on and planning one service project as a group, using what they know about their camp and its needs, and their campers. For example, they might pull weeds from a garden, plant a rain garden to help with erosion, paint a fence to preserve the wood, or build new benches for the program area. Encourage the CITs to self-manage and use relevant skills they've learned, such as teamwork, time management, and communication, to plan the project. Help them decide on roles and create a to-do list, timeline, materials list, and anything else they might need for the project.

Finally, support CITs in following their plan and executing their service project. Throughout, help them work together as a team and experience how fun and meaningful it can be to give back to your community with others.

# **Chapter 8: CIT 1 Reflection and Evaluation**

#### Introduction

Girl Scout camp days often begin and end with reflection activities for campers and CITs, to help them think about the challenges they've faced, how they've grown, and what they're excited for. These moments can help campers and CITs process

their camp experience; develop critical thinking, self-awareness, and mindfulness skills; and facilitate personal growth. What's more, to earn CIT pins, CITs must reflect on their experience and participate in a final CIT 1 and CIT 2 performance conversation with the camp director, CIT director, and/or other camp staff.

More than just a program requirement, building in daily reflection and evaluation as

Reference
Counselor-in-Training (CIT)
Handbook for Girl Scouts,
page 17

part of your council or camp's
CIT program can help CITs feel
better prepared to take on any
challenges and opportunities
during the current camp session and

as future camp staff.

To support CIT reflection and evaluation, this chapter looks at:

- Daily Reflection and Evaluation
- Final Performance Conversations

#### Daily Reflection and Evaluation

There are four ways this happens every day at camp.

- 1. CIT Debrief with Camp Staff: After each activity session they observe, assist, or lead, CITs should debrief with the camp staff who led or supervised the activity—sharing their ideas, asking any questions, and discussing their performance (if assisting or leading the activity). For more information, see chapter 5.
- 2. CIT Staff and Camp Staff Conversation: Each day, CIT staff should check in with any camp staff who worked with CITs that day to understand each CIT's performance and solve any potential issues before they escalate (e.g., managing a CIT's performance, supporting group dynamics).
- 3. CIT Self-Reflection: Self-reflection can help CITs process their experience at camp while better understanding their own skills, talents, interests, and areas for growth. At the beginning of the camp session, support CITs in exploring their interests and creating goals for the camp session. Throughout the session, encourage CITs to take time to reflect daily, using a practice of their choice such as journaling or meditation.
- **4. CIT Unit Reflection:** Daily group reflections help foster a culture of community, sisterhood, and continuous improvement. CITs can connect with one another while talking about their challenges and successes. At the start of the day, reflection time can serve a practical purpose; for example, participants might go over the day's schedule

and address any questions. At the end of day, group members can debrief one another on their experiences, offering everyone the space to share their feelings, learn from their peers, and develop essential interpersonal skills. Group reflection might be done in a community circle (see chapter 4 for more), and you might even find somewhere unique to do it each day of camp.

#### Final Performance Conversations

At the end of the camp session, each CIT either completes the program and earns the CIT 1 pin or has not fulfilled the requirements and needs to repeat the training program. Hold an individual performance conversation with each CIT to reflect on their progression throughout their time at camp, highlight their achievements, and identify areas for improvement.

Before the conversation, gather feedback from camp staff to evaluate each CIT's performance. CITs can also reflect on their entire experience using the questions in the *CIT Guide for Girl Scouts* (or your camp's equivalent process). The conversation can then center on several relevant questions.

- **Performance:** How did the CIT perform in their role throughout the summer? How did they grow into a leader within the camp community?
- Interest Areas: What areas did the CIT explore?
  What age groups did they work with? Which were
  their favorites and why?
- **Skill Development:** What skills did the CIT develop throughout the session? What areas could be improved?
- Accomplishments: Did the CIT fulfill each program requirement? What were some specific accomplishments?
- Improving Your CIT Program: How can the CIT program be improved? What would make the CIT experience even better?

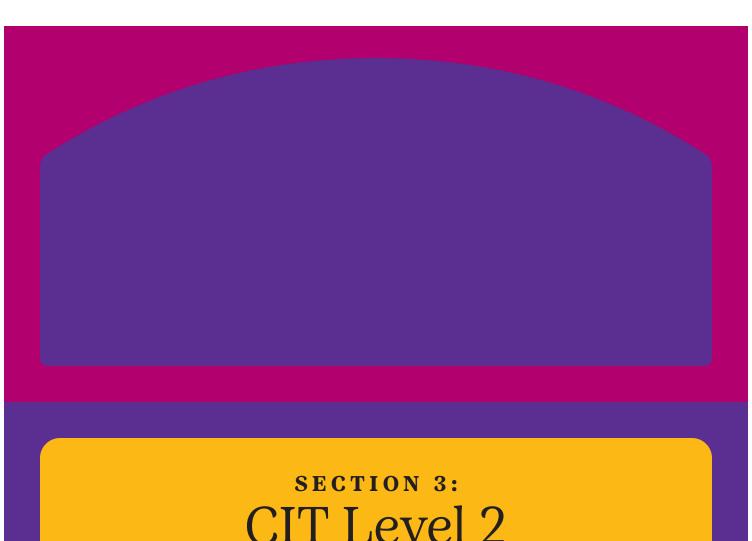
At the end of the discussion, if the Girl Scout has met all of the CIT 1 requirements, then they have completed the level and earned their pin. CITs who did not meet the requirements may choose to repeat the session (if the council approves).

Following the camp session, share information with CITs who have completed the level about how they can continue their leadership journey at camp, and support those who did not complete the level in deciding if and when they'll repeat the session.

#### Throughout the Camp Session

Camp staff can help nurture a supportive environment in which CITs can grow their aspirations and refine their skills. Encourage CITs to regularly reflect individually (such as by journaling or meditating) and as a CIT unit on their experience while at camp, noting what skills they've learned, their strengths, and areas for improvement. Resources such as the CIT Guide for Girl Scouts offer tips for successfully navigating the camp session and CIT program.





# CIT Level 2

### **Chapter 9: Introduction to CIT 2**

page 18

#### Introduction

Girl Scouts' CIT 2 programming furthers the leadership journey at camp for Girl Scout Ambassadors who have already completed the CIT 1 level. Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Handbook for Girl Scouts, To become a CIT 2, Girl Scout Ambassadors should build on their experience from CIT 1 by leading activities and assisting staff to support camper groups of all sizes.

With an emphasis on hands-on experience, CIT 2s learn under the guidance of camp staff as they directly engage with and support younger campers. They care for campers, including by learning group management techniques and assisting in conflict resolution. They also plan and lead camp activities, including a service project with younger campers.

This chapter includes a summary of CIT 1 concepts and important reminders for council Reference

and camp staff facilitating CIT 2 programming. For more information on these topics, see "Camp Safety and the CIT Role at Camp" in chapter 2 and

CIT 1 concepts in section 2.

#### Reminders for Council and Camp Staff Facilitating the CIT 2 Program

CITs and Camper to Staff Ratio: Remember, CITs are not considered staff. That means they cannot be counted toward the supervision ratios you are required to meet and should never be left alone with minors. While it's OK for a CIT to take the lead in an activity, staff must always be present to provide coaching and oversight.

To begin, share a summary of your CIT 2 requirements so CITs know what to expect from the camp session. Next, provide a guick review of what the CIT 2s did during their previous (CIT 1) camp session. They can

reflect on their experience as CIT 1s to inspire ideas for their camp session as CIT 2s. Use the table on the following page to review any important concepts related to the CIT 1 requirements.





Summary of CIT 1 Concepts				
Chapter	Requirement	Concepts Included		
4	Live and work in a camp community.	Camp basics (Promise and Law, camp traditions, CIT role), community contracts, community circles, coping skills, time management		
5	Interview, observe, and assist camp staff.	Role of unit counselor and other camp staff, any required specialty trainings, observations, interviewing, assisting		
6	Practice and lead songs and games.	GSLE, ages and stages of campers, song leading, common songs and games at your camp		
7	Do a service project.	Importance of service and giving back, teamwork and communication, designing something to help others		
8	Reflect on the experience.	Giving and receiving feedback, self-reflection, performance evaluation		

Finally, review the following with your CITs, conducting drills as needed:

- Their role as campers (*not* camp staff)
- Camp rules and any altered or additional rules specific to CITs
  - ☐ Expectations regarding behavior and dress code around campers, staff, and caregivers

- $\hfill\square$  What CITs are expected to do to enforce the rules with campers
- Emergency procedures, including what CITs are expected to do in emergency situations; this includes aquatic and equestrian emergency procedures if your camp includes LITs (lifeguards in training) and/or WITs (wranglers in training)



## Chapter 10: Care for Younger Campers

#### Introduction

By understanding where campers are at developmentally and the dynamics of a camper group, CITs can better assist camp staff, and even lead activities. Through these opportunities, CITs not only enhance their leadership skills but

also cultivate a sense of teamwork and mutual respect among campers, creating a positive and enriching camp

Reference Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Handbook for Girl Scouts, pages 19-24

For more information on role modeling (first learned in CIT 1),

environment for all.

check out chapter 5.

Review the GSLE and GSLE by level in the CIT Guide for Girl Scouts with CITs and invite them to share knowledge and experience with each level from their time as a CIT 1. Then explain to CITs their role, expectations, and limitations when supporting and caring for campers (what to do, what not to do, who to escalate issues to, etc.).

Through the discussion, invite CITs to share camp and out-of-camp situations where they've encountered conflict, how it made them feel, and how (and if) the conflict was resolved. Highlight how CITs can support both individual campers' and groups' changing needs, from first getting to know one another to encountering conflict or reaching a group decision. The CIT Guide for Girl Scouts includes group management activities, including icebreakers, dialogue starters, and practices that support decision-making, processing, and reflection. If you have time, do several activities from the lists, taking turns facilitating.

Finally, have CITs improvise two "yes, and?" scenarios: the worst and best camp days ever. Invite them to each add an idea into each scene, acting out different roles such as counselor, CIT, and camper. After,

discuss what the characters did that helped or made the situation more difficult, such as implementing group management techniques, aiding in conflict resolution, asking for help, actively listening, or making the environment more inclusive and welcoming to all. Remind CITs that their goal should always be to make sure everyone is having the best experience possible. Encourage them to intervene early to prevent any situations from escalating and to involve camp leadership when necessary.

#### Throughout the Camp Session

Whether planning a skit, organizing a service project, or resolving a conflict with campers, CITs can help foster creativity, collaboration, and inclusivity. They can encourage campers to share their ideas, actively listen to their perspectives, and guide them through the activity process.

As needed, help CITs practice supporting individuals and camper groups, reminding them of their role as CIT and their goal to always make sure everyone is having the best experience possible at camp.

# **Chapter 11: Assist Camp Staff**

#### Introduction

The primary role of a CIT is to learn the skills required to be a counselor at Girl Scout camp, including leading camp activities such as horseback riding, archery, and more. In CIT 1, CITs learned the basics of different camp areas through

Reference Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Handbook for Girl Scouts, page 25

conducting interviews, observing, and shadowing. (See chapter 6 for more information.) CIT 2s build on this experience by assisting camp staff in their roles over five activity sessions.

Before meeting with CITs, make sure to meet with camp leaders who can share an updated staff list of camp areas, including any specialty areas. Review and brainstorm what opportunities are available for CITs to assist camp staff, meeting with camp leadership and staff from the respective areas to confirm.

When introducing this requirement to CITs, explain the different opportunities available for them to assist camp staff. Then have CITs share what roles they're interested in exploring and let them know how to schedule their five activity sessions.

As necessary, support CITs in taking any additional trainings required for their roles when assisting or leading an activity. (See chapter 6 for more information.)

#### Throughout the Camp Session

CITs should assist unit counselors and camp staff over five or more activity sessions to understand the responsibilities of working with campers in areas ranging from arts and crafts to the climbing wall.

Then, following the activity, the staff member can lead a debriefing session with each CIT to discuss their experience and performance and answer any questions the CIT may have. Camp staff (especially CIT staff) should also encourage CITs to reflect on their performance as part of their daily individual and group reflection.



## Chapter 12: Plan and Lead Camp Activities

#### Introduction

Throughout the camp session, CITs will plan and lead camp activities for younger campers. They'll learn how to create

memorable experiences for campers while also contributing to the overall success of your camp program.

Reference
Counselor-in-Training (CIT)
Handbook for Girl Scouts,
page 26

Before the program begins, check on your camp's procedures for planning an activity and find a camp program description to later share with CITs. If possible, meet with the camp director to discuss the possibility of scheduling CIT-designed and led activities.

Then, with CITs, share your experience planning activities and programs. For example, what's been your favorite, most memorable, and most difficult experiences? What went into planning each? As you can, mention different camp activities available at your camp, especially those that CITs will be able to plan and lead. Next, share the camp program description with CITs and go over "How to Plan a Camp Activity" in the CIT Guide for Girl Scouts. Then divide CITs into small groups, assigning each a grade level(s) and number of camper(s) to plan an activity that fits within your camp's program theme.

As they begin, support the small groups in deciding on an activity before planning who will do what: who will gather supplies, who will make the event announcement to the rest of camp, etc. You might even have them fill out your camp's program request form (if applicable) with supplies. And because unexpected things can happen at camp, have the CITs also plan what to do if a rainy day occurs. After, have the small groups come together and present their activities for feedback.

#### Throughout the Camp Session

If possible, support CITs in leading their planned activity with campers under the guidance of camp staff. Support CITs in brainstorming, planning, and leading other activities regularly. Remember that while CITs may lead, they must be supervised by camp staff at all times.

**Tip:** If the group needs help brainstorming or deciding on an activity, encourage them to try one of the techniques in the *CIT Guide for Girl Scouts*.



## Chapter 13: Lead a Service Project

#### Introduction

For over 100 years, Girl Scouts have taken action in the outdoors to protect the planet and become environmental stewards.

Part of being a Girl Scout is 
making the world a better place, 
and it's no different for CITs!

Reference

Counselor-in-T.

Handbook for page

Reference
Counselor-in-Training (CIT)
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As CIT 1s, Girl Scouts worked in their CIT unit to do a service project, highlighting their skills in teamwork, communication, and problemsolving. Now, as CIT 2s, Girl Scouts can take the lead and include campers in their service project. This allows them to use their growing camper

and group management skills as they support
and teach campers the importance of
leaving camp a better place than
when they arrived.

**NOTE:** The focus of this requirement should not be the

result of the project (of course, impact and need are still important!), but instead on building CITs' skills around group management. Support them in finding a project that's simple but meaningful to lead a group of younger campers through.

At the start of the camp session, introduce CITs to the importance of service in Girl Scouting. Let them know that service is a tradition as old as Girl Scouts itself and that leaving a place better than you found it is an important part of being both a Girl Scout and someone who cares about other people and the planet.

Discuss the program requirement with CITs and any initial ideas they might have for their service project. Let them know they'll be starting conversations and planning for the project soon, with both camp staff and campers, and that the project will need to be completed by the end of the camp session.

#### Throughout the Camp Session

In the first half of the camp session, support CITs in exploring camp and identifying small problems or issues that they may be able to address with their service project. For example, you might ask CITs for ideas and updates as part of their daily group reflection. Help them schedule meetings with the camp director, ranger, and any other staff who can

share what's important to the camp and what kind of service project might be most useful.

About halfway through the camp session, support CITs in deciding on and planning one service project to lead with younger campers as a group, using what they know about their camp and its needs, and their campers. For example, they might pull weeds from a garden, plant a rain garden to help with erosion, paint a fence to preserve the wood, or build new benches for the program area. Then encourage CITs to use skills they've learned around planning activities, group leadership, supporting campers, and even conflict resolution (as needed) to plan the project. Help them to decide on roles and use group management activities to help themselves and/or the campers create a to-do list, timeline, materials list, and anything else they might need for the project.

Finally, support CITs in incorporating and guiding campers, following their plan, and executing their service project. Throughout, encourage them to take the lead, help younger campers work together as a team, and experience how fun and meaningful it can be to give back to your community with others.

# Chapter 14: CIT 2 Reflection and Evaluation

#### Introduction

Girl Scout camp days often begin and end with reflection activities for campers and CITs to help them think about the challenges they've faced, how they've grown, and what they're excited for. These moments can help campers and CITs process their camp experience; develop critical thinking, self-awareness, and mindfulness skills; and

self-awareness, and mindfulness skills; and facilitate personal growth. What's more, to earn CIT pins, CITs must reflect on their experience and participate in a final CIT 2 performance conversation with the camp director, CIT director, and/or other camp staff.

More than just a program requirement, building in daily reflection and evaluation as

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part of your council or camp's
CIT program can help CITs feel
better prepared to take on any
challenges and opportunities
during the current camp session and

as future camp staff.

To support CIT reflection and evaluation, this chapter looks at:

- Daily Reflection and Evaluation
- Final Performance Conversations

#### Daily Reflection and Evaluation

There are four ways this happens every day at camp.

- 1. CIT Debrief with Camp Staff: After each activity session they assist or lead, CITs should debrief with the camp staff who supervised the activity to share their ideas and ask any questions. The staff can also share their observations of the CIT's performance, including strengths and areas for improvement. For more information, see chapter 11.
- 2. CIT Staff and Camp Staff Conversation: Each day, CIT staff should check in with any camp staff who worked with CITs that day to understand each CIT's performance and solve any potential issues before they escalate (e.g., managing a CIT's performance, supporting group dynamics).
- **3. CIT Self-Reflection:** Self-reflection can help CITs process their experience at camp while better

- understanding their own skills, talents, interests, and areas for growth. At the beginning of the camp session, support CITs in exploring their interests and creating goals for the camp session. Throughout the session, encourage CITs to take time to reflect daily, using a practice of their choice such as journaling or meditation.
- 4. CIT Unit Reflection: Daily group reflections help foster a culture of community, sisterhood, and continuous improvement. CITs can connect with one another while talking about their challenges and successes. At the start of the day, reflection time can serve a practical purpose; for example, participants might go over the day's schedule and address any questions. At the end of day, group members can debrief one another on their experiences, offering everyone the space to share their feelings, learn from their peers, and develop essential interpersonal skills. Group reflection

might be done in a community circle (see chapter 4 for more), and you might even find somewhere unique to do it each day of camp.

#### **Final Performance Conversations**

At the end of the camp session, each CIT has either met the requirements and earns the CIT 2 pin or has not fulfilled the requirements and may repeat the training session. Hold an individual performance conversation with each CIT to reflect on their progression throughout their time at camp, highlight their achievements, and identify areas for improvement.

Before the conversation, gather feedback from camp staff to evaluate each CIT's performance. CITs can also reflect on their entire experience using the questions in the *CIT Guide for Girl Scouts* (or your camp's equivalent process). The conversation can then center on several relevant questions.

- **Performance:** How did the CIT perform in their role throughout the summer? How did they grow into a leader within the camp community?
- Interest Areas: What activities did the CIT lead? What age groups did they work with? Which were their favorite and why?

- **Skill Development:** What skills did the CIT develop throughout the session? What areas could be improved?
- Accomplishments and Their Future: Did the CIT fulfill each requirement? What were some of their specific accomplishments? Do they want to be a camp counselor in the future?
- Improving Your CIT Program: How can the CIT program be improved? What would make the CIT experience even better?

At the end of the discussion, if the Girl Scout has met all of the requirements to move up to the next level (junior counselor or counselor, depending on age and camp), then they have completed the level and earned the CIT 2 pin. CITs who did not meet the requirements may choose to repeat the session (if the council approves) or can be encouraged to try another camp program such as a wrangler-in-training (WIT) or adventure program.

Following the camp session, share information with newly awarded CITs about how they can continue on their leadership journey to becoming camp professionals.





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# Camp Counselor Career Catalyst Playbook



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# About the Playbook

#### Welcome to the playbook for Girl Scouts of the USA's Camp Counselor Career Catalyst training program!

The Camp Counselor Career Catalyst program provides workforce development opportunities for underserved communities through camp counselor jobs. These communities include:

- LGBTQIA+ individuals
- People from rural populations
- Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)
- People from low-income backgrounds

We designed this playbook to help councils:

- Position camp counseling as valuable career preparation
- Facilitate equitable access to income, skill development, career advising, and education pathways
- Empower individuals facing opportunity gaps to succeed personally and professionally

The playbook is a comprehensive resource created to support any council staff members involved in recruiting, hiring, and/or training summer camp counselors. Inside, you'll find:

- An overview of the program's mission, model, and strategic approach
- How the program is funded
- Actionable strategies for cultivating impactful community partnerships
- Best practices for inclusive recruitment, hiring, and
- Sample resources like marketing materials and training curricula
- Guidance on supporting counselors in their professional development and career pathways
- Strategies for building on- and off-ramps to/from the program

By applying the guidance in the playbook, council staff can implement a truly transformative camp counselor program that expands access and changes more lives.

Intended Audience: This playbook was designed for council staff members involved in recruiting, hiring, and/or training summer camp counselors.

#### Acronyms

BIPOC.....Black, Indigenous, and people of color

GSUSA.....Girl Scouts of the United States of America

**HBCUs** ...... Historically Black Colleges and Universities

LGBTQIA+ ..... Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (The + represents the many other identities that may be part of the community, such as pansexual, agender, nonbinary, and gender fluid, as well as allies of the community)

**WIOA**......Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

# Why This Program?

This program is an initiative designed to provide members of underserved communities with workforce development opportunities through camp counselor jobs. It creates a model to strengthen youth workforce readiness through camp employment.

This is achieved by:

- Building sustainable partnerships with schools, employers, workforce boards, and community organizations
- Providing individuals with comprehensive training that builds essential skills like leadership, problem-solving, and adaptability
- Offering camp counselors guidance and resources for post-camp career exploration, higher education, and overall long-term success

# Program Logic Model

The logic model outlines goals, objectives, and intended outcomes of the Camp Counselor Career Catalyst program.

#### **Program Goals**

- 1. Create a replicable, scalable model for expanding access to employment and training opportunities for underserved older adolescents and young adults who face barriers to employment, through on-thejob training experiences at Girl Scout sleepaway
- 2. Expand national and local partnerships that promote increased alignment between Girl Scouts and workforce development boards, school systems, and employers to fuel sustainable, systemic changes that eliminate barriers to employment.
- 3. Increase access to work experiences and work readiness skill development among a more diverse body of camp counselor staff that will in turn deliver more equitable, inclusive experiences to Girl Scouts across the country.

#### Challenges the Program Addresses

- Need for opportunity youth to have access to summer jobs and workforce training
- Growing industry/workforce demand for qualified camp counselors
- Barriers to inclusivity for underserved and marginalized
- Racial disparities in existing counselor workforce

#### **Inputs**

- American Camp Association partnership and other strategic partnerships at all levels
- Dedication of Girl Scout council staff time
- Local camp facilities and residential camp programs
- Opportunity for underserved, marginalized youth ages 15-21



#### **Intended Program Activities**

#### Girl Scouts of the USA

- A. Contract/grant subawards to Girl Scout councils, and provide ongoing oversight and support.
- B. Identify/track strategies and practices and develop a suite of resources and trainings on implementing the programming.
- C. Expand national workforce and education partnerships.
- D. Identify/secure funding partners to scale the program model for more councils.

#### **Girl Scout Councils**

- E. Expand alignment and partnerships with schools, workforce boards, higher education, HBCUs, and community partners to recruit/engage more youth.
- F. Deliver the training program: career exploration services, career counseling, work-based learning experiences, and connections to education and jobs.





#### **Outputs**

#### **Program Implementation Suite**

■ Program toolkit/resource suite that provides guidance on community partnership building, supervisor training, pre-camp training, marketing resource development, hiring and onboarding, etc.

#### **Program Participants**

- 640 participants complete a work-based learning experience
- 180 participants enter postsecondary education or occupational skills training
- 225 participants enter unsubsidized employment

#### **Partnerships**

- 24 new workforce development partners engaged
- 45 new employer partners engaged
- 45 new education partners, including secondary and postsecondary, engaged
- 45 new optional partners engaged



#### **Intended Program Outcomes**

#### **Short-Term**

- Youth earn pay and room/board; get work experience, access to career counseling, access to higher education, and future job placement; and develop transferrable employment skills.
- Supervisors develop workforce readiness and career counseling competencies.
- A bigger talent pool for hiring to meet double-digit industry growth needs.
- Growing network of partnerships strengthens participant access to career training and overall workforce diversity, especially for underserved and marginalized groups.
- Girl Scout councils increase their capacity to deliver high-quality, inclusive youth development experiences and diversify staff.





#### Long-Term

- Girl Scout councils have a sustainable, replicable model to strengthen youth workforce readiness through employment and training opportunities.
- Councils, schools, workforce boards, higher education institutions, and other community partners are more aligned and better able to support dropout reengagement and recovery.
- Adults from underserved and marginalized groups are better prepared to succeed in work and life.
- The program builds awareness and understanding of camp counselor impact on employment pathways.

# **Program Funding**

This program is funded through a combination of federal grants and non-governmental sources. It operates under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Title I), which ensures equal opportunity for all participants. Detailed funding information and specifics about auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities are available upon request.

# Community Partners

Cultivating strong community partnerships is essential to the success of this program. By strategically engaging with a diverse network of organizations, you (councils) can access a wider pool of camp counselor prospects and provide comprehensive workforce development resources for participants.

# Types of Community Partners

#### Workforce Development Board **Partners**

Workforce Development Boards oversee and fund workforce development programs in their regions. They operate American Job Centers, which provide job seekers with employment resources, training opportunities, and connections to local programs.

These partners can support the program by sourcing potential candidates for camp counselor roles and serving as resources for participants seeking additional employment after their camp experience. Note that workforce boards may operate under different names depending on your location (for example, Workforce Solutions, CareerSource, Ohio Means Jobs).

When reaching out, consider contacting business service representatives, youth counselors, and career center managers.

#### **Employer Partners**

Employer partners can come from various industries and sectors. In reaching out, remember that the key is aligning the employer's needs with the program's goal of developing individuals' transferable skills through camp counseling.

Ideal employer partners will recognize the value of individuals who possess skills cultivated in the camp environment—skills that can directly meet the employer's workforce needs, such as:

- Group management
- Activity facilitation
- Time management

#### **Education Partners** (Secondary and Postsecondary)

- Public school partnerships can facilitate connections with high school guidance counselors to recruit graduating seniors interested in camp counselor roles as they transition from high school.
- College and university partnerships can provide:
  - ☐ Access to students seeking summer employment, and internships
  - ☐ Resources for connecting participants to educational opportunities post-employment
  - ☐ Potential appeal to college students looking for summer housing, as camp counselor positions often include room and board

**Note:** Depending on your region, you may have access to additional partners, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or other specialized institutions.

 Trade and technical school partnerships offer pathways for participants to explore vocational training and certification programs after their camp experience.

#### **Optional Partners**

■ Local chapters of organizations that can bring unique value to your program should also be engaged, such as Dress for Success, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other community-based spaces where young people from the focus communities might be engaging.

# How to Engage Community Partners

Engaging community partners is crucial for recruiting participants from varied social, cultural, and economic backgrounds and providing comprehensive workforce development opportunities through Girl Scout summer camps. Here are some strategies:

#### **Identifying Potential Partners**

- Research local organizations, nonprofits, schools, places of worship, and community centers. Focus particularly on those serving segments of your community that are underrepresented in your council membership.
- Look for entities aligned with Girl Scouts' mission and values, such as those focused on youth development, education, and/or community empowerment.

#### **Building Relationships**

- Initiate contact through email, phone calls, or in-person meetings to introduce the program and its goals.
- Highlight mutual benefits of collaboration and shared objectives.
- Offer to meet potential partners to discuss effective ways to work together.
- Attend community events and connect in person with leaders/members of organizations to understand the organizations' values and roles in the community. Find out how the program can both support their values and help you attain the desired program outcomes. This takes time, so plan for it!

#### Tailoring Recruitment Strategies

- Host or cohost events with partners to share the benefits of the program. Make a point to engage with attendees rather than simply present information. Take time to understand attendees' interests and needs and be prepared to explain how the program might be a good fit for them. Be mindful of people's time.
- Leverage social media platforms to promote camp opportunities, especially to reach younger demographics. Create short videos that showcase the skills camp counselors learn.

#### **Providing Incentives**

- Invite partners to promote their brand and share employment on-ramps by providing program participants with career coaching opportunities, facility tours, and/or educational workshops.
- Publicly recognize and celebrate the contributions of community partners through acknowledgments or awards.
- If you're hosting events, provide a meal or transportation vouchers.

#### Collaborating on Workforce Development

- Connect with community partners to offer participants training in outdoor skills, leadership development, college applications, financial aid, financial literacy, career readiness, etc.
- Collaborate with community colleges or vocational schools to offer participants relevant certification programs or workshops as a part of an on-ramp or offramp to/from the program.

#### **Providing Resources** and Other Support

- Assign a dedicated staff member or volunteer to serve as a liaison, providing community partners with ongoing support and guidance.
- Share relevant materials with community partners to support their efforts in recruiting program participants and providing workforce development training.

#### **Evaluating and Adjusting Strategies**

- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment and workforce development strategies by gathering feedback from participants, community partners, and staff, using various methods:
  - $\hfill \square$  Formal surveys with a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions
  - ☐ Informal conversations during events and meetings
  - ☐ Anonymous suggestion boxes or online forms
  - ☐ Attendance and response rate data
  - ☐ Social media engagement metrics
- When designing surveys or feedback forms, consider including questions such as:
  - ☐ How well do you feel the program addresses the needs of our community?
  - ☐ What aspects of the program have been most beneficial to you/your organization?
  - ☐ Are there any barriers preventing fuller participation in the program?
  - ☐ How can we improve our communication and collaboration?
- Be reflective in your analysis. If response rates are low or feedback is consistently negative, consider whether the issue lies in your approach rather than with the respondents.

- Maintain open communication with community partners to address any challenges or barriers that may arise. Schedule regular check-ins to discuss progress and areas for improvement.
- Use the insights gained from feedback to continuously refine and improve your strategies, ensuring the program remains relevant and effective for all stakeholders.

Building strong partnerships with community organizations is key to expanding access and providing meaningful workforce development opportunities through Girl Scout summer camps. By establishing relationships, tailoring strategies, offering incentives, and continuously evaluating and adapting your approach, you can empower youth from diverse backgrounds to thrive.

## Sample Partnership Outreach Letters

The following letters are examples of how you can initiate relationships with potential partners. The templates can be tailored to highlight each partner's strengths and align with their specific areas of expertise.

#### **Employer Partner Letter**

[Date]

[Recipient Name], [Recipient Title] [Organization Name] [Organization Address]

Dear [Recipient Name],

We recently secured funding for an exciting program called Camp Counselor Career Catalyst, through which underserved young people ages 15-21 can work at a Girl Scout camp and receive impactful career guidance. This is a mutually beneficial collaboration between GSUSA and local organizations like yours.

We believe [Organization Name] can offer valuable career growth opportunities for our focus group of young people. At our upcoming camp staff training in [Month], would your team be willing to:

- Discuss career paths at [Organization Name] and how participants can pursue similar careers;
- Host a training on resume building, interview prep, or applying camp skills to jobs; or
- Arrange an in-person tour to your organization for our youth?

We look forward to hearing from you about creating employment pathways for our program participants. Please let me know if you have any other ideas for collaboration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

The dollar amount of Total Grant Federal funds for the program is \$2,499,771. The percentage of the total costs of the program which will be financed with Federal money is 58% and the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the program that will be financed by non-governmental sources amounts to 42% or

"The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Title I) is an equal opportunity program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities in recruitment brochures and other materials that are ordinarily distributed or communicated in written and/or oral form, electronically and/or on paper, to staff, clients, or the public at large, to describe programs financially assisted under Title I of WIOA or the requirements for participation by recipients and participants.

#### **Education Partner Letter**

[Date]

[Recipient Name], [Recipient Title] [School/University Name] [School/University Address]

Dear [Recipient Name],

Thank you for considering a collaboration with [School/ University Name] through the Camp Counselor Career Catalyst grant. This grant serves underserved youth ages 15–21 interested in working at Girl Scout camps. Our goal is to guide participants in applying their camp experience to future education and career opportunities.

We value the educational prospects [School/University Name] could provide our participants. During camp staff training in [Month], your team may:

- Discuss educational pathways aligned with participants' interests.
- Offer workshops on academic success, career planning, and skill development.
- Host an educational visit to your campus.

We appreciate your support in creating pathways to education and employment for our program participants. Please share any other collaboration ideas.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

The dollar amount of Total Grant Federal funds for the program is \$2,499,771. The percentage of the total costs of the program which will be financed with Federal money is 58% and the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the program that will be financed by non-governmental sources amounts to 42% or \$1,826,531.

"The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Title I) is an equal opportunity program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities in recruitment brochures and other materials that are ordinarily distributed or communicated in written and/or oral form, electronically and/or on paper, to staff, clients, or the public at large, to describe programs financially assisted under Title I of WIOA or the requirements for participation by recipients and participants.

#### **Workforce Development** Partner Letter

[Date]

[Recipient Name], [Recipient Title] [Organization Name] [Organization Address]

Dear [Recipient Name],

Girl Scouts is excited to collaborate with [Workforce Organization Name] through the Camp Counselor Career Catalyst grant. This grant serves underserved youth ages 15-21 who are working at Girl Scout summer camps. Our goal is to advise participants on applying camp skills to future careers.

[Workforce Organization Name]'s workforce development expertise could greatly benefit our participants. During our [Month] camp staff training, your team may:

- Provide workforce readiness training (communication, teamwork, leadership).
- Offer guidance on job searching, resume writing, and interviewing.
- Discuss facilitating connections with local employers or internship opportunities.

We look forward to working together to create employment pathways for our program participants and welcome your suggestions for any other collaborations.

Sincerely, [Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

The dollar amount of Total Grant Federal funds for the program is \$2,499,771. The percentage of the total costs of the program which will be financed with Federal money is 58% and the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the program that will be financed by non-governmental sources amounts to 42% or \$1,826,531.

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# Program Participant On-Ramps

Recruiting participants into the Camp Counselor Career Catalyst program smoothly is important. To begin, you'll want to communicate the value of the camp counselor position. Below are some key points to include.

# Why Work at a Girl Scout Summer Camp?

Working at a Girl Scout camp is more than just a job—it's an adventure. Camp staff can look forward to...

- Learning Valuable Skills: Staff learn important skills like leadership, teamwork, communication, and problemsolving in an outdoor setting.
- **Developing Workforce Skills:** They build organization, time management, and adaptability skills while managing groups of campers.
- Receiving Medical Training: Staff often receive first aid, CPR, and other medical training, giving them lifesaving skills useful well beyond camp.
- Earning Certifications: Staff can get certified in outdoor activities like archery, canoeing, and lifeguarding, as well as programs like Leave No Trace.

Working at a Girl Scout camp offers abundant opportunities for personal growth, professional development, and positively impacting youth.

# What Camp Staff Can **Expect at Camp**

Every day at camp is filled with Girl Scout traditions, camaraderie, and adventure. Camp staff can look forward to...

- Outdoor Immersion: As outdoor stewards, staff nurture campers' love of nature through hiking, outdoor skill building, and the undertaking of conservation projects.
- Communal Living: Living in the camp community, staff guide campers and help them grow in a safe, inclusive environment.
- Lasting Friendships: Sharing in challenges and triumphs create lifelong friendships among staff members.
- Fun, Safety, and Growth: Beyond rewarding work with youth, staff engage in fun activities like campfires, songs, and team building, promoting personal growth and leadership while always prioritizing safety.

# Benefits for Participants

Program participants working as camp staff enjoy additional opportunities as well. These may include...

- Focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice: Camp staff may learn invaluable skills that help them cultivate welcoming and inclusive environments.
- **Skill Building:** Staff are able to develop skills essential to future employment and education, such as communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution.
- Community Engagement: Staff can enhance the impact of their camp experience by engaging with community partners—networking and building connections that extend beyond the camp setting.
- Career Opportunities: Camp staff can leverage the potential of their role to equip them for various career paths, like teaching and outdoor education.

# Recruitment

The Camp Counselor Career Catalyst program aims to reach young people from underserved segments of local communities who may not typically apply for summer camp positions. Make sure your recruitment efforts target all areas and demographics within your council's jurisdiction.

# **Recruiting Participants** for the Program

Consider these strategies to enhance your outreach:

#### Diversify recruitment channels.

- Partner with nonprofits, community centers, and schools, focusing on segments of your community that are underrepresented in your council membership to extend your reach.
- Leverage social media, community newsletters, and local events to connect.
- Build partnerships with organizations that are connected to communities you're not already connected to.

#### Engage education/ workforce agencies.

- Collaborate with local workforce boards to access their networks.
- Work with career counselors and job specialists to promote the program as a workforce development opportunity.

#### Leverage employer partnerships.

- Promote the program to employers as a way to build transferable professional skills for participants.
- Highlight how camp counseling teaches skills valuable across various industries.
- Invite council sponsors and funders to lead or participate in program workshops as a volunteer engagement opportunity.

#### Promote community engagement.

- Host informational sessions/workshops in partnership with community organizations.
- Encourage current/former participants to share testimonials to inspire new recruits.

#### Implement targeted outreach.

- Remember to focus your efforts on specific underrepresented groups.
- Work with experts in diversity, equity, and inclusion to develop inclusive messaging and materials.

#### Offer incentives and highlight benefits.

- Provide financial assistance, stipends, certifications, equipment, and travel assistance to encourage participation.
- Emphasize long-term benefits like enhanced employability and career advancement likelihood.

#### Provide ongoing support.

- Create program off-ramps from the role of camp counselor toward educational and workforce opportunities.
- Establish mentorship programs to support participants' continued learning.
- Offer continued career counseling, resume workshops, and networking opportunities.

#### Continuously evaluate and improve.

- Monitor recruitment strategies based on data.
- Gather input from stakeholders to identify areas for innovation.

By establishing diverse partnerships and creative outreach strategies, your council can effectively recruit for the program and expand access to valuable workforce development experiences for underrepresented communities.

# Translate Camp Skills to Workforce Skills

When crafting job descriptions for camp staff roles, it's important to highlight how the experience builds valuable workforce skills that are highly transferable across various industries. This strategic positioning can appeal to candidates seeking professional development opportunities who are also excited about working at camp, positioning the roles as enriching experiences that prepare them for future career success.

Consider the following tips:

- 1. Lead with an overview emphasizing how the camp role cultivates critical competencies valued by employers, such as leadership, problem-solving, and communication skills.
- 2. Within the core responsibilities section, thoughtfully weave in language that ties specific camp duties to the development of transferable skills (for example: "Facilitate group activities that promote teamwork and interpersonal skills," "Oversee compliance with safety protocols, honing risk management abilities," "Maintain detailed records, showing attention to detail and organizational skills").
- 3. In the qualifications or requirements, include any preferred skills or experiences that align with the transferable competencies highlighted (for example: "Prior experience leading group activities and projects" for leadership skills, "Excellent verbal and written communication abilities" for interpersonal communication, "Ability to remain calm and level-headed in stressful situations" for adaptability).

- 4. Dedicate a separate section for listing the transferable workforce skills applicants can develop through the camp experience, using the examples provided in the list below (such as commitment to learning, adaptability, and attention to detail).
- 5. Consider including testimonials or quotes from past staff members who have successfully leveraged their camp experience in other professional settings.

By intentionally framing camp staff roles through the lens of professional skill development, you can attract a wider pool of candidates seeking enriching experiences that prepare them for future career success.

Prominent transferable workplace skills and attributes that camp staff can develop:

- Commitment to lifelong learning
- Planning and organization
- Leadership and teamwork
- Adaptability and problem-solving
- Interpersonal communication
- Safety and risk management
- Attention to detail and record-keeping
- Regulatory compliance
- Commitment to continuous improvement
- Long-term strategic thinking
- Managing groups of young people with diverse needs
- Mindfulness around identity and inclusion
- Creating cohesion across a diverse team

## For Supervisors: Camp Staff Training Guidance

The Camp Counselor Career Catalyst program aims to enhance Girl Scout summer camp counselor employment by integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices into workforce development. This section outlines how supervisors can seamlessly incorporate the program playbook into existing camp staff training.

## Understanding the Program

The key objectives of the program include:

- Elevating the impact of summer camp counselor employment programs
- Strengthening community partnerships to increase access to qualified candidates
- Positioning camp employment as valuable workforce development and training

## Tips for Workforce Development Skills **Training**

The program can help camp staff recognize and leverage the valuable skills gained through their roles, preparing them for future career opportunities. Here's how you can facilitate:

## **Key Strategies**

- 1. Reflective Activities: Help camp staff connect camp responsibilities to in-demand job skills.
- 2. Resume/Cover Letter Development: Help staff showcase their transferable camp skills on job applications.
- 3. Industry Research: Guide camp staff in exploring the skills needed in the fields they're interested in.
- 4. Guest Speakers: Invite guests to share how they've transitioned from camp roles to other industries.
- 5. Professional Collaborations: Partner with local employers, educational institutions, and workforce agencies to support camp staff development.

6. Career Connections: Provide staff with access to internships, job shadowing opportunities, and mentorship programs.

## Translating Camp Skills to Workplace Settings

Help participants understand how their camp experiences translate to various industries and roles. Examples include...

- Safety and Risk Management: Valuable in healthcare, construction, and outdoor recreation
- Group Management and Leadership: Essential in team management, project coordination, and customer service roles
- Planning and Organization: Crucial in hospitality, event management, project coordination, and operations
- Childcare and Supervision: Relevant in education, social work, and customer service roles

## Implementing Workforce Development Principles

Reflect these principles consistently in the program's job descriptions, training materials, and surveys to align with workforce development goals.

- **Job Descriptions:** Highlight transferable skills gained, such as "Develop leadership skills by managing groups of 10-15 campers."
- Training Materials: Include exercises like "Skill Mapping," wherein counselors identify camp tasks and link them to professional competencies.
- Surveys: Ask questions like "What professional skills have you developed as a camp counselor, and how might you apply these in your future career?"

By providing this context and discussing the connections, camp staff can better understand how their experiences transfer to other jobs and be equipped to articulate their value to potential employers.

## Assessment Tools

Gathering feedback on the program from camp staff is essential to continuously improving curricula and supporting team members in their personal and professional development.

Below are examples of questions that can help you gather valuable insights as you evaluate the program and understand each staff member's experience during the summer camp season. Questions can be tailored to fit your camp and program needs.

#### **Girl Scout Summer Camp Staff Exit Interview**

lame:	
Position:	
Pate:	

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this exit interview. Your feedback is important to us as we strive to improve our Girl Scout summer camp experience for both staff and campers. Please answer openly and honestly the following questions:

- What motivated you to apply for a position at our camp this summer?
- Reflecting on your time at camp, what were the highlights of your experience?

- What specific skills or knowledge did you gain during your time at camp?
- Did you achieve any certifications during your time at camp? If so, please list them.
- How do you plan to use the skills you learned and certifications you earned this summer in your future job or educational opportunities?
- How did you find the workforce development training, including resume training, interview techniques, financial advice, and applying camp-learned skills to the real world?
- Did you feel supported by camp management and your colleagues during your time at camp? Please explain.
- What suggestions do you have for improving the staff experience at our camp?
- Would you consider returning to work at our summer camp next year?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your camp experience?

Thank you for your time and feedback.

Sincerely, [Camp Director Name] [Camp Name]

## Camp Staff Training Topics and Resources

Creating an unforgettable and meaningful Girl Scout summer camp experience begins by providing thorough and engaging training for the leadership team and new/ seasonal supervisors. This section highlights essential topics to make sure staff are well-prepared. It also includes ways to embed the Camp Counselor Career Catalyst program into existing camp training and recruitment programs.

## Girl Scout Leadership Team Training Topics

## Girl Scout Mission and Values

■ Embrace the heart of Girl Scouts by exploring our mission and values, with an emphasis on inclusivity and nurturing leadership.

## **Program Planning** and Implementation

- Discover how to design fun, age-appropriate programs that deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Get hands-on tips for creating activities that build teamwork, spark creativity, and encourage personal growth.

## Safety and Risk Management

- Engage in comprehensive safety training, covering routine protocols, emergency procedures, and risk assessments tailored to camp settings.
- Understand the importance of maintaining a safe, welcoming environment for everyone.

## Girl-Led Leadership

- Dive into the Girl Scout leadership model, empowering girls to take charge in decision-making and problemsolving.
- Learn effective strategies for facilitating girl-led activities and nurturing the development of leadership skills.

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice (DEIRJ)

- Gain insight into DEIRJ principles, learning how to tackle biases and help create inclusive spaces.
- Participate in activities and discussions that celebrate diversity and embrace differences within our community.

## Training Topics for New/ Seasonal Supervisors

## Leadership and Team Management

- Master the art of leading a team with effective communication, conflict resolution, and team-building techniques.
- Learn best practices for delegating tasks, providing constructive feedback, and creating a positive work environment.

## Camp Operations and Logistics

- Get a comprehensive overview of camp operations, from scheduling and budget management to facility maintenance and logistics coordination.
- Be familiar with camp-specific policies and procedures, including camper registration and equipment management.

## Staff Training and Development

- Explore strategies for training and mentoring seasonal staff, ensuring everyone feels supported and capable.
- Use tools to gather constructive feedback, conduct performance evaluations, and promote professional growth.
- Encourage staff to explore how everyday interactions, activities, and routines convey important lessons and values.
- Help staff cultivate skills of or involving teamwork, responsibility, resilience, and empathy through structured activities and reflective discussions.

## **Camper and Parent Communication**

- Learn effective communication techniques for interacting with campers and their caregivers, addressing inquiries and concerns and sharing camp updates.
- Build strong relationships with campers and their families, promoting a sense of community.

To accommodate busy schedules, consider which trainings can be done online.

By addressing these key topics in your training, you can help camp staff uphold a positive camp culture rooted in Girl Scout values and principles.

# Integrating the Program into Existing Camp Training and Recruitment Plans

This table outlines ways to integrate the Camp Counselor Career Catalyst program into your camp staff training as well as on an ongoing basis after camp.

Training Topic	Activity Examples	Expected Outcomes	Benefits to Participant	Value to Council
Resume Building	<ol> <li>Workshop on highlighting transferable skills</li> <li>Online resume builder resources</li> </ol>	■ Effective resumes tailored to future jobs	<ul> <li>Market         readiness for         employment</li> <li>Articulate         strengths/         experiences</li> </ul>	■ Develop workforce-ready talent pipeline
Interview Skills	Mock interviews     Tips on communication, including body language	<ul><li>Confidence in interviewing</li><li>Ability to convey strengths</li></ul>	<ul><li>Preparation for professional opportunities</li></ul>	■ Represent council's workforce development
Job Search	<ol> <li>Intro to job boards</li> <li>Application submission guidance</li> </ol>	<ul><li>Familiarity with job search process</li><li>Ability to pursue opportunities</li></ul>	<ul> <li>Transition to future careers</li> <li>Continued personal/ professional growth</li> </ul>	■ Showcase program impact
Transferring Skills	<ol> <li>Safety/risk management drills</li> <li>Group leadership</li> <li>Planning/budgeting</li> <li>Childcare techniques</li> </ol>	<ul> <li>Understanding applications of camp skills in real world</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Relevance of experience</li><li>Diverse skill acquisition</li></ul>	<ul><li>Substantiate value of program</li><li>Recruit future participants</li></ul>
Career Exploration	<ol> <li>Invite guest speakers</li> <li>Campus/workplace visits</li> <li>Counseling resources</li> </ol>	<ul><li>Exposure to potential paths</li><li>Goal setting</li></ul>	<ul><li>Informed decision making</li><li>Motivation for continual development</li></ul>	<ul><li>Partnership building</li><li>Program advocacy</li></ul>

By integrating relevant Camp Counselor Career Catalyst components as outlined above, your camp training can equip staff with workforce skills while highlighting the diverse applications of their experience—enhancing participants' future prospects and demonstrating the council's investment in our country's workforce.

## Program Participant Off-Ramps

Off-ramps play a vital role in transitioning participants from the immersive camp counselor experience to future endeavors. They provide camp staff with structured opportunities to:

- Reflect on their personal growth, accomplishments, and skills acquired at camp.
- Facilitate the integration of camp experiences into upcoming educational or professional pursuits.
- Understand how the camp role can serve as a stepping stone toward broader pathways.

Off-ramps allow participants to understand the transferable value of their camp experience and its potential to fuel personal and professional advancement.

## Connecting Participants with Community **Partners**

Establishing connections with community partners is key to providing effective off-ramps. Consider the following undertakings.

Mentorship Programs: Connect participants with mentors who can provide guidance, advice, and resources tailored to individual goals.

Workshops/Training: Host sessions on resume writing, interview skills, and career exploration facilitated by staff or industry professionals.

Networking Events: Coordinate events during which participants can connect with alumnae, partners, and professionals across various fields.

**Reflective Discussions:** Facilitate group discussions for participants to share experiences, articulate skills, and identify goals.

Resource Hub: Curate an online platform with information on education and job opportunities, scholarships, and related community resources.

Individualized Support: Offer personalized coaching, goalsetting support, and ongoing communication opportunities to empower each participant in their transition.

## **Continuing Education** Pathways

Extend the impact of the camp experience with continuing education initiatives that empower participants to explore diverse pathways for personal and professional growth.

### **Connecting to Higher Education** Institutions

- Organize campus tours, information sessions, and workshops in collaboration with colleges, universities, and technical schools.
- Expose participants to various academic/vocational programs, admission requirements, and career trajectories.

## **Building College Readiness**

- Facilitate workshops on time management, study habits, academic goal-setting, and effective communication.
- Enhance participants' critical-thinking, problem-solving, and self-advocacy skills for academic success by providing them access to trainings from partners in the education field.

## Providing Financial Literacy and FAFSA Support

- Offer guidance on budgeting, student loans, scholarships, and financial aid, including FAFSA completion.
- Collaborate with financial aid experts to ensure participants can make informed decisions about educational financing.

By thoughtfully implementing off-ramps and facilitating connections to community partners and educational institutions, you can empower participants to use their camp experience as a launchpad for future success, in alignment with the goals of the Camp Counselor Career Catalyst program.

## Conclusion

We hope this playbook empowers more and more council staff to effectively recruit, hire, and train summer camp counselors—emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion while investing in our collective workforce. By applying the

resources and strategies provided, you can emphasize the camp counselor program as a prominent platform for personal and professional growth, particularly for underserved communities.

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# Girl Scouts Camp Director Handbook



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## About This Handbook

Girl Scouts' National Camp Director Handbook is a living document, subject to updates based on evolving insights and policy changes.

Every summer, Girl Scouts across the country look forward to the magical experience of camp. It's a place where they forge new friendships, explore the natural world, and embark on thrilling outdoor adventures. From conquering ropes courses to navigating rapids, camp offers unparalleled opportunities for Girl Scouts of all ages and backgrounds to develop outdoor skills and life lessons—all while having fun!

This handbook is the go-to national guide for council staff running a successful Girl Scout camp. It was created to provide camp directors with all the tools they need to ensure a successful and safe camp season. Drawing from the collective wisdom of multiple Girl Scout councils, it covers topics ranging from budgeting to program implementation. Whether you're a seasoned pro or new to your role, you'll find valuable resources—including practical advice, sample guidelines, and much more—to help you

Girl Scout Leadership Experience

\_\_\_\_\_\_

**GSLE** 

create safe, inclusive, and fun outdoor adventures and environments for all campers.

We know every council and camp is unique—so feel free to adapt the information in the handbook to fit your specific policies, practices, and beloved camp traditions. You'll also want to consider factors such as size, location, available resources, and the specific needs of your campers. Keep in mind that each council's processes may also differ, so you'll want to consult with your leadership team to help you understand how camp operates within your council.

#### To get started...

Review the table of contents on pages 2-4 and "Recommended Annual Timeline" on page 9 to familiarize yourself with the key components of operating a Girl Scout camp.

Intended Audience: This handbook was designed for council staff members, especially camp directors, who manage and otherwise support council camps.

Acron	Acronyms GSUSA		A Girl Scouts of the United States of America	
ACA	American Camp Association	HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability	
AED	Automated External Defibrillator		Act	
САРТА	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act	HR	Human Resources	
CIT	Counselor in Training	MY	Membership Year (October–September)	
CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation	SAC	Safety Activity Checkpoints	
DEIRJ	Diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice	SWAPS	Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere	
EAP	Emergency Action Plan	WIT	Wrangler in Training	

Important note: Links to third-party websites are provided for convenience only. Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) does not endorse or support the content of third-party links and is not responsible for the content or accuracy, availability, or privacy/security practices of other websites, and/or services or goods that may be linked to or advertised on such third-party websites. By clicking on a third-party link, you will leave the current GSUSA site whereby policies of such third-party link may differ from those of GSUSA.

## Why Girl Scout Camp?

Girl Scouts helps its members build courage, confidence, and character, and make the world a better place. Every camper at Girl Scout camp is a Girl Scout, whether they attend for a day, a week, or longer.

Girl Scout camp is more than outdoor adventures. It's a place where campers discover new abilities, grow in confidence, and form lasting friendships. In this unique environment, campers of a diversity of backgrounds come together to explore, learn, and grow. Whether it's their first or their sixth time participating, camp offers Girl Scouts excitement, laughter, and a sense of belonging.

## Why Outdoor Experiences Matter

Participating in outdoor experiences significantly benefits girls' overall well-being. Studies show that:

- Exposure to green spaces restores people's attention and improves cognitive functioning.
- Spending time outdoors reduces people's cortisol, a stress-inducing hormone,<sup>2</sup> and lowers blood pressure.<sup>3</sup>
- Learning new skills in nature increases people's self-confidence.⁴
- Having outdoor recreational experiences in early childhood strongly and positively influences people's environmental attitudes, 5 values, 6 and behaviors, 7 with experiences like hiking and camping cultivating a sense of responsibility for nature.8
- Check out "From Girl Scout Camp to Real-World Champ!" to learn more about the benefits of Girl Scout camp and being outdoors.

<sup>1.</sup> Berman, Marc G., Jonides, John, & Kaplan, Stephen (2008), The cognitive benefits of interacting with nature, Psychological Science, 19(12), 1207-12.

<sup>2.</sup> Li Q. (2010). Effect of forest bathing trips on human immune function. Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine, 15(1), 9-17.

<sup>3.</sup> Park, B.J., Tsunetsugu, Y., Kasetani, T., Kagawa, T., & Miyazaki, Y. (2010). The physiological effects of Shinrin-yoku (taking in the forest atmosphere or forest bathing): evidence from field experiments in 24 forests across Japan. Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine, 15(1), 18-26.

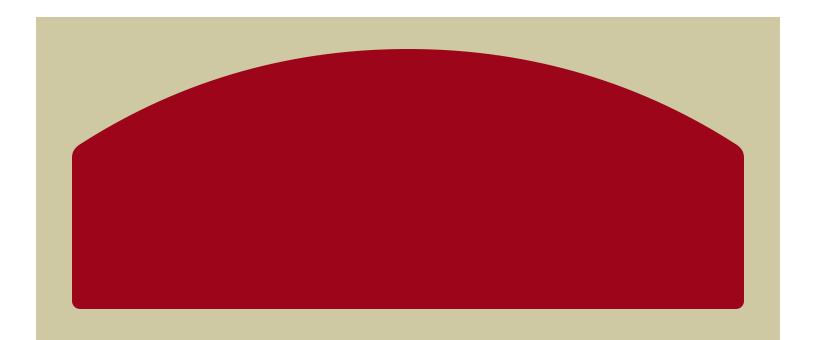
<sup>4.</sup> Palmberg, I.E. & Kuru, J. (2000). Outdoor activities as a basis for environmental responsibility. The Journal of Environmental Education, 31(4), 432–36.

<sup>5.</sup> Kaiser, F.G., Wolfing, S., & Fuhrer, U. (1999). Environmental attitude and ecological behavior. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 19, 1–19.

<sup>6.</sup> Bixler, R.D., Floyd, M.F., & Hammitt, W.E. (2002), Environmental socialization; Quantitative tests of the childhood play hypothesis, Environment and Behavior, 34, 795–818.

<sup>7.</sup> Poortinga, Wouter & Steg, Linda & Vlek, Charles. (2004). Values, environmental concern, and environmental behavior: A study into household energy use. Environment and Behavior, 36, 70-93.

<sup>8.</sup> Ewert, A. & Place, G. (2005). Early-life outdoor experiences and an individual's environmental attitudes. Leisure Sciences, 27, 225-39



## **SECTION 1:**

# Camp Essentials— Laying the Groundwork

## Chapter 1: Your Role in Shaping the Girl Scout Camp Experience

#### Introduction

As a camp director, you play a pivotal role in creating a safe and enriching Girl Scout camp environment that:

- Offers programs and activities inspired by the Girl Scout mission
- Finds camp staff equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to deliver exceptional programs
- Demonstrates the value of Girl Scouting and camp to families

In your role, you'll serve as a vital link between campers, staff, council leadership, Girl Scout families, and the community. This first chapter of the handbook provides relevant guidance and resources to support you.

While your responsibilities are many, remember that your council and camp leadership team are there to help you manage tasks and bring diverse perspectives toward the building of a dynamic camp program.

## Connecting with the Girl Scout Camp Community

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) is dedicated to building a strong, collaborative camp community. We aim to give Girl Scouts an experience where they can create lasting memories, develop essential skills, be creative, and have an environment to immerse themselves in the wonders of the great outdoors.

If you're a camp director or in a camp leadership role, you're invited to join in on these great connection opportunities:

- Camp Community Calls: Monthly chats on hot topics, clever ideas, and problem-solving. We meet every third Thursday from October through May.
- Unpacking Camp: A yearly virtual get-together in late September to look back at the prior season and kick off planning for the next one.
- Girl Scout Kindred Session at the ACA National Conference: An in-person meetup before the ACA national conference kicks off.

Check out GSUSA's Camp page on gsConnect for more information.

### **Recommended Annual Timeline**

Every camp and council are unique, so we've created a flexible annual timeline for camp directors. You'll find more details about each task and more topical timelines offered throughout this handbook.

To make navigation easier, we've grouped tasks into five categories, each linked to specific chapters:

## **Council Operations**

Chapters 1-3, 16

## **On-Site Operations**

Chapters 5-8

## Registration

Chapter 4

#### Staffing

Chapters 10-12

#### **Program Planning**

Chapters 9, 13-16

## **Recommended Annual Timeline**

Annual and Ongoing Tasks  Connect Your Camp with Your Council and the Wider Camp Community		
Category	Tasks	
	Plan and manage camp budgets: one for the current membership year (MY) camp season, and another for the upcoming MY camp season.	
Council	<ul> <li>(Optional) Do an annual ACA paperwork check, including to ensure outdoor team memberships are renewed.</li> </ul>	
Operations	<ul> <li>(Optional) Get ready for the four-year ACA camp peer review and compiling of the ACA binder (details at www.acacamps.org).</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>(Optional) Attend the ACA regional and national conferences, including the Girl Scout Kindred Session at ACA National.</li> </ul>	
On-Site Operations	■ Review and update your camp's Emergency Action Plan (EAP).	
Program Planning	Support year-round council programming, especially outdoor and camp-related activities.	

September Wrap Up Summer Camp and Look Ahead		
Category	Tasks	
Overall	■ Debrief the summer with your council and start planning for the next season. Cover everything from programs and registration to budget, inclusion, and staffing. Don't forget to talk about camp menus, apparel, inclusivity efforts, and your camp store.	
Council Operations	<ul> <li>Gather your camp leadership team.</li> <li>Settle any lingering invoices from the recent summer.</li> <li>Lock in the budget for next MY's camp, pending leadership approval.</li> <li>Join GSUSA's virtual "Unpacking Camp" gathering.</li> </ul>	
Staffing	<ul> <li>Map out your staffing needs for the upcoming summer, considering expected camper numbers and roles like kitchen staff (or food service providers), medical personnel, and activity specialists.</li> <li>If your council is able to, meet with HR and DEIRJ leaders about potential staff changes (new positions, efforts to boost diversity, adjustments to counselor numbers, etc.).</li> <li>Decide if you want to bring on international staff or work with an international staffing agency.</li> </ul>	

October Gear Up for Registration and Staff Recruitment			
Category	Tasks		
Council Operations	<ul> <li>Check in with your camp leadership team on season prep progress.</li> <li>Start crunching numbers for next MY's camp budget (e.g., MY26 camp season in MY25).</li> <li>Review and tweak the current MY camp budget, making sure programs, capacity, and staffing align.</li> <li>Touch base with other departments about potential price hikes.</li> <li>Join the monthly Camp Community call held every third Thursday.</li> </ul>		
Registration	<ul> <li>Team up with other departments to nail down and announce camp registration's opening date.</li> <li>Start collaborating with Marketing on this year's camp guide layout, content, and program updates.</li> <li>Partner with your DEIRJ pro to review registration materials.</li> </ul>		
Staffing	<ul> <li>If your council is able to, team up with HR and DEIRJ leaders to refresh job descriptions and hiring processes. Discuss goals of diversity in identities and experiences among staff and specific strategies to meet these goals.</li> <li>Reach out to last year's staff and recent CIT 2 grads about applying for the upcoming summer.</li> <li>Connect with local community groups to help you build a diverse camp team that reflects the communities you serve.</li> </ul>		

November  Prep for Registration and Kick Off Staff Recruitment			
Category	Tasks		
Council Operations	<ul> <li>Meet with Finance to plan next MY's camp budget and lock in camper costs for the current MY.</li> <li>Join the monthly Camp Community call.</li> </ul>		
Registration	<ul> <li>Double-check registration forms and waivers before uploading.</li> <li>Work with Marketing on the camp confirmation packet, promo materials for campers and staff applicants, and a game plan for discounts, scholarships, and online promos throughout summer.</li> </ul>		
Staffing	<ul> <li>Team up with Marketing, DEIRJ, and HR to spread the word about job openings across various platforms.</li> <li>Scout out staff recruitment events like college job fairs, green fairs, and ACA international job fairs.</li> <li>(Optional) Get ready for international staff selection events and update any international agency accounts.</li> </ul>		

December Tease Registration and Continue Staff Recruitment			
Category	Tasks		
Council Operations	<ul> <li>Touch base with your camp leadership team on season preparation progress.</li> <li>Start drafting the budget for next MY's camp.</li> <li>Join the monthly Camp Community call.</li> </ul>		
Registration	<ul> <li>Work with Marketing to get the final camp guide and confirmation packet online.</li> <li>Plan promotions for camp events and staff recruitment fairs.</li> <li>Send previous campers a year-end postcard with registration opening info.</li> <li>Before registration goes live, brief customer care and data/IT teams on FAQs and key details.</li> <li>(Optional) Open registration for returning campers and members.</li> </ul>		
Staffing	<ul> <li>Team up with HR to update staff contract forms with confirmed details.</li> <li>Host an end-of-year gathering or reunion for past and recent staff, encouraging them to apply for open positions.</li> </ul>		

January Launch Registration and Hire Staff		
Category	Tasks	
Council Operations	<ul> <li>Keep working on next MY's camp budget.</li> <li>Join the monthly Camp Community call.</li> <li>Once registration opens, keep a close eye on numbers. If they're lagging, brainstorm with Marketing on advertising and backup plans for spending and staffing.</li> </ul>	
Registration	<ul> <li>Launch registration for all campers (returning, new, members, and non-members).</li> <li>Field emails and questions from caregivers.</li> </ul>	
Staffing	Start reviewing applications, interviewing candidates, checking references, and extending job offers. Keep your staffing goals in mind: aim for a diverse pool of applicants.	
Program Planning	<ul> <li>Start mapping out each session's program schedule, including check-in/out processes, activity times and locations, and staff-to-camper ratios.</li> <li>Get your DEIRJ team's input on the draft schedule.</li> </ul>	

February Continue Registration, Hire Staff, and Create Your Program Schedule			
Category	Tasks		
Council Operations	<ul> <li>Meet with your camp leadership team to review progress on camp season preparation. This is a great time to discuss registration numbers and program schedules.</li> <li>Join the monthly Camp Community call.</li> </ul>		
Registration	<ul> <li>Regularly check registration numbers and camper locations to update program numbers and adjust staffing needs. This helps determine if any areas need increased marketing.</li> <li>Answer emails and questions from caregivers, keeping in mind that clear communication builds trust with families.</li> <li>(Optional) Work with Marketing to initiate a monthly newsletter for registered families. Start building excitement about the upcoming camp season!</li> </ul>		
Staffing	<ul> <li>Continue your staff hiring process, adjusting your staffing needs according to registration numbers.</li> <li>Confirm dates for your pre-camp staff training.</li> </ul>		
Program Planning	■ Finalize the program schedule for each session. Create a comprehensive list of vendor contracts, supplies, equipment, and any additional staff or experts needed for your programs.		

March Continue Registration, Hire Staff, and Begin Program Preparations			
Category	Tasks		
Council Operations	<ul> <li>Begin discussions and updates for next year's camp budget (such as MY26 budget in MY25).</li> <li>Join the monthly Camp Community call.</li> </ul>		
On-Site Operations	■ Draft your camp's menu using past years' menus and any relevant data. Consider dietary trends and camper favorites.		
Registration	<ul> <li>Keep checking registration numbers and camper locations regularly. Update program number adjust staffing needs, and identify any areas needing increased marketing.</li> <li>Answer emails and questions from caregivers.</li> <li>Send reminders to camper families about payment deadlines.</li> <li>(Optional) Work with Marketing to send monthly newsletter to registered families. Keep building the excitement!</li> </ul>		
Staffing	<ul> <li>Continue your staff hiring process, marketing open positions and adjusting staffing needs according to registration numbers.</li> <li>Conduct background checks for all new and returning staff.</li> <li>Update staff policies and have staff complete paperwork by their due dates. Stay organized to avoid last-minute rushes.</li> <li>Plan the content for your pre-camp staff training, deciding on important topics and activities.</li> </ul>		
Program Planning	<ul> <li>Once the majority of registrations are in, begin securing all supplies, equipment, transportation, and vendors for each activity in your program sessions.</li> </ul>		

April Finalize Camp Programs and Prepare for Staff Training				
Category	Tasks			
Council Operations	<ul> <li>Hold a final planning session with your camp leadership team to review:</li> <li>Camp policies and procedures, such as for emergencies, managing staff performance, and inclusion</li> <li>Current staffing and open positions</li> <li>Registration numbers, program schedule, and any outstanding activity preparation for each session</li> <li>Any updates or concerns related to program preparations</li> <li>Join the monthly Camp Community call.</li> </ul>			
On-Site Operations	<ul> <li>Purchase additional insurance to cover all people who will be on camp property, including non-members or uninsured individuals.</li> <li>Schedule an on-site pre-camp inspection with property staff. Review the Emergency Action Plan, property-specific information, and evacuation routes. Make any necessary improvements before camp starts.</li> <li>Confirm the start date for kitchen staff and when they can clean and set up the kitchen.</li> <li>Create a spreadsheet with estimated meal numbers and camper/staff counts for each week. This helps with meal planning and any related contracts.</li> </ul>			
Registration	<ul> <li>Continue monitoring registration numbers and camper locations regularly. Adjust program numbers, staffing needs, and marketing efforts as needed.</li> <li>Answer emails and questions from caregivers.</li> <li>Remind camper families of any payment deadlines.</li> <li>(Optional) Send monthly newsletter to registered families with rallying updates about the upcoming camp season!</li> </ul>			
Staffing	<ul> <li>Continue your staff hiring process, including marketing open positions, adjusting staffing needs, conducting background checks, and ensuring staff complete all required paperwork.</li> <li>Create a full schedule for your pre-camp staff training, including arrivals, arrangements for work schedules and lodging, and a detailed agenda for each day.</li> <li>Send staff pre-camp communications and a pre-camp survey. Include dates and times for staff training to help participants prepare.</li> <li>(Optional) Complete international staff hiring and recruit home hospitality hosts if applicable, keeping in mind that cultural diversity can enrich the camp experience.</li> </ul>			
Program Planning	Continue ordering supplies and equipment, and secure any vendors needed for your program sessions.			

May Complete Final Preparations for Camp Programs			
Category	Tasks		
Council Operations	<ul> <li>Meet with your camp leadership team to track progress on final preparations for the camp season.</li> <li>Join the monthly Camp Community call.</li> </ul>		
On-Site Operations	<ul> <li>Connect with your camp's local emergency services, keeping in mind the importance of maintaining these relationships.</li> <li>Prepare your kitchen for its annual health department inspection, which typically happens before the start of summer to ensure the kitchen can open for camp.</li> <li>Around mid-May, place your camp's first food order so it arrives in time for pre-camp staff training. (Kitchen staff should handle subsequent orders.)</li> <li>Review menus with the cook, discussing any allergies or dietary needs of staff and campers and confirming that kitchen staff have the food and supplies they need to safely accommodate everyone.</li> </ul>		
Registration	<ul> <li>Continue checking registration numbers and camper locations regularly. Make final adjustments to program numbers, staffing, and marketing efforts.</li> <li>Promptly answer any last-minute emails and questions from caregivers. Help ease any precamp jitters!</li> <li>Send final reminders about payment deadlines to camper families.</li> <li>(Optional) Send out a final pre-camp newsletter to registered families. Provide any last-minute information and bring the excitement to a head!</li> </ul>		
Staffing	<ul> <li>Finalize your staff hiring process, including conducting any last background checks and completing any remaining paperwork.</li> <li>Create and share the final staff schedule, including arrival and training times, work schedules and lodging arrangements, and off-days.</li> </ul>		
Program Planning	<ul> <li>Finalize any outstanding contracts and order any remaining supplies or equipment.</li> <li>Review program schedules, staffing, and logistics. Double-check that everything is in place for a successful camp season.</li> </ul>		

Throughout the Camp Season: June–August  Implement and Evaluate Your Camp Programs				
Category	Tasks			
Council Operations	<ul> <li>Meet with your camp leadership team monthly to address updates, improvements, and potential concerns.</li> <li>Submit next year's camp budget for approval (such as MY26 budget in MY25). Update as needed and plan for your council board's approval.</li> <li>Adjust the current year's spending and staffing based on final registration numbers. Monitor budget throughout the season.</li> <li>Collect and submit all invoices and expense forms on time. Maintain accurate financial records.</li> </ul>			
On-Site Operations	<ul> <li>Safety and Risk Management: Share weekly reports with local emergency services on property occupancy. Maintain open communication with the property staff and your leadership team for safety. Conduct safety inspections of camp equipment before each use, and document inspections to prevent incidents.</li> <li>Transportation: Perform vehicle safety checks at least twice monthly, including tire pressure checks and wear inspections.</li> <li>Kitchen and Meals: Manage kitchen operations, including weekly meal counts and staff assignments. Plan for special dietary needs and off-site meals.</li> <li>Camp Closeout: Clean up, take inventory, and close camp at summer's end.</li> </ul>			
Registration	<ul> <li>Monitor registration numbers for upcoming sessions. Track attendance and capacity.</li> <li>Adjust sessions (open, close, merge) as needed to accommodate demand.</li> <li>Respond promptly to caregiver inquiries, and maintain clear communication with families.</li> <li>Send payment deadline reminders, and make sure all accounts are settled before sessions begin.</li> </ul>			
<ul> <li>Conduct pre-camp staff training, including first aid, CPR/AED, inclusivity, and program-scertifications.</li> <li>Hold weekly staff meetings to share updates, review schedules, and address concerns</li> <li>Conduct mid-season staff check-ins to share feedback and support.</li> <li>Perform end-of-season staff evaluations to discuss performance and potential for future.</li> </ul>				
Program Planning				

## **Making Council Connections**

Whether you're part of a multi-camp council or flying solo, remember you've got a whole network of support! If there are other camp directors at your council, team up to share ideas and streamline your processes. And if you're the only camp director, don't sweat it—your entire council has your back, plus there's a national camp community ready to support you!

## Council Connections with Camp

Below are some ideas for teaming up with various council departments, with more details in related chapters.

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Team or Department	How You Can Work Together	Related Chapter(s)	
Executive Leadership	Set camp goals that fit your council's big picture.  Talk with the executive team about what success looks like for your camp.  They can also help double-check your risk and liability plans before summer hits. Keep them in the loop about your progress and any hiccups along the way.		
Property	Create a safe, memorable on-site experience for campers.  Your property managers, rangers, and maintenance crew are your go-to people for site inspections, budget insights, and emergency plans. They might also have ideas for using camp year-round to support council goals.		
Finance and Accounting	Keep your camp programs financially healthy.  The people in this department are great for help with budget planning and tracking throughout the year. They can help spot financial risks and balance your program needs with expenses and revenue goals. They might also have a system for tracking payments and invoices.		
Membership and Outreach			
Product Program	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,		
Get the word out about camp to new and returning families. This team can create materials like your camp guide, orientation packet, social media posts, and even postcards. They're your connection to troops, camp families, and council members about camp programs and open dates. Share with them why camp is so special, and brainstorm ways to reach communities across lines of difference.		4	

(continued on following page)

Team or Department	How You Can Work Together	Related Chapter(s)
Retail	Support your camp store.  Work with Marketing to design camp gear. The retail team can help set up store procedures and get you any badges or patches you need for campers.	
Fund Development	Find funding for camp and Girl Scouts.  This team can help you reach your camp goals through fundraising. They might find grants, run campaigns for big camp projects, or fundraise for camper scholarships. Don't forget to loop them in on Friends of Camp groups and alumnae events!	
Customer Care	Answer questions and handle concerns.  Customer Care is your front line when registration opens and throughout the summer. They can keep families in the loop about any big updates or changes at camp	
Data and IT	Gather info and keep systems running smoothly.  This team is key when it comes to registration and evaluations. They'll help you collect all the necessary forms and data from campers and their families.	4
Girl Scout Experience and Program	Bring Girl Scout programming magic to camp.  This team knows what's trending with our members and young people in general. They can help you weave Girl Scout activities, badges, and awards into your camp program. Together, you can create camp experiences that fit your council's program strategy.	2, 13–16
Volunteer and Adult Development	Plan for adult trainings at camp.  While camp is often for youth, adults might use the site for trainings too.  This team can fill you in on adult training requirements and help you create outdoor-focused training programs.	
Human Resources		
DEIRJ Committee or team  Bring diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice (DEIRJ) to life at camp. These values are at the heart of Girl Scouting and should shine through at camp. Team up with your DEIRJ leaders to look at your programs, policies, and practices. The goal? Make sure every camper and camp supporter feels welcome and included. For more, check out GSUSA's DEIRJ gsConnect page.		All

## **Building Your Camp Leadership Team**

Establishing a solid camp leadership team is important for getting council buy-in and running a smooth camp operation. Meet regularly to plan and prep for summer and to tackle potential challenges. Here's who you might want on your team:

- Executive leadership (person operating the property and camp, such as the COO, VP of programs, etc.)
- Camp directors across all council camps

- Property director and ranger(s)
- Marketing and communications director
- Retail coordinators
- DEIRJ practitioners
- Activity specialists (seasonal)
- Nurse/health staff (seasonal)
- Assistant camp directors (seasonal)

Sample Camp Leadership Team Timeline		
When?	Task	
September	Gather your new or refreshed camp leadership team. Look back at last summer's wins and learning opportunities, then start dreaming up the next camp season.	
October-March	Set up regular meetings (maybe every month or two) to keep tabs on progress and resolve any issues.	
April	Have one last planning session to make sure everyone's on the same page for the upcoming camp season.	
May-August	Meet monthly (or more often if needed) to share updates, fine-tune your program, and tackle any concerns that pop up.	

## **Documentation and Keeping Track**

Good record-keeping helps everyone stay on the same page, follow the rules, and look back on what happened. Whether you prefer pen-and-paper or digital methods, find a system that works for you. Just check with your council's HR team to make sure you're following their policies.

## **Documentation helps you...**

- Track important info. Keep records of essential information, such as camper registrations, medical specifics, and emergency contacts, to promote the wellbeing of campers and staff.
- **Be legally compliant.** Show that your camp can provide evidence of compliance with local laws and regulations.
- Communicate clearly. Note schedules, policies, and guidelines for staff to keep everyone on the same page and provide a reference for caregivers about their campers' experiences.
- Evaluate and improve. Collect camper feedback, staff performance write-ups, and program outcomes to help you evaluate the success of your programs, identify areas for improvement, and make more informed decisions for future camp sessions.

■ **Stay safe.** Outline safety procedures, incident reports, and any other relevant information to help you manage risks associated with camp.

#### What Should You Document?

- Camper Information: Registration forms, medical history, dietary restrictions, and emergency contact information
- Staff Information: Applications, background checks, interview notes, certifications, and training records
- Policies and Procedures: Camp rules, safety instructions, emergency plans, and area-specific procedures
- Incident Reports: Any accidents, injuries, or incidents that occur with campers and with staff members
- **Program Plans:** Schedules, field trips, vendor contracts, and other essential program information
- Financial Records: Budgets, expenses, and revenue related to camp operations
- Evaluation and Feedback: Camper and staff feedback, program evaluations, and ideas for improvement

## American Camp Association: A Mark of Quality

The American Camp Association (ACA) is the national accrediting organization for all types of camps. They focus on health, safety, and risk management practices. Getting ACA accredited is voluntary and involves a peer review process.

Here's why getting ACA accredited matters:

- It demonstrates that your camp meets industryaccepted and government-recognized standards.
- It shows you're taking steps to ensure the health and safety of campers and staff.
- It helps create consistent guidelines and procedures for staff across seasons.
- It's recognized in legal situations and may reduce insurance rates.

ACA membership also comes with professional development opportunities. Many councils provide ACA memberships for their outdoor staff and attend the annual ACA conference. If you're interested in accreditation, visit https://www.acacamps.org.

For more information, check out these ACA resources:

#### **Introduction to ACA Accreditation**

#### **Benefits of ACA Membership**

#### **ACA Now Newsletter**

Important Note: ACA Accreditation doesn't replace any required licenses for operating a camp.

## Your Evolving Role as Camp Director

Some camp directors work seasonally, while others have year-round responsibilities. In many councils, camp directors join the program team after the summer, supporting outdoor programming throughout the year.

#### Tips for Transitioning from Your Summer Role

- Plan for downtime: Discuss with your supervisor scheduling some rest after the summer season.
- Prepare for fall programing: Plan camp or outdoor programs for the regular membership year at least six months in advance.
- Retain key staff: Consider hiring some of your activity specialists part-time for weekend programs during the year.

## **Chapter 2: Understanding Girl Scout Camp**

#### Introduction

As a Girl Scout camp director, you're responsible for running a camp and making sure the experience aligns with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE).

This chapter explores Girl Scouts, the GSLE, and the importance of camp in the Girl Scout community. It will help you create meaningful camp experiences that support the development of young leaders.

#### Resources

Camper Ages and Stages: These resource sheets in the appendix provide GSLE information for each Girl Scout level in the context of camp and offer tips for supportive adults to enhance the camp experience for all.

## The Benefits of Camp Activities

Girl Scout summer camp isn't any ordinary experience it's an adventure filled with time-honored traditions and personal growth opportunities. We're committed to creating an inclusive environment in which every camper, regardless of their needs, can thrive. Some of the benefits of traditional summer camp activities include...

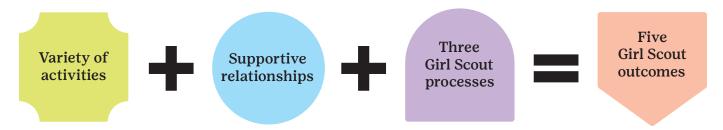
- Community and Social Skill Development: Camps help their campers create lasting memories and friendships. Shared meals, team games, and other bonding activities promote cooperation and teamwork among campers.
- Outdoor Experiences: From archery to kayaking, outdoor activities promote physical fitness and help campers plug into nature. Activities like hiking and canoeing help campers develop a love for the great outdoors while moving their bodies and having fun.
- Survival Skill Development: Where else can you learn to build a shelter or cook over a campfire? Learning these unique survival skills boosts campers' selfconfidence and gives them a sense of accomplishment.
- Fostering of Independence: Camp challenges campers' comfort zones in the best way possible. Whether it's through tackling a ropes course, going backpacking, or reading a map, campers learn to navigate challenges and grow more self-reliant.

- Nurturing of Creativity: From campfire skits to friendship bracelet making, camp offers campers activities related to visual arts, music, and drama, allowing campers to express themselves and discover hidden talents.
- Character and Value Development: Campers develop leadership skills and self-awareness as they practice fair play and teamwork as part of living with and experiencing camp with other people.
- **Memories and Belonging:** Camp provides campers with a space that promotes authentic self-expression and the cultivating of new friendships. Participating in traditional camp activities, such as campfires and camp songs, can help foster a sense of belonging for campers and strengthen their connections to other campers and the wider Girl Scout community.

These benefits are ultimately realized through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE).

### The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

The GSLE is our evidence-based model that provides the framework for Girl Scouts to develop their leadership potential. It offers structure, support, and meaningful connections that help Girl Scouts grow into confident leaders.



What Girl Scouts Do: A Variety of Activities			
Discover	Connect	Take Action	
<ul> <li>Understand themselves and their values</li> <li>Develop skills in areas of interest</li> <li>Appreciate nature's beauty and wonders</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Make new friends and strengthen existing bonds</li> <li>Experience community living with peers and adults</li> <li>Develop self-reliance and group skills through planning and problem-solving</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Improve their surroundings</li> <li>Serve their camp and broader community</li> <li>Draw inspiration from the Girl Scout Promise and Law</li> </ul>	

## Who They Do It With: Supportive Relationships

With guidance from caring adults and peers, campers try new things and discover the power of heart-led leadership.

How They Do It: The Girl Scout Processes		
Girl-Led	Learning By Doing	Cooperative Learning
Girls of all ages take the lead, pursuing their interests and building confidence.	Hands-on activities help girls develop a can-do attitude and resilience.	Girls experience the strength of teamwork, learning to respect and collaborate with others.

## How They Benefit: Our Outcomes

When camp integrates the GSLE, girls develop skills to make a positive impact, now and in the future.

#### **GSLE Outcomes**

Strong Sense of Self: Have confidence in themselves and their abilities and form positive identities.

**Positive Values:** Act ethically, honestly, and responsibly, and show concern for others.

Challenge Seeking: Take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes.

**Healthy Relationships:** Develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.

Community Problem-Solving: Desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create action plans to solve them.

#### **Outdoor Outcomes**

Outdoor Interest: Develop a love for and interest in nature.

Outdoor Confidence: Gain confidence in their ability to take on new challenges and learn from them.

Outdoor Competence: Learn to engage safely and responsibly in a range of outdoor activities.

**Environmental Stewardship:** Come to understand how their behaviors impact the environment and what they can do to protect the natural world.

## Girl Scout Camp Culture and Traditions

Girl Scout camps have unique traditions that create a sense of belonging and community. These traditions make camp memorable for both campers and staff.

#### A Core Tradition: Girl Scout Promise and Law

Recited daily, often during flag ceremonies, the Promise and Law reinforces Girl Scout values and creates a shared sense of purpose. This practice strengthens campers' commitment to Girl Scout principles and promotes unity among the group.

#### **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.

\* Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word "God" in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word "God."

#### **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.

## **Girl Scout Camp Culture and Traditions**

- **Campfires:** Evening gatherings featuring songs, skits, and storytelling build community and provide a platform for shared experiences. These events enhance social bonds, boost confidence through performance opportunities, and create lasting memories for campers. Modified "campfires" are also an option if your camp is in an area with fire restrictions.
- Flag Ceremonies: Daily flag raising and lowering, accompanied by the Pledge of Allegiance and Girl Scout Promise, and reinforce Girl Scout values. These ceremonies can help campers develop a sense of citizenship and establish a routine in camp life.
- Camp Names: Fun nicknames for staff help create a playful atmosphere and separate camp life from the outside world. This tradition can help campers feel more comfortable interacting with staff and adds to the camp's unique culture. Be thoughtful in choosing camp names to make sure that they are respectful and align with DEIRJ values.
- **SWAPS:** SWAPS stands for "Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere." They're small, handcrafted tokens that campers make from a variety

- of materials to reflect their individual camp experiences and exchange with one another. SWAPS help campers remember their camp friends and time together.
- **Songs:** A variety of songs for different occasions can unify the group and maintain camp spirit. Singing together enhances group cohesion, teaches musical skills, and helps preserve camp culture across generations.
- Friendship Circles: Representing the unbroken chain of friendship among Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world, the Friendship Circle is often used during campfires and by camp units to end each day. Campers form a circle, then those who are able stand, cross their right arm over their left, and clasp hands with their friends on both sides. Everyone then makes a silent wish as a friendship squeeze is passed from hand to hand around the circle.
- Tent/Cabin Inspections: Regular cleanliness checks teach responsibility and teamwork, helping campers develop life skills, promoting hygiene, and instilling a sense of pride in personal space. Oftentimes the cleanest tents or cabins are recognized during mealtimes or other unit or all-camp events.

- Awards Ceremony: Recognizing camper achievements acknowledges personal growth and skill development. These events celebrate learning and can boost campers' self-esteem and motivate their continued participation.
- Friendship Bracelets: Friendship bracelets are commonly crafted and exchanged by campers to symbolize their friendships and connections made at camp.
- Service and Take Action Projects: For Juniors and above, community service or improvement initiatives apply Girl Scout values in practical ways. These

- projects develop campers' leadership skills, promote environmental stewardship, and instill a sense of civic responsibility. Many camps incorporate projects that are environmental in nature.
- Council-Specific Traditions: Each Girl Scout council may have unique traditions. Reach out to staff or volunteers to learn about specific ceremonies, activities, or rituals that are special to your council. These might include particular opening or closing ceremonies, or traditional camp activities unique to your area.

## **Cultivating Inclusive Camp Traditions**

As camp practices evolve, it's important to be aware that some long-standing traditions may have unintended cultural or religious implications. Regularly reviewing and updating camp activities promotes a more inclusive and equitable experience for all campers. Consider the following:

- Actively seek feedback on traditions from staff and caregivers, as some campers may not feel comfortable voicing concerns.
- Trust and listen to staff members who question certain traditions, even if the reasons may not be immediately clear to you.

- Embrace change as an opportunity to improve traditions for future generations of Girl Scouts.
- Create spaces for individual needs, such as quiet time or prayer, which may conflict with some camp routines.
- Include regular downtime in the schedule, especially before meals, bedtime, and high-energy activities. This is supportive of all campers but especially those who are neurodivergent.
- Respect those who may not participate in certain ceremonies due to personal beliefs, without drawing attention to their non-participation.

## Ages and Stages of Campers

Girl Scouts serves girls from kindergarten through 12th grade, with six progressive levels:

■ Daisy (K-1st grade)

- Junior (4th-5th grade)
- Senior (9th–10th grade)

- Brownie (2nd–3rd grade)
- Cadette (6th–8th grade)
- Ambassador (11th–12th grade)

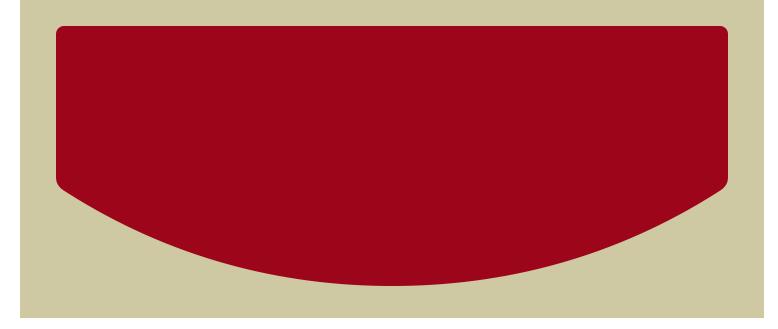
At camp, campers are grouped into units by age and grade level. It's important that you and camp staff consider your campers' developmental needs and abilities. For example, Daisies benefit from a variety of short activities due to their limited attention spans, while Cadettes are generally ready for more challenging adventures like ropes courses.

For detailed guidance on implementing the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) for each level and creating a supportive environment, refer to the "Camper Ages & Stages" guide in the appendix. This resource provides valuable tips to help camp staff ensure that all campers have a positive experience.



## SECTION 2:

# Managing Camp Operations



## **Chapter 3: Camp Finances and Budgeting**

### Introduction

Understanding and managing your camp budget is crucial to a successful camp season. A comprehensive camp budget includes many elements, from estimated camper numbers and discounts to costs of staffing, food, and supplies.

As a camp director, you'll work closely with your supervisor and other council teams, such as Accounting or Finance, to:

- 1. Understand your camp's financial performance.
- 2. Create your annual budget.
- 3. Track expenses.
- 4. Make informed financial decisions.

This chapter provides tips and information to help you plan and implement a camp budget. The content is based on practices shared by multiple Girl Scout councils but remember that each council's process may vary. Always check with your leadership team to understand your council's specific procedures.

#### Resources

Camp Costing Tool: This interactive spreadsheet in gsConnect helps you create a personalized camp budget. It combines income with the costs of staffing, program supplies, and food to help you determine the appropriate camp fees per camper.

## **Budget Planning and Management**

Most councils begin building the next fiscal year's budgets in March. For camp, this means planning for the following summer, not the upcoming one.

By planning ahead and using the Camp Costing Tool, you can make this task more manageable. Start thinking about your budget around November, following the below steps or your council's own process. Work with other camp

**TIP:** Use historical data and trends over multiple years to enable more strategic long-term budget planning.

directors, your supervisor, camp leadership team, and council teams including Property, Marketing, and Finance. Finance can provide valuable insights on past expenses, council subsidies, and potential financial risks.

## **Steps to Create a Camp Budget**

1. Gather information. Meet with Finance and Accounting and any other teams to discuss specific budget requirements. Share your insights on program needs, upcoming expenses, and revenue goals. Collect all relevant information, including the expected number of campers, camp duration (weeks or months), activities and programs, and staffing needs (counselors, instructors, and administrative staff).

- **2. Estimate expenses.** Use your information to identify costs to include as line items in your budget, referring to the box on the following page for ideas.
- 3. Identify income sources. Use past data to predict the percentage of participant, trends, cost increases, and potential camp fee adjustments. Determine camp fees based on expenses and desired profit margin. Account for scholarships, grants, and discounts. Find more information on camper scholarships later in this chapter.
- 4. Create a budget spreadsheet. Use a spreadsheet program (or the Camp Costing Tool) to organize your budget. Create categories for income and expenses and break down each category into specific line items.
- 5. Calculate, review, and adjust. Sum up all sources of income and expenses to calculate your total camp budget. Review it for accuracy and feasibility, adjusting to align with camp goals and financial constraints.
- 6. Monitor the budget and track expenses. Keep tabs on invoices and expenses throughout the camp season. Submit all reports on time. Regularly review and update the budget to reflect any needed changes and avoid overspending.

## Sample Camp Costs

- Personnel/Staff: Wages for counselors, instructors, administrative personnel, and other staff
- **Supplies and Equipment:** Arts and crafts materials, sports equipment, first aid supplies, personal care items, badges and patches, bicycles, and any other necessary items
- **Transportation:** Buses or vans needed for field trips or off-site activities, gas
- Food and Drink: Groceries, kitchen supplies, and dining equipment
- Outside Vendors: Program and activity supplies not owned by the camp (e.g., horses, boats, etc.)

- **Insurance**: Liability insurance and any other necessary insurance policies
- **Property:** Property usage, utilities, maintenance, certifications, general upkeep, inspections, and future improvements
- Marketing and Promotions: Registration and camp assets
- **Retail:** Camp merchandise and fulfilling badge, patch, and award orders from the shop

**TIP:** Expect the unexpected! Set aside a contingency fund for unknown expenses and emergencies.

#### Did You Know?

Camp directors can play a key role in council fundraising initiatives such as capital campaigns for large camp projects, purchases, and camper scholarships. You can help gather photos, testimonials, success stories, and other assets that showcase camp and can

be incorporated into proposals for both camp and council-wide funding. As you share content, remember to represent all campers fairly, without over- or underrepresenting any group based on identity or ability.

## Sample Budget Timeline

Camp directors manage two budgets simultaneously: one for the current membership year (MY) camp season and another for the following MY. For example, in MY25, you'd

implement the MY25 camp budget while preparing the MY26 budget. The sample timeline below can inform your budget planning and implementation.

Sample Budget Planning and Expenses Timeline			
When?	Tasks		
Overall for the Year	Plan budget for the following camp season (i.e., budget for MY26 in MY25):	Implement budget for the current camp season:	
October	<ul> <li>Gather information from council teams and review last summer's budget to begin budget preparations for camp.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Review camp budget (created in previous MY) to make sure programs, capacity, and staffing are correct.</li> <li>Meet with different departments to check for price increases that would affect the current MY budget (e.g., camp utility costs, gas prices, vendor and food costs) and adjust the budget as needed</li> </ul>	
November	Meet with Finance to discuss budget preparations.	Meet with Finance to finalize the cost per camper to be included in any registration materials and FAQs for the camp season (see chapter 4).	
January	■ Prepare initial camp budget.	■ Monitor registration numbers.	
March	■ Begin to socialize and update budget.	<ul> <li>Work with Marketing if numbers are low.</li> <li>Prepare contingency plans for reduced spending and staffing if needed.</li> </ul>	
June	Submit budget to council leadership for approval.	Adjust spending and staffing based on final registration numbers.	
July- August	Update budget as needed for approval.	<ul><li>Monitor spending.</li><li>Submit all invoices and expense forms on time.</li></ul>	
September	<ul> <li>Obtain leadership team approval for budget.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Pay any outstanding invoices.</li> <li>Debrief on the past summer's budget performance (see Chapter 16).</li> </ul>	

## Camp Fees and Payment Schedules

Your camp's registration goals typically align with council membership goals. Determine the fee per camper using the Camp Costing Tool, considering total expenses, camp duration, and camper capacity.

Remember to factor in revenue goals. For example, if your break-even point is \$509.44 per camper, you'd need to charge more to generate revenue. Some councils add

an overhead percentage to total expenses. Others may subsidize costs through grants or their main budget if operating costs are high.

Set payment deadlines four to six weeks before sessions begin. This allows time to secure vendors, order supplies, and make necessary adjustments.

## Camp Discounts, Scholarships, Cookie Credits/Cookie Dough, and Financial Aid

The following options can help break down barriers and make camp more accessible.

- Camp Discounts: Early bird rates, decreasing discounts, or bring-a-friend offers can boost registration. Work with your camp leadership and marketing teams on effective strategies.
- Camper Scholarships: Councils may use grants that they have acquired to fund scholarships for campers.
- Cookie Credits/Cookie Dough: A cookie credit or more commonly known as "cookie dough" is when girls can earn cookie dough program credits to help offset the cost of camp, the camp store and other program activities by participating in your council's product sales program. Consult your product program team for details.
- Financial Aid: Some councils will set aside financial assistance for camp programs. Be sure to work with your finance department to determine what's available.

It's important to account for all of these when budgeting. Consider creating dedicated line items so each area is accounted for in your budget. Your council may also have practices established. Consult with camp leadership, marketing, fund development, and finance teams to understand existing practices.

### IDEA: Start an equipment share to make attending camp more affordable.

Consider setting up an equipment share between camp alumnae and new campers to make camp more financially accessible. This can help families overcome the challenge of purchasing necessary camp supplies.

# **Chapter 4: Camp Registration Timeline**

# Introduction

As a camp director, you're the go-to expert for your camp's program. You'll play a key role in crafting your camp's story. This might involve:

- Creating the camp session calendar
- Writing program descriptions
- Collecting photos and videos for marketing

This chapter includes the nuts and bolts of registration, to help you build a registration process that's efficient for your team and exciting for campers and their families. It includes:

- Recommended forms and waivers
- Ideas for registration
- A sample registration timeline

# **Registration Process**

Align your registration goals with your camp's financial needs and council membership targets. Consider taking these steps before launching registration:

- 1. Review your budget (see chapter 3) to determine revenue needs.
- 2. Check in with your council about membership goals by grade level.
- 3. Team up with Membership and Outreach to explore how camp can boost recruitment.
- 4. Set minimum and maximum participant numbers for each session.
- 5. Work with Data/IT to set up your registration system. Aim for Salesforce integration or regular reporting capabilities.

When you're ready to go live:

- Update your website and registration system.
- Upload the latest camp guide and confirmation packet.
- Make sure all forms and waivers are current.

Keep an eye on your numbers as summer approaches. You may need to cancel sessions, add new sessions, or start waitlists. This helps you make the most of your camp's potential and stay on top of staffing needs.

# Make Camp Welcoming for All

Every Girl Scout should feel at home at camp. Here's how you can help families understand what to expect:

- Be upfront about facilities and accommodations.
- Describe the camp environment in detail—including wildlife (insects count)!
- Explain precisely what you mean with terms like "wilderness" and "outdoor adventure."
- Provide specific examples of how these concepts play out at your camp.

This transparency is especially important for families who might be new to camping or have faced challenges like being unhoused.

# Sample Registration Timeline

Planning for the new season should begin immediately after your current summer ends. While timelines vary by council, on the following page is a comprehensive sample to help guide your efforts. Find a detailed list of registration materials, forms and waivers, and later in this chapter.

Sample Timeline for Camp Registration and Marketing				
When?	Task(s)			
September	<ul> <li>Review previous summer's registration numbers as part of your camp season debrief (see chapter 16).</li> <li>Set goals with your camp leadership team for the coming year.</li> </ul>			
October	<ul> <li>Decide on and post camp registration opening date, collaborating with other teams.</li> <li>■ Work with Marketing on layout, content, and program edits for this year's camp guide.</li> <li>■ If your council is able, have your DEIRJ practitioner or an HR professional review all materials</li> </ul>			
November	<ul> <li>■ Review and prepare registration forms and waivers for upload.</li> <li>■ Work with Marketing to create:</li> <li>□ Camp confirmation packet</li> <li>□ Promotions for campers and camp staff applicants</li> <li>□ Schedule of discounts, scholarships, and online promotions (ongoing through summer)</li> </ul>			
December	<ul> <li>Upload the final camp guide and camp confirmation packet to registration website.</li> <li>Schedule promotions for camp events and staff recruitment fairs.</li> <li>Send end-of-year postcard to previous campers with registration opening date.</li> <li>Share FAQs and details with customer care and data/IT teams.</li> <li>Optional: Open registration for returning campers and members.</li> </ul>			
January	<ul> <li>Launch general registration (for returning campers, members, new campers, and non-members).</li> </ul>			
Once Registration Opens	<ul> <li>Regularly check registration numbers and camper locations.</li> <li>Update program numbers and adjust staffing needs.</li> <li>Identify council areas needing increased marketing.</li> <li>Promptly answer emails and questions from caregivers.</li> <li>Send payment deadline reminders (typically four to six weeks before session start).</li> <li>Optional: Work with Marketing on monthly newsletter for registered families (starting February).</li> </ul>			

#### Forms and Waivers

Below is a list of forms and waivers that are generally needed as part of camp registration. Make sure all forms comply with your council and local health department requirements. Most forms can be completed online.

- **Registration Forms:** These cover emergency contacts, medical information, and dietary restrictions. Camp policies and inclusion practices may be included here.
- **Health Forms:** These may be separate from the registration forms.
- Medical Release Form: Your camp might have a form authorizing staff to seek medical treatment for a camper in an emergency.

- Travel and Activity Permission Slips: For any off-site activities.
- Photo and Video Release: Consent for the camp to use a camper's photo or video for future promotions and on social media. It can be included as part of your registration forms. During a camp session, make sure to have a clear way to identify any campers who do not have photo permission.
- Camper Pick-Up Authorization Forms: List of responsible adults and caregivers who are allowed to pick up the camper at check-out. At pick up, a photo ID will be needed to match the name submitted on the form.
- Transportation Authorization: For off-site activities. This might include information such as transportation methods and the duration of the transportation.

# Camp Registration and **Communications Planning**

Effective marketing and communications efforts are important throughout the camp cycle—from recruiting campers to showcasing experiences during the season. A well-planned strategy keeps your camp community engaged year-round, boosting retention and strengthening your camp's reputation.

#### To achieve this:

- Collaborate with your council's marketing, DEIRJ, data/IT, and customer care teams.
- Focus on year-round engagement with alumnae, families, and potential campers.

Find strategies to help you develop your plan in the following section and a list of potential materials immediately below.

Camp Registration Materials			
Material	Purpose		
	Distribute the camp guide by mail, by email, and at recruitment events to potential returning and new campers to share information such as:		
	■ This year's camp programs and descriptions		
	■ Session dates		
Camp Guide	■ Application process and deadlines		
	Financial aid and discount information		
	Camp accommodations description		
	■ Inclusion practices		
	Overall camp story and philosophy		
	Send to campers after they register to prepare new and returning families with basic camp procedures and expectations and any other topics families commonly have questions about, including		
	■ Camp and Staff Contact Information: For summer and in the off-season		
	■ Schedule: Check-in, drop-off, and pick-up times		
	■ Directions to Camp: Address and any transportation details (such as buses)		
Camp	■ Important Dates: Form deadlines, payments, open houses, camp tours		
Camp Confirmation Packet	■ Policies: Payment and cancellation, pets and service animals, valuables, behavior guidelines, lost and found, weapons and drugs		
	■ Packing List: General and specific items for a trip or specialty program		
	■ Health and Safety Procedures: Care of minor injuries and mild illness, protocol for communicating with caregivers if camper becomes ill, information on nearby medical facilities, and any health and safety information required by your state		
	■ <b>Health and Medical Information:</b> Procedures for handling prescription medications, management of health conditions (inhalers, allergies, EpiPens, etc.), health center staffing, and required health forms and deadlines		

# Camp Marketing and **Communications Plans**

Consider these strategies to help you create a marketing and communications plan tailored to your camp's needs:

Create a communications plan. Early in the membership year, work with your marketing and communications team to develop a comprehensive plan covering registration, presummer, and summer periods.

**Develop registration and promotional materials.** As soon as the camp season ends, meet with Marketing to plan next year's materials.

Create FAQs and manage inquiries. Define which team handles specific types of questions (for example: Data/IT for system issues, Customer Care for deadlines). Develop a "cheat sheet" or binder with FAOs, including:

- Camp guide highlights
- Important dates
- Required forms
- Common policies and procedures

Gather content throughout summer. Coordinate with your marketing and communications teams about their needs for future efforts, such as:

- Photos and videos of camp activities
- Camper and staff testimonials
- Successful program highlights

Communicate your camp's commitment to DEIRJ. This helps families know they will be welcomed and valued for who they are. It clarifies your intentions and your actions toward creating a welcoming environment for all campers. Be sure to:

- Clearly describe how your camp welcomes all communities.
- Provide specific examples of your camp's inclusive practices.
- Be mindful of how activity descriptions might be interpreted by diverse audiences.
- Offer details on staff training and experience with various communities.

# Camp Apparel and Merchandise

Creating camp-branded items can boost camp spirit and provide additional revenue. To get started...

#### 1. Collaborate with your retail and marketing teams to:

- Review past inventory and feedback each fall.
- Decide on new merchandise for the coming season.
- Create mock-ups following GSUSA brand guidelines.
- Get DEIRJ input on imagery and messaging.

#### 2. Consider offering items such as:

- Camp apparel and supplies, including from the latest camp collection featuring rash guards, a cozy robe, sleeping bags, etc.
- Essential items campers might forget (toothbrushes, socks, stationery)
- Fun souvenirs (stuffed animals, bracelets, bandanas, and more)

#### 3. Advertise your merchandise through:

- Social media
- Camp guide
- Camper orientation packet
- Flyers distributed at check-in

#### 4. Consider allowing caregivers to:

- Visit the store during check-in and check-out.
- Add money to camper accounts before the session starts.

TIP: Set up the store for caregivers to visit and/or add and settle camp balances during check-in and checkout. For more on integrating the camp store into your check-in and check-out processes, see chapter 9.

# Chapter 5: Emergency Procedures and Risk Management

# Introduction

Safety is our top priority at Girl Scout summer camps. This chapter will guide you through essential safety practices and procedures, helping you create a secure environment for campers and staff alike. In this chapter, we cover:

- Working with your council on risk assessment and control
- Establishing an Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
- Training staff on emergency procedures
- Activity safety and insurance requirements
- Proper adult-to-camper ratios
- Handling emergencies

Always check with your council to align camp procedures with their protocols and insurance requirements.

#### Resources

Sample Summer Camp Staff Emergency Guidelines and Procedures: All camp staff should be trained and familiar with your camp's EAP and emergency procedures.

Sample Equipment Inspection Forms: This spreadsheet contains sample forms for activities that can be adapted for your camp to document equipment inspections.

# Safety Activity Checkpoints

GSUSA's Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) resource provides standard safety guidelines for GSUSA and councilapproved activities. It covers:

- Physical and emotional safety of girls
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion in activity planning

The SAC helps you plan activities that are not only safe but also inclusive and enriching for all participants. Your council may have its own version of the SAC. Check for regular updates to stay current with best practices and legal requirements.

# Camper-to-Staff Ratios

Proper supervision is important for camper safety. Our ratios:

- Set the minimum number of adult staff needed to supervise campers safely
- Allow for one adult to handle emergencies while another supervises remaining campers

Maintaining adequate staffing means that campers

are properly supervised at all times, reducing the risk of accidents and allowing for quick response to any emergencies.

Find current ratios in your council's Volunteer Essentials. Review these regularly to maintain optimal safety standards.

#### Vendors and Insurance

When planning activities, especially off-site or with thirdparty vendors, be sure to:

- Adhere to the SAC and council insurance requirements.
- Use council-approved vendors when possible.
- Verify vendor insurance coverage and expiration dates.
- Share the SAC with new vendors.
- Make site visits when possible.

Taking these precautions to meet Girl Scout safety standards for all activities—including those run by outside vendors—helps protect your campers and your camp from potential liability issues.

# **Emergency Action Plans (EAPs)**

A comprehensive EAP is your blueprint for handling emergencies. Include these key elements...

- 1. Contact Information: Note all key personnel and emergency services.
- 2. Updated Camp Maps: Work with your property team to make sure the property maps are up to date with important utility information and any changes made to entrances.
- 3. Clear Chain of Command for Emergencies: Assign a leader(s) as well as staff roles and responsibilities for emergencies.
- 4. Crisis Communication: Have clear procedures for how to notify campers, staff, caregivers, insurance companies, and any other parties in case of an emergency. Also see GSUSA's Sensitive Issues Repository on gsConnect.
- **5. Evacuation Plans:** Note various scenarios such as severe weather, fires, and the presence of an active shooter.
- 6. Severe Weather: Document plans for potential hurricanes, tornados, severe storms, high winds, and flooding,
- 7. Fire Safety: List fire escape routes and procedures for fires in buildings and outdoor areas.
- 8. Missing Camper or Person Protocol: Outline a reporting procedure and when to contact law enforcement if a camper or staff member is missing.
- 9. Communicable Disease Prevention and Response:

Note how to prevent, identify, mitigate, and contain potential communicable diseases. Make sure your health center is well stocked with personal protective equipment, and have protocols for cleaning/disinfecting and a plan to contact caregivers.

- 10. Allergies and Medical Conditions: Make sure you maintain accurate documentation of each camper's medical condition/s and/or allergies in case of emergencies—and that procedures are outlined for who has access to this information and where they can access it. See chapter 6 for more information.
- 11. Activity-Specific Plans: If your camp has specific activity centers, such as aquatics, equestrian arts, or ropes courses, include an EAP for each type of activity.

- 12. Incident Documentation Procedures: Note how you'll document emergency situations, including who is responsible for completing incident reports and how to submit them.
- 13. Post-Emergency Support: Outline plans for campers and staff to debrief after an emergency.
- 14. Reviews and Revisions of EAP: Note a plan for the regular review and update of your EAP and who is responsible for making the updates.

# Who Should Be Involved in **Creating Your Camp's EAP?**

Creating an effective EAP requires input from a number of different people who bring a variety of perspectives and expertise.

**Executive Team:** Understands the overall council policies and liability concerns.

**Camp Director(s):** As the person overseeing all aspects of camp including health and safety, the director is most often the person to initiate the EAP in an emergency.

**Healthcare Professionals:** Provide medical expertise for health-related emergencies.

Emergency Service Providers: Offer insight on local emergency response capabilities; e.g., the police department, fire department, and ambulance service.

# **Communications Director (or similar role):**

Assists you in effectively communicating with staff, caregivers, and others during an emergency.

**Facility Maintenance/Property Managers/Rangers:** 

Provide insight on potential hazards on your property and how to safely evacuate during an emergency.

**Camp Staff:** Provide on-the-ground perspective on potential issues.

# **Equipment and Inspections**

Conducting regular inspections can help you identify and address potential safety hazards before they can cause accidents. And maintaining proper documentation not only keeps you compliant with regulations but also provides a record in case of any incidents.

#### **Pre-Camp Site Inspection**

- Conduct pre-camp site inspections with property staff (around April).
- You might also perform pre-camp inspections on all equipment and make sure first aid kits are available and your automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and fire extinguishers are not expired.

#### **Equipment Safety Inspections**

- Inspect program equipment (such as helmets, harnesses, target equipment, saddles, personal flotation devices, etc.) and general equipment (including maintenance and non-program equipment such as climbing towers, zip lines, pool ladders, horse pasture fences, canoes, sailboats and kayaks, docks, and ropes courses).
- Identify who is responsible for conducting safety inspections and where inspections should be recorded.
- Train staff on how to conduct inspections as part of your pre-season staff training.
- Make sure all inspectors know what to do in case of an inspection failure.

#### **First Aid Kits**

- Make sure first aid kits are readily available in aquatic and specialized activity areas, on trips, in vehicles, and in food service areas.
- Keep the kits stocked with supplies appropriate for the location and activity—for example, personal protective equipment.
- Each group or unit should always carry at least one emergency first aid kit with them.

#### **Documentation**

- Find out which specialty areas require documentation and logs for state inspections or ACA accreditation.
- Make sure staff follow the daily or weekly schedule and document all inspections to help prevent any incidents. Remove an item if it's no longer safe.
- Find sample equipment inspection forms in the gsConnect camp resource folder.

# Connecting with **Local Emergency Personnel**

Building strong relationships with nearby emergency services is key to camp safety. By creating these connections, you're setting up a support network that can make a real difference in an emergency. Remember, local emergency personnel are valuable allies in keeping your camp safe and sound.

#### Why These Relationships Matter

- Close connections can mean quicker response times during emergencies.
- Emergency teams get to know your camp layout and any unique challenges.
- Looped-in emergency personnel can provide expert advice that improves overall camp safety.

#### **Need-to-Know Info**

- Locations of closest hospital, fire and police departments, poison control center, and animal control center
- How long it typically takes each service to reach you
- Easy-to-follow directions for emergency personnel to get to your camp

#### **How to Connect**

#### 1. Drop by or schedule meetings at local emergency service offices.

- Say hello and explain your role.
- Tell personnel approximately how many people stay at your camp in summer.
- Give them an info packet with:
  - ☐ Your camp schedule
  - ☐ A detailed map of your property
  - ☐ Important contact numbers

#### 2. Invite personnel over for a camp tour or BBQ.

- Show them critical spots like water and gas shut-off valves.
- Point out where people gather in emergencies and how they exit.

# 3. Let personnel use your property for drills/training/ practice when camp's not in session.

- This helps emergency teams get familiar with your site.
- Doing this can also help you strengthen relationships with emergency service providers.

#### 4. Keep in touch regularly.

- Let personnel know each week how many campers and staff you have.
- Tell them about any big changes to your property or how you run things.

# Chapter 6: Medical and Health Care

# Introduction

Health care at camp is a cornerstone of safety. Many states have specific laws about childcare facilities, medication distribution, documentation, and required certifications for treating injuries. It's up to you and your staff to provide top-notch care for your campers.

#### **Key points:**

- Most camps have a central first aid or nurses' station.
- All medications and main medical supplies are kept in locked cabinets.

- The camp director typically hires the health care
- Staff training should cover medical procedures and relevant laws.

# Resources

Camper Health Care Log: Included in the appendix, this is an example of a basic log sheet that can be used by or adapted for health care staff when aiding campers.

# Health Forms, Tracking, and Documentation

Maintaining proper documentation keeps everyone on the same page and helps prevent mistakes or oversights in camper care. Ideally, health forms are completed during registration before campers arrive. See a full list of suggested forms and waivers in chapter 4 and more information about check-in in chapter 9.

#### At check-in:

- Designated staff should review health information.
- Collect medications.
- Note allergies or conditions needing treatment.
- Get permission to treat minors without on-site guardians.

#### For tracking throughout the camp season:

- Provide your health care team with a computer or tablet for reporting.
- Staff should have notebooks to document care provided.
- Update the medical tracking system at least daily.
- Use a formatted document like the **Camper Healthcare** Log for recording vitals.

# Connect with Local **Medical Facilities**

### Make sure you, camp leadership, and the health care team know:

- Location of the nearest hospital, poison control center, and animal control center
- Typical response times for each

This information can be critical in emergencies. Obtaining the information is a part of building relationships with local emergency services (see chapter 5 for more details).

# **Privacy and Medication** Administration

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) laws protect individual privacy. The act covers:

- Medical details (allergies, dietary needs, activity restrictions, immunizations)
- Mental, emotional, and social histories
- Personal circumstances (like bedwetting or ADHD)

Treat all of this information as strictly confidential. Doing so helps create an inclusive environment that puts campers' privacy and well-being first.

## **Medication Administration**

Many states have specific laws about medication administration. For example, at camp:

- Store all meds in locked cabinets out of camper reach.
- Only certified staff should give out medications.
- Follow instructions on original containers.
- Track all medication given in software or a binder.

Prescription medication must be kept in the original container from the doctor or pharmacy, to be administered as prescribed on the container unless written instructions from the prescribing physician instruct otherwise. For prescription meds, note:

- Medication name
- Dose strength, quantity, and form
- When it's given
- Why the camper takes it
- Duration—one time or ongoing
- Any special instructions

Once a camper's health record has been submitted to the camp, parents and caregivers are responsible for notifying the camp leaders of any changes in the camper's health status, allergies, medications, and/or recent travel before the camper arrives.

Camp leaders should let parents and caregivers know that they should avoid stopping any long-term medications for camp unless it's in the camper's best interest (and let the camp know if the child has been taken off any long-term medicine).

# Allergies at Camp

Get campers' allergy and dietary info in advance so you can prepare. This might mean:

- Ordering special foods
- Changing certain planned activities

Keep this information confidential, sharing only with staff who need to know (health care supervisor, camp director, cook, unit counselors).

#### Before camp:

- Review all allergies and dietary needs with your cook.
- Train all staff on emergency medications (like EpiPens) and what to do in emergencies.

# Guidance to Local Laws for Medication and ACA Accreditation

Check out "State Laws and Regulations" on the ACA website for state-specific laws on distributing medicine at camp.

# First Aid/CPR/AED Training

All camp staff should be trained and certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)/automated external defibrillator (AED) certified. The process guidelines are updated every five years, and staff must recertify every two years. For added safety:

- Have an AED at camp with trained staff to use it.
- Have certified staff at all specialized activities, especially aquatics.
- Keep well-stocked first aid kits in all activity areas, vehicles, and food service areas.
- Always have trained staff on duty when campers are present.

By adhering to these best practices, camp staff can enhance their preparedness and response capabilities and create a safer environment for all participants.

## Good to Know:

Understanding different cultural approaches to health and personal care can help all campers feel comfortable and join in camp activities more easily.

# Mental Health and Wellness Training

Camp can be stressful for staff. They might deal with homesick campers, panic attacks, and/or injuries. Well-equipped staff can better recognize signs of campers' mental health issues, provide appropriate support to campers, maintain their own well-being throughout the camp season, and help create a healthy camp environment for all.

Remember, a healthy camp is a happy camp. By prioritizing health care and wellness, you're setting the stage for a successful and enjoyable experience for everyone.

#### Consider training your staff in:

- Mental health first aid
- Suicide prevention via ASIST (Applied Suicide **Intervention Skills Training)**
- Trauma-informed care
- Crisis prevention intervention
- Conflict resolution and de-escalation

#### Also, you might teach staff coping skills like:

- Stress management
- Effective communication
- Self-care practices
- Time management

# **Chapter 7: Transportation**

# Introduction

As a camp director, your responsibilities go beyond managing on-site activities. When campers and staff venture off-camp, their safety remains your top priority. This chapter covers key aspects of camp transportation, from driver training to vehicle maintenance and rental options.

# **Driver Training for Camp Vehicles**

Check with your HR team, Girl Scouts' Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC), and the American Camp Association (ACA) for up-to-date transportation protocols. These resources often specify requirements for driver

qualifications, vehicle safety standards, and passenger ratios that you'll need to follow.

Implement a thorough driver training program. Below are key topics to cover.

Driver Training Topics			
Topic	What to Share		
Safety First	Review your camp's transportation safety procedures, emphasizing the importance of defensive driving and staying alert.		
Vehicle Inspection	Teach proper pre-trip inspections, including how to check tire pressure and fluid levels and identify potential safety hazards.		
Loading/Unloading  Establish a safe, orderly process. For example, loading vehicles from back to front and unloading from front to back can help maintain order and safety. When necessary, unhook any shout that are crossing the exit way.			
Breakdowns	Cover emergency procedures, including how to safely pull over, when to evacuate passengers, and whom to contact for assistance. For example: only the driver should exit the van to inspect the source of the breakdown (unless all passengers must evacuate for safety reasons). After the cause has been determined, the driver first contacts the camp director then calls emergency road service as needed.		
Passenger Care  Address motion sickness and passenger care. Give drivers strategies for handling commo without compromising safety. Vans should be equipped with plastic-lined bags in case of passenger becoming carsick.			
Camper Behavior	Address what's acceptable behavior before leaving camp (full details found later in this chapter).  Examples include fastening seatbelts and not disturbing the driver.		
<b>Refueling</b> Set clear guidelines for keeping vehicles fueled, such as never letting the tank drop below one-quarter full.			

# Camp Vehicle Maintenance and Safety Checks

Conducting regular safety checks is crucial. Implement a twice-monthly inspection. Also, a trained staff member should check the tire pressure with a gauge at least weekly. This way, if any item needs repair or replacement, you'll be notified and the problem can be corrected. If an inspection is past due when a trip is set to begin, make sure to complete it beforehand.

Check the following components as part of each safety check:

- Lights (headlights, taillights, back-up lights, turn signals)
- Tires (pressure, wear patterns, tread depth)
- Windshield and wiper condition (cracks, chips, wiper blade condition
- Emergency equipment (first aid kit, fire extinguisher, flashers, reflective triangles)
- Brakes and horn (including parking brake)
- Mirrors (adjustment and condition)
- Fluid levels (oil, coolant, brake fluid, power-steering fluid)

# **Renting Vehicles**

If you need to rent a vehicle or hire a bus service to help with transportation for an off-camp trip, do it as soon as you know the trip details. When renting, always clarify insurance coverage, driver requirements, and any specific rules or restrictions

Consider these rental options...

- Rental Car Agencies: These agencies typically offer vans suitable for transporting larger groups. Find out age restrictions for the driver and insurance requirements.
- Local Charter Bus Companies: Request quotes based on your group size and trip details.

- School Buses: In some areas, school buses might be available to provide transportation. Check with your local school district.
- Online Rental Platforms: Compare prices and read reviews carefully.
- Girl Scout Council Recommendations: Your council may have preferred vendors or negotiated rates.
- Local Camp or Community Organization Suggestions: These groups can provide valuable insights into reliable local options.

# Van Box Essentials

Whether you're renting vehicles or using vehicles owned by your camp, make sure to have a van box stocked with the

fol	lowing:
	First aid kit (regularly checked and restocked)
	Flashlight (with extra batteries)
	<b>Emergency supplies</b> (toilet paper, fire extinguisher, basic tools)
	<b>Motion sickness kit</b> (plastic bags, paper towels, wipes, water)
	<b>Disposable camera</b> (for documenting incidents if needed)
	<b>Emergency contact information and forms</b> (including accident report forms and vendor or other emergency numbers if you're traveling outside the 911 service area)
	<b>Trip roster and health forms</b> (need to be provided for all campers and adults on the trip)
	<b>Maps and itinerary</b> (including alternate routes if possible)
	<b>Seasonal items</b> (for example, sunscreen in summer and ice screners in winter)

# Ready, Set, Go: A Pre-Trip Checklist

Follow the guidelines in your council's transportation handbook. GSUSA recommends you take these steps before each trip:

- Complete the trip log and check the van box contents. This creates a record of the trip and ensures you have essential supplies. Fill out all required fields in the trip log, including passenger list, destination, and expected return time. Verify that the van box contains all required items, restocking as needed.
- Perform a thorough vehicle inspection. Catching issues before departure can prevent breakdowns and accidents. Use a checklist to inspect tires, lights, fluids, and safety equipment. Address any problems immediately, even if it means delaying departure.
- Review loading and unloading procedures. Establishing a clear process reduces confusion and potential safety hazards. Explain the procedure to passengers, emphasizing the importance of entering and exiting one at a time. Designate staff to oversee the process and assist as needed.

■ Confirm appropriate camper-to-adult ratios.

Proper supervision is crucial to safety and behavior management during transit. Review your council's guidelines for ratios. Count campers and staff, adjusting staffing if necessary to meet or exceed the required ratio.

- Check weather forecasts. Anticipating weather conditions allows for safer travel planning. Consult reliable weather sources for your route. Be prepared to alter plans or delay travel if severe weather is expected. Make sure the vehicle is equipped for potential weather conditions (such as chains for snow).
- Conduct a transportation orientation. Setting clear expectations promotes safety and reduces distractions for the driver. Create orientations for staff and campers similar to what's in the box below. Gather all passengers before boarding. Cover key points like seatbelt use, behavior expectations, and emergency procedures. Allow time for questions to make sure everyone understands.

Road Rules: Your Guide to Safe Camp Travel			
Staff Responsibilities	Camper Expectations		
<ul> <li>■ Complete the trip log before leaving.</li> <li>■ Complete the loading process.</li> <li>□ One camper at a time, back to front.</li> <li>□ Everyone is seated as far forward as possible.</li> <li>□ Only adults ride in the front seats.</li> <li>■ Safety first.</li> <li>□ Secure all equipment.</li> <li>□ Keep exits and aisles clear.</li> <li>□ Keep seatbelts on, always.</li> <li>■ Stay alert.</li> <li>□ Follow driver instructions during stops.</li> <li>□ Help maintain a calm, quiet atmosphere.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Buckle up. Join the "all buckled up" countdown.</li> <li>Stay safe.</li> <li>Use indoor voices.</li> <li>Stay seated and belted.</li> <li>Keep bottoms on seats, not floors.</li> <li>Know your exits. Pay attention during the safety review.</li> <li>Keep it clear. Don't block exits or aisles with your stuff.</li> </ul>		

# **Chapter 8: Kitchen and Meals**

#### Introduction

Mealtime at camp is about more than just filling stomachs—it's a chance to build community, share experiences, and create lasting memories. As a camp director, you play a crucial role in making this happen.

Camp directors are often tasked with staffing, stocking their camp's kitchen with equipment, menu planning, and ordering the first food order. You might find that

your food will be cooked in the kitchen, delivered by local restaurants, outsourced to a third-party vendor, or some combination of these.

#### Resources

Sample Menu: Check the appendix for what to feed campers and staff over a two-week camp session.

# Staffing, Training, and Managing Your Kitchen Dream Team

To hire the right mix, determine your kitchen hiring needs based on camper numbers and meal plans. Consider...

- **Kitchen positions:** Typically you'll want a head cook with experience, plus several kitchen aides.
- Local laws: Check your local laws for age requirements and necessary certifications.
- Partnering with a food service organization: Food service organizations can provide experienced cooks and food service personnel to handle ordering, cooking, and kitchen maintenance. See more in the box below.

# **Training for Success**

Once you've assembled your team:

- Familiarize them with kitchen equipment and safety protocols.
- Review daily, weekly, and monthly duties with them.
- Go over camp traditions related to meals.
- Educate them on food allergies and dietary restrictions.
- Be sure to include them in your weekly staff meetings to go over menus, food orders, and budgets.

**Important Note:** CITs should not be subbed in as kitchen staff. At times they may assist in the kitchen, but only as a part of their program.

# Partnering with a Food Service Organization

While it's often more expensive, partnering with a food service organization can be a game-changer, especially if you're serving a large number of campers or managing multiple camps. If you decide to go this route:

- 1. Clearly communicate your camp's needs. Make sure to communicate your camp's unique needs and culture. Most organizations will provide a head cook and a second cook by default, but you can request a different staffing structure if needed.
- 2. Provide specific details about your camp. Share your season dates, available accommodations, and whether staff can stay on-site.
- 3. Discuss state-specific requirements. Make sure the organization understands any certifications or requirements for kitchen staff in your state.
- **4. Consider local talent.** Some organizations work with local schools and may be able to hire school cooks familiar with large-scale food preparation.
- **5. Plan for additional support.** Even with a food service organization, you may need to hire camp staff as kitchen aides to help with tasks like dishwashing, salad bar setup, and light food prep.

# **Scheduling Shifts**

Establishing kitchen schedules may require some flexibility, with staff usually working two of three meal shifts per day. A schedule for a kitchen staff of three based on mealtimes might look like...

■ Breakfast: Kitchen aide #1 and #2

■ Lunch: Head cook, kitchen aide #2

■ Dinner: Head cook, kitchen aide #1

Be prepared to adjust as needed and have a backup plan for staff absences. You may also need to assist in the kitchen, so it's important to familiarize yourself with the equipment and kitchen procedures.

#### **Staff Appreciation**

Show appreciation for your kitchen staff. For example:

- Listen to their feedback, concerns, and requests. If possible, provide tools such as organizers, backpacks, whistles, or hats that make their job easier.
- Provide campers with opportunities to shout-out or thank their kitchen staff for amazing meals.
- Be flexible with scheduling when possible. For example, do you need all kitchen staff to work on every meal or can you accommodate and split the meals between multiple staff?

# Menu Magic: Planning and Ordering Food

#### **Menu Planning**

Your goal is to provide tasty, balanced meals that keep campers and staff energized. When creating your camp's menu, consider:

- Planning for the entire camp season
- Including a variety of fruits, vegetables, proteins, and carbohydrates
- Accommodating dietary restrictions and allergies
- Incorporating camp traditions and different meal styles

The appendix includes a sample menu you can adapt for your camp. Your food distributor might also have resources for menu ideas.

#### Order Food Like a Pro

Your camp may use a food service distributor as the primary source of food for camper and staff meals. Camp directors often place the initial food order for the summer because kitchen staff have not yet arrived at camp.

When ordering, make sure to:

- Work with a reliable food service distributor.
- Place the initial order yourself, including pre-camp staff training meals.
- For each order, account for staff and campers getting seconds. The unofficial rule is to order one and a half times the amount you need.
- Train kitchen staff on ordering procedures and budget constraints.

# Camp Meal Styles

Round Table Meals: Community-style dining with campers at round tables and meals served familystyle.

**Buffet Style:** Convenient for serving a large group; campers line up and serve themselves (or a staff member dishes up) food from a buffet table. Buffets can offer a wider variety of choices and allow campers more control over their portion sizes.

**Cookouts:** Food cooked over a campfire outdoors, such as foil dinners (meat, potatoes, and vegetables packed in foil and cooked over hot coals), hot dogs, and s'mores. Campers can also plan and lead their own cookouts.

Meals with Caregivers: When caregivers join campers for special occasions, many camps change their menus to include more adult options such as additional fresh fruit and vegetables.

Picnics/Sack Lunches: Perfect for field trips and special events, these can include simple options such as sandwiches, fruit, and chips.

Themed Meals: Add excitement with creative dining experiences such as "breakfast for dinner."

# **Outsourcing Options**

Some camps find it easier to outsource some or all their ordering and cooking to a vendor, rather than try and hire kitchen staff. Camps can also supplement their menu planning with outsourcing, such as by having kitchen staff cook breakfast and lunch and ordering dinner such as pizza, hoagies, chicken tenders, pasta, and salad from a restaurant (or any combination of this).

Whether it's part of your regular planning or used in

a pinch, a little help from outside can save the day! If you're interested in outsourcing:

- Consider partnering with local restaurants for occasional meal delivery.
- Research third-party vendors who can handle all aspects of food service.
- Have a backup plan for unexpected staffing issues.

# Menu Planning for Allergies and Dietary Needs

Many campers and staff have specific dietary needs. Common dietary regimens/considerations include:

- Gluten free (sometimes celiac disease)
- Nut allergies (some camps choose to be nut free)
- Kosher and halal diets.
- Seafood allergies
- Lactose intolerance
- Diabetic needs
- Vegetarian and vegan diets
- Spice sensitivities

Be flexible in accommodating various dietary needs; creativity and careful planning are key here. For example, to create an inclusive dining experience:

- Collect and communicate dietary needs. Collect allergy and dietary information during registration and check-in (see chapter 9 for check-in information). Communicate needs to kitchen staff weekly.
- Offer similar alternatives. Try to offer alternatives that are similar to the main meal being served. If you're serving cheeseburgers, provide veggie burgers, dairy-free options, and gluten-free buns. This way, everyone feels included in the meal experience.

- Prevent cross-contamination. Serve alternatives separately to avoid mix-ups and keep allergens isolated.
- Use color-coding. Use uniquely colored cutlery and dishware for allergy-safe meals. This visual cue helps prevent confusion and cross-contamination.
- Set up separate prep stations. For severe allergies, dedicate specific areas, utensils, and equipment to allergy-safe food preparation.
- Communicate with caregivers. When in doubt about a camper's needs, reach out to their caregiver for clarification.
- Think beyond the dining hall.
  - ☐ Adapt any food-related activities, such as baking or campfire cooking, to include campers with allergies.
  - ☐ Review camp store offerings and remove items containing common allergens if necessary.
- Care for your staff. Staff members with allergies are at camp all summer. Work with them to provide meal options that meet their needs.
- Stay vigilant. Not all campers may be fully aware of their allergies. Train all camp and kitchen staff to be alert for potential allergic reactions.

For additional information on caring for campers with allergies, see chapter 6.

# **Understand Allergy Terminology**

Anaphylaxis: Severe, potentially life-threatening reactions. Extra precautions should be taken to avoid cross-contamination.

**Airborne Anaphylaxis:** Reactions triggered by inhalation. Extreme precautions should be taken. If possible, the allergen should not be used at all. In the very least, careful arrangements should be made to ensure the camper is not exposed.

Intolerance: Less severe but still uncomfortable reactions. Precautions should be taken to prevent the camper from ingesting the allergen. At times, campers with intolerances will still eat what they are intolerant to, as they may just not be able to handle it in large amounts.

**Hives and Rashes:** Ranging from minor to severe. Take extra precautions to avoid cross-contamination.

# Kitchen Safety and Annual Health **Department Inspection**

# **Kitchen Safety**

Establish clear safety rules for your kitchen staff:

- Require closed-toe, non-slip shoes.
- Enforce proper hair containment (hairnets, caps, or visors).
- Mandate frequent glove changes and handwashing.
- Train staff on proper food handling and storage techniques.

#### **Health Department Inspections**

The health department will do a full inspection of your kitchen each year, typically before the start of summer. If there is a violation, you must work with the kitchen staff and property manager to remedy it in a timely manner.

Inspection criteria will vary based on your state: https://www.fda.gov/food/fda-food-code/state-retailand-food-service-codes-and-regulations-state

■ Food Handling Certification: At least one staff member at camp needs to have SERV Safe food-handling certification or equivalent. This could be the head cook, kitchen staff member, or camp director.

- Overall Cleanliness: There must be no mouse poop or other animal feces present in the kitchen. Inspectors check inside cupboards and drawers for overall cleanliness.
- Fridge, Freezer, and Dishwasher Temperatures: Inspectors will check that you have a system to monitor temperatures.
- Water Testing: Test strips must be available near a sink.
- Handwashing: Handwashing signs must be posted by the bathroom sink and the kitchen's handwashing station.
- **Food Storage:** If any open food is stored in the fridge, it must have a written date for when it was opened. Anything opened more than seven days prior should be discarded.
- Staff Appearance: Kitchen staff should wear hair nets or pull their back in a ponytail, wearing a visor or hat. If your kitchen staff are present for the inspection, they should be prepared to answer any relevant questions.

Sample Kitchen Timeline			
When?	Task(s)		
September	<ul> <li>Review last year's menu and any data/recommendations for the kitchen, and plan for improvements.</li> <li>Identify all the positions you'll need for the kitchen, taking into consideration your estimated camp numbers and roles such as cook and kitchen aide—or choose to use a food service organization to hire kitchen staff.</li> </ul>		
March	■ Draft next summer's menu.		
,	Confirm the start date for kitchen staff (before other staff arrive) and when they can clean and set up the kitchen.		
April	Create a spreadsheet with the estimated number of meals needed each week and approximately how many people (campers and staff) will be at camp each week to help staff create any contracts related to meals and your planned menus.		
	■ Prepare your kitchen for its annual health department inspection (typically before the start of summer).		
May	Around mid-May, place your camp's first food order to arrive in time for pre-camp staff training (to later be done by kitchen staff).		
	Review menus with the cook and any possible allergies or dietary needs of staff and campers. Confirm the cook has the food and supplies needed to make food safely for all campers and staff.		
Throughout the	■ Give the cook weekly meal counts for ordering and prepping, noting any trips or cookouts.		
Summer	As needed, assign non-kitchen staff to kitchen duty to help with cleaning dishes and cookout requisitions.		
	■ Have cooks shut down the kitchen and deep-clean, making sure all leftover food is properly disposed of.		
	Review the summer with the kitchen staff and note their requests/recommendations for the next season to include in the post-camp debrief.		
End of Summer	■ Make final payments for any food contracts.		
	If you worked with a food service organization, debrief the summer with your representative, letting them know what worked well and discussing any changes that need to be made for the following summer.		

# Chapter 9: Check-In and Check-Out Processes

#### Introduction

The start and end of each camp session are critical moments that set the tone for campers and their families. A well-organized check-in and check-out process can transform these potentially hectic times into positive experiences that build your camp community.

As a camp director, you play a crucial role in designing and implementing these processes. This chapter will guide you through creating efficient, safe, and welcoming procedures for receiving and releasing

campers. We'll cover everything from setting up stations to preparing your staff, and even share ideas for memorable farewell activities.

#### Resources

What to Ask Your Camper: Look for this handout in our appendix to share with caregivers at check-out. It will support campers as they continue to build and reflect on their camp experience once they return home.

# Developing Your Check-In and Check-Out Strategy

Creating a smooth process requires careful planning. Here are steps you can take to create your own check-in and check-out processes for your camp:

- 1. Plan an efficient schedule. Prevent long wait times by establishing a clear timeline for check-in and checkout. Consider staggering arrival times if you have a large number of campers. For check-out, set specific times for campers to be ready and enlist counselors to help them stick to the schedule.
- 2. Set up strategic stations. Organize your check-in and check-out areas into distinct stations to streamline the process. Common stations include:
  - Welcome/registration
  - Health check
  - Cabin/group assignments
  - Camp store
  - Activity station
  - Lost and found (for check-out)

Decide on a logical flow between stations that works best for your camp layout. You might opt for a traditional stationto-station approach or a drive-thru-style process where families remain in their vehicles.

3. Consider any accommodations. Make sure your process accommodates all campers and families.

This includes providing wheelchair access if needed and having a plan for campers with any other access requirements.

- **4. Prepare your camp staff.** Assign specific roles to your staff members and train them thoroughly on the checkin and check-out procedures. Some key roles include:
  - Greeters and traffic directors (to indicate where people should park and where they should go after)
  - Registration and paperwork handlers (to check paperwork and identification)
  - Health check staff (including to check meds—usually includes your camp nurse)
  - Luggage assistants
  - Camper and caregiver engagement staff (to respond to questions, build excitement, etc.)
  - Lost and found monitor
- 5. **Prioritize safety.** Double-check all paperwork during check-in to confirm you have up-to-date information on each camper's needs and allergies. For check-out, implement a robust system to verify authorized pick-up persons for each camper.
- 6. Communicate clearly. Share your check-in and checkout procedures with families well in advance as part of your camp confirmation packet (see chapter 4). Include details like schedules, locations, required documents, and contact information.

7. Review camper paperwork. Forms and waivers are essential to a smooth and safe check-in and check-out process (see "Forms and Waivers" in chapter 4). As part of check-in, camp staff can use a final registration list to confirm that each camper is registered for the current session and has completed all the required paperwork. If needed, have caregivers complete any remaining paperwork at check-in. Have a plan for any campers who are not on your final list.

TIP: Be prepared for the unexpected. Have a backup plan for inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances. Make sure all staff know how to implement these contingency plans if needed. Consider how to keep luggage and important stations dry as well as how to notify caregivers if the check-in/ check-out area or related procedures change.

# Check-In and Check-Out Stations

Each station in your check-in and check-out process serves a specific purpose. Here's how to maximize their effectiveness:

Suggested Stations for Camp Check-In and Check-Out			
Station Purpose			
Welcome Area	<ul> <li>Check-In</li> <li>Set up a clearly marked registration table with alphabetized camper lists.</li> <li>Verify registrations and update contact information if needed.</li> <li>Complete any outstanding paperwork, such as waivers and permission forms.</li> <li>Provide a camp map and schedule to help orient new families.</li> <li>Have staff available to answer questions and direct families to the next station.</li> <li>Check-Out</li> <li>Welcome families with enthusiasm.</li> <li>Verify pick-up authorization using photo ID and your approved pick-up list.</li> <li>Share any final camp information, such as lost-and-found procedures or upcoming camp dates.</li> <li>Distribute and collect feedback surveys or direct families to online evaluation forms.</li> <li>Have a staff member available to address any concerns or questions about the camp experience.</li> </ul>		
Nurses' or Health Station	■ Update health records with any new information provided by caregivers.		
Trading Post or Camp Store	<ul> <li>Display popular camp merchandise like T-shirts, water bottles, and stuffed animals.</li> <li>Set up a system for campers to deposit or withdraw "camp bank" funds.</li> <li>Offer special check-out deals or bundles to boost sales.</li> <li>Consider having a mobile store setup that can be moved between stations.</li> <li>Train staff to engage with families and promote camp spirit through merchandise.</li> </ul>		

(continued on following page)

Station	Purpose	
Activity Station	<ul> <li>Set up age-appropriate games or activities that are easy to join and leave.</li> <li>Have counselors lead group songs or chants to build camp spirit.</li> <li>Display a slideshow of photos from the camp session for departing campers to enjoy.</li> <li>Organize a simple craft activity related to the camp theme.</li> <li>Have campers sign one another's T-shirts or memory books.</li> </ul>	
Lost and Found (for check- out)	<ul> <li>Sort items by type (clothing, water bottles, electronics) for easy browsing.</li> <li>Display items on tables and hang clothing for maximum visibility.</li> <li>Have a staff member manage the area to help identify owners and record claimed items.</li> <li>Provide bags for families to collect multiple items.</li> <li>Have a plan for unclaimed items (such as donation after a certain period).</li> </ul>	

Depending on your camp's needs, you might also include...

- Mail Drop-Off: Letters and small packages can take too long to be mailed during a camp session, so caregivers are encouraged to drop off "mail" for their camper at check-in, to later be delivered at lunch each day. This can be combined with another station.
- Luggage Station: Organize a system to label and sort luggage by cabin or group. Have staff available to help with heavy items. Use this opportunity to do a quick check for prohibited items during check-in.
- Camper Drop-Off: Helpful for drive-thru check-in, families park their car and get out to say goodbye to their camper as well as meet their child's unit counselor.

# Wrapping Up the Camp Experience

The end of a camp session is more than just packing bags. It's an opportunity to celebrate achievements, reflect on experiences, and share meaningful goodbyes. Following are some ideas to help make check-out special for everyone.

# **Packing Prep**

Plan packing time in advance to reduce last-minute stress. For example:

- Schedule packing time the day before check-out or early on departure day.
- Assign staff to assist younger campers with packing.

- Create a packing checklist for campers.
  - ☐ Arts and crafts projects (properly wrapped to prevent messes)
  - ☐ Lost-and-found items
  - ☐ Swimsuits and towels from designated storage areas
  - ☐ Personal items from cabins or activity areas
- Turn packing into a fun activity—add music or games to keep spirits high!

#### **Farewell Activities**

Provide meaningful closure for the camp experience. For example:

- Host special celebrations like final campfires or closing ceremonies.
- Acknowledge campers' achievements and growth during their stay.
- Organize group activities that allow campers to say goodbye to friends and staff.
- If you've taken photos during the session, provide clear instructions for caregivers on how to access them after camp.

# **Caregiver/Staff Conversations**

Encourage staff to engage with caregivers during pick-up. For example:

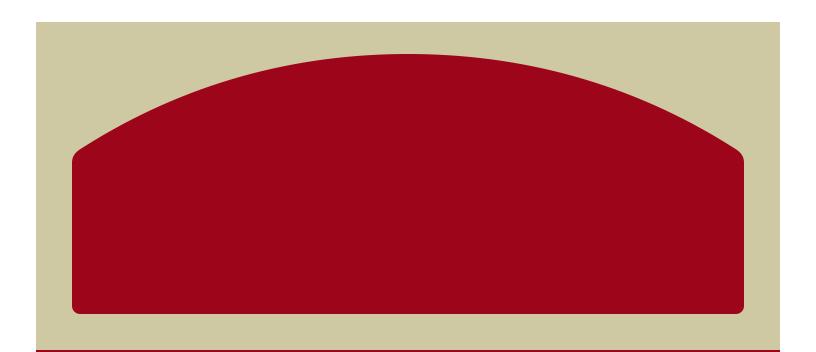
- Prepare staff to share highlights of each camper's experience.
  - ☐ Activities participated in and skills developed
  - ☐ Special achievements or moments of personal growth
  - ☐ Positive behavior and contributions to the camp community
- Have counselors hand over any earned badges or completed badge logs.
- Consider having staff write brief, personalized notes for each camper with two or three positive observations.
- Remind staff to share the "What to Ask Your Camper" resource (in the appendix) with caregivers to support ongoing reflection at home.

#### Feedback and Evaluations

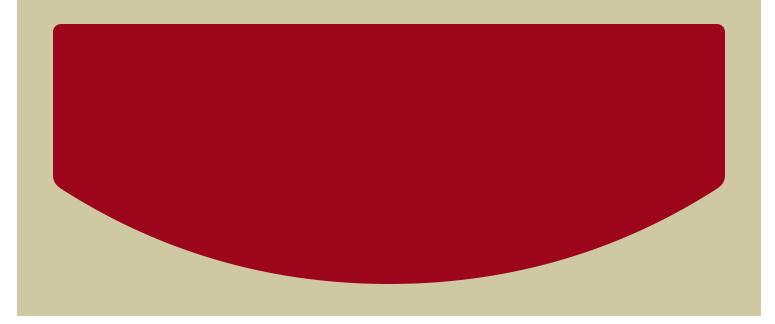
Gather valuable input to improve future camp sessions. For example:

- Offer caregivers a quick and easy way to provide feedback at check-out.
- If using email surveys, remind caregivers to complete them soon after returning home.
- Encourage campers to share their own evaluations if they haven't already done so.
- Direct camp directors to chapter 16 for more information on the evaluation process.

By thoughtfully planning these end-of-camp activities, you'll create a positive final impression that leaves campers and families eager to return next season.



# Camp Staff Management



# **Chapter 10: Hiring Camp Staff**

# Introduction

As a camp director, one of your responsibilities is to assemble a top-notch team of seasonal staff. This diverse group typically includes health care professionals, assistant directors, kitchen staff, unit counselors, and activity specialists (think equestrian and ropes course experts, lifeguards, and canoe instructors).

The key to a successful camp season? Versatility. Look for staff who can wear multiple hats—your lifeguard might also be a fantastic cook, or your archery instructor could double as a drama coach. This flexibility helps keep operations smooth and fuels a dynamic camp environment.

All seasonal staff should be prepared to:

■ Attend pre-camp training (it's not optional, it's essential!)

■ Commit to the full camp season (usually June through August)

Remember, you're not alone in this hiring adventure. Tap into these valuable resources:

- Your human resources team for process guidance and support
- Marketing and communications teams for help promoting open positions
- Your council's DEIRJ practitioner for tips to ensure a diverse candidate pool

#### Resources

#### **Camp Staff Interview Guide and Sample Questions:**

Don't miss this in our appendix—it's packed with interview techniques and questions to help you find your dream team.

# The Benefits of Working at Girl Scout Camp

Working at a Girl Scout camp isn't just a summer job—it's a life-changing experience. Your staff can look forward to:

- Being part of the Girl Scout movement. They're joining a network of millions of Girl Scout alums who are leading in all spaces, from camp to government.
- Learning valuable life and workforce skills. Leadership, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, time management, and adaptability are just some of what they'll practice in an outdoor setting.
- Medical training. Many staff members receive medical training that's valuable beyond the camp experience.
- Earning certifications. From archery to lifeguarding, staff can earn certifications that look great on any resume.

Come up with compelling job descriptions to help you attract a diverse pool of applicants. To attract the applicants you want:

# Staffing Milestones and Recommended Timeline

A well-planned hiring timeline is your secret weapon for building a stellar team. While your specific timeline may vary, below is a general roadmap to success.

Sample Staffing Timeline			
When?	Tasks		
September  Lay the groundwork.	<ul> <li>Review last summer's feedback to inform your recruitment strategy.</li> <li>Identify all positions needed for the upcoming season.</li> <li>Meet with HR and DEIRJ teams (if your council is able) to plan for recruiting a diverse team and potential international hires.</li> </ul>		
October Get the word out.	<ul> <li>Update or create job descriptions. Update job descriptions to accurately reflect roles and attract top candidates. See "Writing Job Descriptions for Camp Staff" in the next section of this chapter.</li> <li>Invite returning staff and CIT 2s. Send out invitations to camp staff from last summer, letting them know when applications go live. Send out the staff applications to Girl Scouts who recently completed your council or camp's CIT 2 program.</li> <li>Connect with local community organizations. Networking with local organizations can expand your recruitment network.</li> </ul>		
November Launch your search.	<ul> <li>Post job openings. Work with Marketing and Communications, DEIRJ, and HR to advertise on job boards, websites, and social media.</li> <li>Look for recruitment events. Look into college job fairs, green fairs, the ACA international job fair, and local events. Check with HR about existing council recruitment efforts.</li> <li>Prepare for international staff. If applicable, get ready for international staff selection events and update any agency accounts.</li> </ul>		
December Keep the momentum.	<ul> <li>Update paperwork. Team up with HR to refresh your staff contract forms with current camp dates and training information.</li> <li>Host a staff reunion. Organize an end-of-year gathering for former and recent staff, encouraging them to apply for open positions.</li> </ul>		
January-May Dive into hiring.	<ul> <li>Review applications. Look for candidates who match your job qualifications and support your diversity goals.</li> <li>Interview promising candidates. Use in-person, phone, and/or video interviews to evaluate skills and experiences. Find "Camp Staff Interview Guide and Sample Questions" in the appendix.</li> <li>Check references. Verify candidate experiences through phone calls or digital communications.</li> <li>Extend job offers. Work with HR to offer positions to top candidates. Consider making offers early to secure commitments.</li> </ul>		

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When?	Tasks		
March	■ Conduct background checks. As HR extends offers, they'll begin background checks for new staff (and returning staff if required).		
Deal	■ Update policies. Work with HR on any staff policy/procedural updates.		
with details.	■ Collect paperwork. Remind staff to complete necessary forms (I-9s, W-4s, WT-4s, etc.) by the due dates.		
	■ Send pre-camp communications. Share packing lists, draft schedules, and virtual camp tours with contracted staff.		
April	■ Fill remaining roles. Keep promoting any open positions with help from HR and Marketing.		
Build excitement.	■ Send out a pre-camp staff survey. Gather information about staff arrival times, T-shirt sizes, dietary needs, and training interests.		
	■ Finalize international staff plans. (Optional) Complete international staff hiring and find home-hospitality hosts if needed. Find more information later in this chapter.		
	■ Confirm staff arrival and arrangements. Work with property staff on move-in dates and arrangements for camp staff.		
<b>May</b> Enter the final stretch.	■ Finalize staff schedules. Share final staff schedules, including arrivals, trainings, and off-days. Ideally you'll have a full team of camp staff, but if not, coordinate a final push for staff applicants with support from HR and Marketing and Communications.		
	■ Send a final reminder for staff forms. Follow up with staff who haven't turned in all their paperwork.		
June Hold your kickoff	■ Carry out the camp staff training. Prep your team with role-specific trainings, camp schedules, certifications, and safety procedures. Find more information, including staff training topics, in chapter 11.		
training.	■ Remember: All training counts as paid work time.		

# Writing Job Descriptions for Camp Staff

- Use inclusive language. Use language that welcomes individuals of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities.
- Include clear requirements and qualifications. Focus on the skills, experience, and qualifications needed to be successful without using language that will exclude potential candidates. For example, instead of saying "must be physically fit," state something such as "must be able to lift at least 30 pounds."
- Be transparent about salary and benefits. While benefits vary from camp to camp, they can include things such as Room and Board (don't list this as a benefit if it is part of the pay), opportunities for professional development and additional certifications (such as lifeguard, archery instructor), access to your council's Employee Assistance Program, paid personal and sick days, paid training, use of camp facilities (such

- as the pool, lake, tennis courts), mentors or coaches, any provided attire (such as staff polo), and incentive programs.
- Describe your camp's culture and values. If staff will live on-site, emphasize the opportunities for building relationships, a sense of community, and the immersive camp lifestyle where all feel welcome.
- Be open about job hours and time off. Share what staff members can expect when it comes to a typical day and time off, including any requirements for overnight hours, daily breaks, and additional time off.

International staff can bring additional cultural dimension to your camp. Not only can these staff benefit from the experiences your camp offers, but their inclusion can help introduce campers to new-to-them countries and

# Hiring and Supporting International Staff

traditions, expanding their perspective. If you intend to hire international staff, consider...

- Agency Collaboration: You must work with an authorized organization to hire international staff. Start early (fall is ideal) and ask the ACA or fellow camp directors for agency recommendations.
- Social Security Essentials: International staff need U.S. Social Security cards to get paid. Plan time for a group trip to the local Social Security office.
- Payment Schedules: International staff often have unique payment needs. Depending on their age, they may be able to open a bank account, but if they don't qualify, they may be paid on a loadable debit card. Find

out and coordinate with your finance team.

- Transportation Needs: Remember, international staff arrive without wheels. Arrange airport pickups, dropoffs, and some local sightseeing adventures. Consider having hosts (board members, council staff members) to welcome and support international staff.
- Cultural Components: Be proactive in accommodating dietary needs and preferences, prayer times, and opportunities for international staff to share elements of their culture with campers.

# Camp Counselor Career Catalyst Playbook

Launching in summer 2025, the Camp Counselor Career Catalyst Playbook is a comprehensive resource designed to help councils transform camp counselor positions into valuable workforce development opportunities. This toolkit will:

- 1. Provide a step-by-step guide for creating partnerships with local schools and universities, potential employers in various industries, workforce development boards, and community organizations.
- 2. Offer ready-to-use training materials focusing on essential career skills, such as leadership and team management, effective communication, problemsolving and critical thinking, time management and organization, and conflict resolution.

- 3. Include resources for supporting counselors' future careers, including:
  - Resume and cover letter templates highlighting camp-related skills
  - Interview preparation guides
  - Information on further educational opportunities
  - Long-term career planning worksheets

The Camp Counselor Career Catalyst Playbook aims to help council staff create a camp counselor program that not only benefits the camp but also provides counselors with concrete skills and resources for their future careers. By implementing this program, councils can attract a wider pool of applicants, retain staff for multiple seasons, and demonstrate the long-term value of camp employment.

# **Chapter 11: Camp Staff Training**

# Introduction

Your camp staff are the driving force behind a successful Girl Scout camp experience. They're the ones who bring the Girl Scout Promise and Law to life, fueling unforgettable memories and nurturing leadership skills in every camper. A well-trained staff makes for a safe, fun, and enriching summer.

This chapter will guide you to creating a first-rate staff training program. From mapping out your training timeline to inspiring staff enthusiasm with hands-on

activities, we'll walk you through every step of creating an effective training program. You'll find practical tips for scheduling, budget-friendly ideas, and a comprehensive list of must-cover topics to make sure your staff are ready for anything camp throws their way.

Remember, your staff training sets the tone for the entire camp season. If you lead by example during training, your staff will carry that energy forward to interactions with your campers.

# **Planning Your Camp Staff Training**

Start your training prep in March. Gather your dream team— HR, DEIRJ, and camp leadership—and dive into these key steps:

- 1. Confirm training dates. Staff training typically runs from one to three weeks at the start of summer. Check with your council about traditional training dates and coordinate with any guest trainers or council staff who'll be joining.
- 2. Create your training program. Decide which topics you need to include in your staff training. We've got a list of suggested topics later in this chapter to get you started.
- 3. Choose your delivery method(s). Will you go for in-person sessions, virtual learning, or a mix of both? Consider

on-the-job training, too. Think about who's best suited to lead each session—experienced trainers, returning staff, council experts, or yourself. We'll break down the pros and cons of each method in the next section.

- 4. Build your schedule. Make your training days mirror a typical camp day. Start with flag ceremonies, sprinkle in camp songs, assign kapers, and showcase camp activities. Run meals following your usual dining hall procedures. This approach gives staff a taste of camp life, helps them adapt to the environment, and lets them have fun while learning their roles.
- **5. Develop your budget.** Factor all training costs into your initial budget—including food, lodging, and any materials for staff arriving early for in-person training. (See chapter 3 for budget planning tips.)

# Training Delivery Methods

Mix and match these methods to create a training program that fits your camp's needs:

#### **Delivery Methods**

- In-Person: Nothing beats face-to-face interaction for team building and hands-on learning.
- Virtual and Online Learning: This option is perfect for reaching staff across distances. Track progress and consider partnering with outside organizations for costeffective training.
- Blended Learning: Combine in-person and virtual methods for the best of both worlds.
- On-the-Job: Let staff learn by doing, as you provide real-time feedback and regular check-ins.

#### **Types of Facilitation**

- **Presenter-Led:** Bring in experts to address complex topics like first aid and mandated reporting. (The latter refers to the legal requirement for camp staff to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.)
- Council-Led: Tap into your council's expertise for training on topics like property management, DEIRJ, and the GSLE.
- **Peer-Led:** Invite returning staff to mentor newcomers—nurturing leadership and community.

# Camp Staff Training Activities

Many camp staff learn best through a combination of delivery methods and creative approaches. As you plan your training, try to include...

- Real-Life Camp Scenarios: This helps staff who've never worked at camp before visualize what to expect. Also share your own stories and tips—you're a role model for your staff.
- **Peer Learning:** Encourage the group to share their own wisdom and experience, either lived experience or prior experiences working at camps. What can staff learn from one another?

- Camper Info: Provide information about incoming campers and their needs to help staff prepare.
- Reflection: Build in reflection time after each training session or activity.
- Space for Questions and Feedback: Try asking "What questions do you have?" and let staff share aloud, in pairs, or on an "exit slip" you can address at the end of a session or end of the training. An exit slip is a quick, written response from staff at the end of a training session. Ask them to jot down:
  - ☐ One thing they learned
  - ☐ One question they still have
  - ☐ One area they'd like more information about

# Energize your training with...

- Improv and Role Playing: Act out real camp scenarios to practice problem-solving.
- **Skits and Posters:** Let small groups creatively present the concepts they learned.
- **Storytime:** Choose a topic for staff to each share an anecdote on, such as managing group conflict, building excitement for chores, or preparing for an activity.
- Gallery Walk: Hang up posters with questions about the topic for everyone to reflect on, write down their answers, and read what others wrote.
- **Acronyms:** Create memorable acronyms for important procedures. For example, with body language, you could: level with them, give eye Contact, n od when listening, or smile.

- **Roadblocks:** Hand staff slips of paper noting different camper behaviors and brainstorm how to address each.
- **Ditties:** In small groups, compose catchy jingles about key training points.
- **Recipes:** Brainstorm "ingredients" for being a great role model.
- Press Conference: Hold a Q&A session with staff playing different camp roles.
- Charades or a Game Show: For charades, write key camp concepts, policies, or scenarios on slips of paper for staff to act out. For a game show, create a quiz show and have teams compete to answer questions from categories like Camp Policies, Emergency Procedures, and Girl Scout Traditions.

# **Suggested Staff Training Topics**

While this handbook was created primarily for camp directors, it also includes information that can be useful for your camp staff training. Below is a suggested list of training topics along with references to relevant handbook chapters. This crossreferencing allows you to dive deeper into each topic as you prepare your training sessions.

	Suggested Staff Training Topics			
Topic	Purpose	Key Points	Handbook Chapter(s)	
Welcome to Girl Scout Camp!	Orient new and returning staff to camp life and Girl Scout values. Returning staff might even lead the tour(s).	<ul> <li>Camp tours</li> <li>Icebreaker activities</li> <li>Girl Scout basics (Promise and Law, etc.)</li> <li>Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)</li> <li>Promoting camp culture and belonging</li> </ul>	2, 13, 14	
The Role of Camp Staff	Set clear expectations and boundaries for staff behavior.	<ul> <li>Job expectations</li> <li>Professional boundaries</li> <li>Navigating conflict</li> <li>Professional development opportunities</li> <li>Mandated reporting</li> <li>Anti-discrimination policies</li> </ul>	10-13	
Emergency Procedures	Prepare staff for any situation essential to camper safety.	<ul> <li>EAP and procedures around: lost camper; weather emergencies; unauthorized guest on the property; fire, aquatic, and medical emergencies; and active shooter</li> <li>Walkie-talkie protocol</li> <li>Paperwork and paycheck information</li> </ul>	5, 12	
Camp Operations	Familiarize staff with daily camp routines and procedures. For example, teach food serving and your camp's clean-up process during the first meal.	<ul> <li>Check-in and check-out processes</li> <li>Medication and allergy protocols</li> <li>Kitchen, dining room, and mealtime procedures</li> <li>Camp kapers (chores including ones for campers)</li> <li>Outdoor cookout safety (if applicable): how to start and put out a fire, how to cook over a fire, and proper food-safety protocols</li> </ul>	6-9, 13-15	
Cleaning and Maintenance	Equip staff with basic skills to maintain a clean, safe camp environment.	<ul> <li>Living area upkeep</li> <li>Waste management (trash and recycling)</li> <li>How to use and store cleaning supplies</li> <li>Basic maintenance: how to clean the restroom, unclog a toilet, use your facility's mop, do laundry</li> <li>How to safely remove wasp nests, mice, and small rodents (or who to inform)</li> <li>How to alert someone of a maintenance issue or submit a maintenance request</li> </ul>	N/A	

(continued on following page)

Topic	Purpose	Key Points	Handbook Chapter(s)
Camp Community and Outdoor Living	Create a positive camp culture and prepare staff to live in an outdoor environment.	<ul> <li>Flag ceremonies</li> <li>Camp traditions</li> <li>Songs and games</li> <li>Outdoor basics such as sunscreen, bug spray, wearing appropriate clothing for the environment, and sleeping gear</li> <li>How to pitch tents (if applicable)</li> <li>Inclusivity practices</li> </ul>	2, 13-15
Caring for Campers	Develop staff skills for supporting campers' well-being and growth.	<ul> <li>Building trust and community</li> <li>Developmental ages and stages of campers</li> <li>Homesickness</li> <li>How to address questions, concerns, gossip, conflict, harassment, bullying</li> <li>Mental wellness and coping skills</li> <li>Managing individual camper and group behaviors</li> <li>Personal care, including hygiene and maintenance needs associated with all hair types and skin tones</li> </ul>	13-15
Activity and Program Planning	Instill staff's confidence to lead engaging, safe camp activities.	<ul> <li>Outdoor skill progression</li> <li>Planned program schedules</li> <li>Girl Scout-specific activities</li> <li>Including campers in planning, decision-making, and reflection</li> </ul>	13-15
Specialty Trainings	Provide required certifications and activity-specific skills. Your state health department will likely require some staff to have specialty training. If your training schedule is full, consider offering these trainings before your official staff training. Source any external instructors well before your training.	<ul> <li>First aid/CPR/AED certification*</li> <li>Specialty activity trainings and certifications (lifeguarding, archery, ropes course, etc.)</li> <li>Kitchen staff training</li> <li>Driver training</li> <li>Health care training</li> <li>Trip training</li> <li>DEIRJ/inclusivity training</li> </ul>	5-8

# Bringing Training to Life: Sample Training Scenarios

Use these realistic camp situations to spark discussion and practice problem-solving.

For each scenario, guide your staff through these questions:

- What does the camper need most in this moment?
- Are there any specific procedures to follow?

- What could happen if this situation is not dealt with?
- What questions can help me better understand what happened?
- How can the camper be approached sensitively?
- What ongoing support might be necessary?

#### Scenario: Homesickness

Situation: A camper shares with their counselor that they're feeling homesick.

Objective: Actively listen to the camper's feelings, provide emotional support, and encourage engagement in camp activities.

Challenge: Validate the camper's emotions, express empathy, and discuss coping strategies to help them overcome homesickness.

#### Scenario: Special Accommodations

Situation: A caregiver informs you about a camper's needs due to a medical condition.

**Objective:** Plan for the necessary accommodations, ensuring the child's safety and comfort.

Challenge: Actively listen to the caregiver's concerns, ask clarifying questions, and work collaboratively to implement appropriate accommodations.

#### Scenario: Activity Feedback

Situation: Campers express dissatisfaction with a team-building activity.

Objective: Acknowledge their feelings, gather specific feedback, and consider making changes.

Challenge: Actively listen to the campers' perspectives, validate their emotions, and help them understand the activity's purpose.

#### Scenario: Camper Conflict

**Situation:** Two campers have a minor disagreement during a group activity.

**Objective:** Actively listen to both campers, mediate the conflict, and guide them toward a resolution.

Challenge: Remain impartial, reflect on your own biases to prevent unfair treatment, encourage open communication, and help the campers understand each other's perspectives.

#### Scenario: Lost Item

Situation: A camper loses a personal item and is distraught.

**Objective:** Calmly gather information about the lost item and assure the camper that efforts will be made to find it.

Challenge: Actively listen to the camper's description of the lost item, express empathy, and communicate the camp's plan for locating lost belongings.

#### Scenario: Late Arrival

Situation: A camper arrives late, disrupting an activity.

Objective: Understand what happened, address any concerns the camper may have, and integrate them into the ongoing activity.

Challenge: Actively listen to the camper's explanation, provide guidance on the camp schedule, and make sure they feel included in the current activity.

#### **Scenario: Dietary Restrictions**

Situation: A camper's dietary needs were not properly communicated during registration.

Objective: Discuss alternative meal options and address concerns with the camper and their caregivers.

Challenge: Actively listen to the concerns, express understanding, and collaboratively find a solution that accommodates the dietary needs.

# Chapter 12: Camp Staff Management and Evaluation

#### Introduction

Camp staff are the face of your camp, representing it in every interaction with caregivers, campers, visitors, and one another. Whether they're on campgrounds, leading a field trip, or wearing camp attire in public, their words and actions reflect on your camp. Maintaining professional boundaries and appearances is crucial at all times.

As a camp director, you're typically responsible for managing and evaluating all camp staff throughout the summer. Your council's HR team is a valuable resource for:

- Risk management
- Handling staff incidents
- Ideas for building staff camaraderie

Don't forget to team up with your DEIRJ team to work toward creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all staff.

This chapter will guide you through supporting, managing, and evaluating your camp staff.

# **Professional Boundaries**

Maintaining professional boundaries protects both staff and campers by defining appropriate relationships. Here are key areas to consider:

#### **Camp Staff and Camper Interactions**

- Follow the adult-to-Girl Scout ratios outlined in GSUSA's Safety Activity Checkpoints and your council's Volunteer Essentials.
- Provide separate shower and restroom facilities for staff and campers.
- Never allow staff and campers to occupy bathrooms simultaneously.
- Offer lockable bathroom stalls as private changing spaces for both staff and campers.

### **Camp Staff to Caregiver Interactions**

Caregivers want to trust that staff can care for their campers. Most interactions happen during check-in and check-out, but conflicts may arise. When they do:

- Be an active listener.
- Stay calm.
- Uphold camp policies.
- Remember that it's okay for staff to ask for supervisor support.
- Consider moving sensitive conversations to a more private area, away from campers.

#### Staff-to-Staff Interactions

While guidelines may vary, here are some standard expectations:

- Treat fellow staff with respect. Showing mutual respect means working collaboratively; offering help and moral support to others; not taking others' items without permission; including others; and respecting others' personal space, identities, and privacy.
- Handle conflict constructively. Resolve conflicts when they first occur, ask for help from a supervisor when needed, practice active listening, and maintain confidentiality.
- Model appropriate behavior for campers. By modeling appropriate behavior, camp staff can set a positive example for how campers should conduct themselves, creating a healthy and respectful camp culture. This means having a positive attitude about camp activities, treating everyone with kindness, respecting differences, and showing appreciation for camp staff.

# Supporting Staff During the Camp Season

Making sure staff feel supported and boosting camp staff morale can nurture a positive and productive camp environment. Try some of these strategies:

Ideas to Support Camp Staff Throughout the Camp Season		
Category	Ideas	
Recognition and Appreciation	<ul> <li>Ask about self-care practices in pre-camp surveys and provide opportunities to accommodate them.</li> <li>Show appreciation regularly, both publicly and privately, such as at check-ins (group and individual), during all-camp moments, and through personalized notes.</li> <li>Create a peer-to-peer shout-out program to recognize one another for achievements through messages, letters, and nominations.</li> <li>Create a program to reward positive behaviors that reflect camp values (such as raffles, gift cards, groups rewards, stickers, and pins).</li> <li>Work with Marketing to recognize staff on social media.</li> <li>Reward staff for their hard work with special activities or spaces such as treating them to special desserts or having a staff-only coffee/tea space with fancier options.</li> </ul>	
Team Building and Professional Development	<ul> <li>Promote positivity, inclusivity, and respect across all exchanges with staff.</li> <li>Offer staff opportunities to develop new skills, attend workshops, and/or participate in training programs.</li> <li>Include staff bonding activities during training and staff meetings to convey the importance of communication, collaboration, and being inclusive.</li> <li>Establish staff communication channels (even before camp), such as a social media or text group.</li> <li>Emphasize clear and respectful communication.</li> </ul>	
Creating a Positive Work Environment	<ul> <li>Use pre-camp surveys to learn more about staff's interests (such as food, traditions, sports, self-care practices) and accommodate them in your camp program.</li> <li>Encourage a work-life balance by providing adequate time off, breaks, and other support for staff well-being.</li> <li>Plan fun activities (on and off campgrounds) for staff to participate in on their off-days such as swimming, horseback riding, canoeing, climbing, and field trips.</li> <li>Welcome staff feedback and suggestions for improving camp, including through regular anonymous surveys.</li> </ul>	
Cultural Competence	<ul> <li>Organize staff activities and events that reflect a variety of staff interests and experiences.</li> <li>Encourage staff to share any specific cultural traditions.</li> <li>Offer DEIRJ training for all staff.</li> <li>Address issues of discrimination promptly.</li> </ul>	

# **Managing Staff Behavior**

Effective behavior management contributes to a positive camp culture. When giving staff feedback:

- Take the time you need to settle yourself and plan your approach.
- Choose an appropriate time and place.
- Share it in a non-threatening manner.
- Maintain confidentiality.

Following are some tips for managing staff behavior:

Techniques for Managing Staff Behavior	
Category	Techniques
Set Clear Expectations	■ <b>Girl Scout Mission and Values:</b> Link daily decisions to the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Example: "How can we be considerate and caring in this situation?"
	■ Code of Conduct: Develop a written code reflecting camp values. Review during training and reference when addressing behavior.
	■ <b>DEIRJ Commitment:</b> Provide examples of how staff can support diversity and inclusion in daily interactions.
	■ Communication Channels: Establish clear pathways for staff to share updates, questions, and concerns.
	■ <b>Keeping Staff Informed:</b> Use multiple formats (verbal, written, digital) to regularly communicate updates such as schedule changes.
	■ Regular Check-Ins: Conduct brief, scheduled check-ins to address staff well-being and performance.
Effective Communication	■ Constructive Feedback: Balance the recognition of staff achievements with areas for improvement.
	■ Courageous Conversations: Train staff to mediate difficult discussions effectively.
	■ Addressing Concerns: Create a safe space for staff to share concerns and other feedback.
Lead by Example	<ul> <li>Model Desired Behavior: Demonstrate the behaviors and values you want staff to reflect.</li> <li>Effective Leadership: Show strong decision-making and problem-solving skills in your work.</li> </ul>

# **Staff Evaluation Processes**

Check with your council's HR team for council policies and procedures. Generally, the primary goals of summer camp evaluations are to:

- Provide constructive feedback.
- Facilitate the professional growth of your camp staff.
- Support staff alignment with your camp's values.

Consider conducting two formal evaluations during the season.

- 1. Mid-Season Check-In: Give feedback on the season so far and address any issues.
- 2. End-of-Season Evaluation: Discuss the staff's overall performance and opportunities for rehire.

Consider including three key components in your staff evaluation.

- 1. Self-Assessment: Staff members reflect on their performance and identify their accomplishments, perhaps reflecting on goals set previously or reflecting more generally on how the summer is going.
- 2. Supervisor Evaluation: The employee's supervisor assesses the employee's performance based on preset criteria, such as meeting job responsibilities, following camp policies, communicating with others, building community, and working as part of a team.
- 3. Camper Feedback: Before check-out, give campers surveys with simple questions, such as what their favorite activity was, and easy rating methods (such as using smiling or frowning faces) to gather feedback about their experience and satisfaction.

# Sample Staff Evaluation Questions

- How well does the staff member fulfill their responsibilities and obligations?
- Does the staff member maintain a positive attitude about their role?
- How often does the staff member take initiative to identify additional duties?
- How well does the staff member follow directions from supervisors and peers?
- How effectively does the staff member interact with and engage campers?

- Is the staff member consistently on time for meals, meetings, and returning from breaks?
- How capably does the staff member motivate and influence others?
- Does the staff member respect the traditions, cultures, and identities within the camp community?
- Would you recommend this staff member for rehire? (For internal documentation.)

# **Professional Development and Staff Retention**

Investing in your staff's growth not only improves your camp experience but also increases the likelihood of staff returning year after year. Consider these strategies:

#### ■ Create a progression system.

- ☐ Allow returning staff to mentor and train new hires.
- ☐ Offer increasing responsibilities throughout the
- ☐ Examples are menu planning, activity leadership, schedule creation, and administrative tasks.

#### ■ Offer opportunities for continuous learning.

- ☐ Provide ongoing certifications and trainings.
- ☐ Encourage staff to pursue new interests and skills.
- ☐ Partner with local organizations or experts to offer specialized workshops.

#### ■ Provide recognition and avenues for advancement.

- ☐ Implement a tiered system for returning staff, with increased responsibilities and pay.
- □ Offer performance-based raises for returning staff.
- ☐ Create designated leadership roles or specializations for experienced staff.

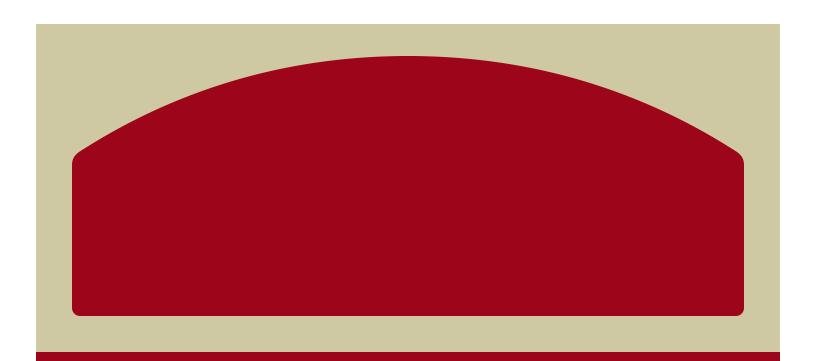
#### **■** Extend opportunities for year-round engagement.

- ☐ Recruit camp staff for off-season outdoor programs.
- ☐ Organize staff reunions or planning sessions during the off-season.
- ☐ Keep in touch through newsletters or social media groups.

# Support professional growth beyond camp.

- ☐ Provide reference letters highlighting skills developed at camp.
- ☐ Connect staff with Girl Scout council job opportunities.
- □ Offer workshops on translating camp experience to other jobs/careers.

Remember, staff who feel valued and respected and see opportunities for growth are more likely to return, creating a strong, experienced team that enhances your camp year after year.



# Creating the Camp Experience

# **Chapter 13: Caring for Campers**

# Introduction

At camp, you and your staff are role models who help shape campers' experiences and campers character. When campers see you showing kindness, empathy, and cooperation, they're more likely to mirror these behaviors. This creates a positive, inclusive camp environment and teaches campers valuable life skills such as how to navigate social interactions, resolve conflicts, and contribute positively to their communities.

Your goal is to address challenging situations with individual campers or groups in a way that supports their success. Many councils have behavior management plans or protocols to guide this process. Give your staff the tools they need to help Girl Scouts feel safe, be themselves, and trust that their peers will embrace their identities.

This chapter looks at how to care for campers, including the role of staff as mandated reporters, and how to support campers through situations such as homesickness and challenging behaviors.

# **Mandatory Reporting**

Camp staff are mandated reporters, legally required to report any suspicion of child abuse. Each state defines child abuse and neglect within the minimum standards set by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Make mandatory reporting a key part of your staff training, either as an online prerequisite or an in-person group activity.

# **Caregiver Communications**

Communication with caregivers is essential to the success of your camp session. Use emails, texts, and online platforms to keep caregivers informed about:

- Check-in and check-out procedures
- Camp's daily schedules, routines, and menus
- What to expect from overnight camp
- How mail is received (how long it takes for mail to arrive vs. dropping off prewritten letters to give out)
- Communication protocols between staff, caregivers, and campers (for example: situations when staff alert caregivers and when caregivers can speak with their camper)
- Photo sharing practices
- Camp community culture, including how you honor diverse identities and experiences

# **Assisting Campers** with Homesickness

At camp, it is crucial for staff to be able to identify and assist in situations of camper homesickness. Without proper training, dealing with homesickness can feel overwhelming. Staff may even become homesick themselves and require mechanisms to cope with their own related feelings.

#### Common signs include:

- Withdrawing from the group
- Acting out
- Complaining
- Stomach issues (lack of appetite, upset stomach)
- Fatigue (often occurs from crying at night)
- Difficulty concentrating

Here's a simple approach to support homesick campers. Please substitute these with your own camp's protocols if needed.

- 1. Normalize feelings. Let the camper know that it's normal to miss home; everyone misses home, even counselors.
- 2. Redirect. Try to encourage the camper to engage in an activity or a simple task.

### 3. Determine if the camper's needs are being met.

Are they hydrated? Have they had enough to eat? Is the camper well rested? Are they clean/showered? Is there anything preventing them from having a good time that you might be able to fix?

- 4. Have a brief, supportive conversation. Let the camper know you're there for them. If you're unable to have a conversation in the moment, let the camper know when you can talk.
- 5. Follow through. If you said you would set aside time to talk with your camper, make sure you make good on it.

### **Managing Camper Behavior**

Most campers are excited to be at camp and eager to participate. However, some may exhibit challenging behaviors due to having difficulty making friends, feeling intimidated, processing home issues, or simply finding camp challenging. When addressing camper behavior, remember:

- There's no single "right" way to experience camp. Be aware of your own biases and those of your staff. Notice if certain campers are treated differently and consider what changes might help all campers feel welcome.
- Consistency is key. Make sure all staff members are on the same page regarding behavior management strategies. Conducting regular check-ins and ongoing training can help maintain a unified team approach throughout the camp session.

### Tips for Managing Camper Behavior

### Create a group agreement early in the session.

- Involve campers in setting their own rules and expectations.
- Display the agreement visibly and refer to it regularly.
- Allow for updates as the session progresses.

### Praise positive behavior (but don't overdo it).

- Be specific about what you're praising.
- Recognize effort and improvement, not just results.
- Use a variety of acknowledgment methods (verbal praise, high-fives, special privileges).

### Avoid threats; phrase instructions positively.

- Instead of "Don't run," say "Please walk."
- Use "when/then" statements: "When you finish cleaning up, then we can start the game."
- Explain the reasons behind rules to help campers understand the logic and importance.

### Understand the root cause of behavior through active listening.

- Ask campers open-ended questions to encourage them to express themselves.
- Reflect back what you hear to show you're listening and understanding.
- Look for patterns in behavior that might indicate underlying issues.

### Ask for help when needed—you're part of a team!

- Don't hesitate to reach out to other staff or supervisors.
- Use team meetings as a forum for discussing challenging behaviors and brainstorming solutions.
- Share successful strategies with your colleagues.

More Tips for Managing Camper Behavior						
DO: Positive Ways to Manage Camper Behavior	DON'T: Inappropriate Ways to Manage Camper Behavior					
Model desired behavior, remembering that campers are watching your every move.	Yell at, label, use sarcasm with, tease, humiliate, use physical contact with, or belittle campers in any way					
Set realistic expectations for the age and abilities of your campers.	Give attention only for undesirable behavior					
Clearly explain rules and their reasons: campers don't mind following them if they make sense!	Assign "chores" as punishment that have no relation to the problem					
Be consistent: rules apply to everyone, both staff and campers.	Enforce rules inconsistently					
Be aware of group dynamics: keep your ears and eyes open to resolve potential problems before they take root.	Use the group or group reactions to embarrass or control behavior					
Use your campers' names and respect their pronouns.	Mispronounce names or misgender campers					

### **Girl Scouts' CIT Training Program**

Our counselor-in-training (CIT) program helps Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors develop leadership skills they need to serve as camp counselors. The CIT program provides a wonderful pipeline for future camp staff! The program is divided into two levels:

- CIT 1: For Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts
- CIT 2: For Ambassador Girl Scouts who have completed CIT 1

CIT registration should be part of your regular camp registration process, open to all eligible members. GSUSA recommends removing any additional application processes to reduce barriers to access.

After registration, send specialized CIT program information in the camp confirmation packet (see chapter 4). For more details, refer to the CIT Guidelines for Staff from GSUSA.

Your camp might also offer other leadership programs, such as WIT (wrangler-in-training) and/or Junior Lifeguard.

### **Chapter 14: Building Your Camp Community**

### Introduction

At Girl Scouts, camp is more than just a place—it's a unique community shaped by its outdoor setting, team-building activities, and welcoming environment. While programs may differ, the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) guides the community-building approach across all Girl Scout camps.

The GSLE, introduced in chapter 2, engages campers in various activities facilitated by supportive adults. Using the three Girl Scout processes—girl-led, cooperative learning, and learning by doing—the GSLE promotes

socioemotional and outdoor outcomes that extend far beyond the camp season.

This chapter explores strategies for camp directors and staff to build and maintain their camp community throughout the season. It covers topics such as community contracts, community circles, and activities for managing both small and large groups of campers. You may share this chapter directly with camp staff to support their work with camper groups.

### **Community Contracts**

A community contract is a set of guidelines that a group agrees to follow. At camp, these contracts establish expectations and create accountability between campers and staff. Create community contracts with staff during pre-camp training, within the CIT unit and each unit of campers, and with any other important groups as each session begins.

You can use an activity such as the one in the box or create a community contract in another way that appeals to a given group. It may be helpful to ask questions like "What helps you feel comfortable and safe at camp?" and "What do you think might help campers and/or staff feel comfortable and safe at camp?" Post the community contract where the group can refer to it as issues arise. Check in periodically to see if updates or additions are needed.

### **Group Activities: Create a Community Contract**

### You'll need:

- Large poster or chart paper



- Instructions:
- 1. Have everyone sit in a circle.
- 2. Draw a giant hand on the paper with the six key terms.
- 3. Define each part and ask the group how they can live out each one at camp.
- **Truth:** Tell the truth and be honest with one another.
- **Trust:** Put trust in one another; trust that everyone is here for good reasons and has good intent.
- **Put-Ups:** "Put-ups" are compliments or positive statements that make people feel good. They can be simple and surface level, such as "I love your sneakers," or more personal, such as "You have a great sense of humor." When sharing put-ups, try to keep a balance of both surface level and
- Active Listening: Active listening is listening attentively while someone else speaks, paraphrasing and reflecting back what is said, and withholding judgment and advice.
- **Personal Best:** You don't need to be the best, but always try your best.
- Fun: This one's self-explanatory—have fun!
- 4. Write down the group's ideas for each part.
- 5. Ask the group if they'd like to include anything else in their contract.
- 6. Have every member of the group sign the paper (including staff).

### **Community Circles**

Group reflection is an important part of Girl Scout camp, and it's often facilitated by counselors, with campers sitting in a community circle. Community circles can be used for all different purposes:

- To debrief an activity or project
- To share a favorite moment
- To process an event
- To resolve an issue

Circles might be held daily (or more often if needed), with staff and campers all having a role, to touch base about programs, challenges, and successes. They can vary in how they look and function, with group members sharing in sequence or using a popcorn or fishbowl style. Holding restorative community circles, while often more challenging, is important in helping to solve conflicts and/or keep camp a positive experience.

### Tips for Successful Community Circles

- Decide who will facilitate. The facilitator (or circle keeper) maintains the circle's power by upholding agreements and guiding the conversation.
- One mic. Circles are rooted in the power of sharing and listening. One person speaks at a time, while everyone else listens.
- Respect voluntary participation. Allow participants to pass when it's their turn. No one has to share.
- Build trust. Community circles, especially those focused on conflict resolution, thrive on trust between the facilitator and participants. Depending on the

- topic, the facilitator should reflect on their own identity and relationship with others to determine if they're the best person to facilitate.
- Ask open-ended questions. Encourage an opportunity for campers to think critically about the impact of their actions.
- Take and share notes. Write down any ideas or group solutions.
- Focus on the process, not just the outcome. Remember that the conversation itself can be valuable, even if a specific solution isn't reached.

### **Camp Songs**

Girl Scouts sing at camp for the pure joy of it! Singing happens throughout the day, including during meals, activities, celebrations, and campfires. Songs can boost team spirit, calm campers, and create lasting memories.

### **Tips for Song Leading**

- Make good song choices. Select songs you love and that are appropriate for the occasion. Find ones that add magic and memories to moments of fun, friendship, and celebration.
- Change it up! Don't overuse songs—send campers home with a whole cadre of new songs to sing. Use songs to fill time gaps or when waiting for an activity to start.
- **Be prepared.** Know the words and tunes of each song and have a few extras ready. If you want others to help lead, let them know ahead of time. When possible, share the song's history or origin.
- **Develop a teaching method.** Check out the below methods to help you teach songs at camp.
- Sing confidently. Project your voice and have fun!

### **Methods to Teach Songs**

- Call and Response: Sing the song all the way through. Then sing a line for the group to repeat.
- Visual Aids: Use lyric sheets or pictures to represent the lyrics.
- Break It Down: Break complex songs into smaller parts and teach separately before putting it all together.
- Actions or Movements: Use hand gestures or simple actions to represent the lyrics.
- **Repetition:** Sing the song multiple times, gradually increasing the tempo.
- Interactive Games: Use games or activities to teach lyrics, such as musical chairs or a scavenger hunt for related objects.

### **Icebreaker Activities**

Icebreakers are quick activities that help campers get to know one another, participate in discussions, and be part of an inclusive environment. They're especially effective at the start of a camp session but can also be used to build team spirit and inspire conversation throughout camp.

### Group Activities: Icebreakers/Get-to-Know-You Games

- **Learn names.** Names are an important part of personal identity. Make sharing and remembering everyone's names into a game. For example, each person might turn their name into an acronym of their interests, such as "Kiwi, Adventures, Tennis, Elephants" for K-A-T-E. Or they could pair their name with a fun movement, like "Samantha spins" or "Laura leaps."
- Explore interests. Discover what group members have in common while having fun. For example, play "Human Bingo," where each person gets a bingo card with squares containing fun facts or interests (such as "Has been camping," "Loves pizza," or "Plays an instrument"). Everyone moves around the group to find people who match the squares and see who can get bingo first!
- Show and tell. Encourage group members to get to know one another on a deeper level by sharing objects or photos. For example, hold a traditional "Show-and-Tell" where campers bring something special to share. You could also offer a selection of objects or photos for campers to choose from. Campers can then explain why their chosen object is special and how it connects to their life or personality.
- Warm up with an activity. Break the ice by getting everyone involved in an opening activity. For example, hold a "Rock-Paper-Scissors" tournament where everyone pairs up, and winners from each match keep playing against other winners. Or try anything else, from a craft to a sport, while encouraging the group to take risks, show their talents, and have fun together.

### **Group Decision-Making Activities**

Engaging in group decision-making activities helps campers generate ideas and make decisions together—from what song to sing to who can volunteer for different tasks while cleaning.

### **Group Activities: Decision-Making**

- Weigh options. Explore the benefits and disadvantages of each option to better understand which might work best. For example, create a simple "Pros and Cons" list with what's good (pros) and what's not so good (cons) about each option. Or ask "Would You Rather" guestions to help the group choose among multiple options.
- Vote openly as a group. Let everyone share their preferences before voting. This can be as simple as having the group raise their hands or move to different sides of the room to share their opinion. Or help the group to see everyone's input and decide collectively by sticker voting, where each camper adds stickers to posters with the available options to show their top choice(s).
- Vote privately. Campers may feel more comfortable voting privately, which enables them to share their true

- preferences without influence or pressure from others. You might simply have the group close their eyes before voting, or share their preference on slips of paper that you can tally afterward. These methods ensure that everyone's vote is private while still leaving the decision open to the whole group.
- Gauge interest. Use a scale to understand how campers feel about any idea or prompt. For example, ask a question, such as, "Do you want to go swimming today?" Have campers respond by either turning their thumbs up (agree), to the side (unsure), or down (disagree). You could also have them show any number of fingers (such as 0 for disagree, 5 for strongly agree). This method allows everyone to share their feelings in a simple, non-verbal way, and can be adjusted for the group's abilities.

### **Group Activities: Brainstorming**

- Brainstorm individually and as a group. Support the group in brainstorming on their own, in pairs, in small groups, or together as one large group. Or combine these techniques with an activity such as "Think-Pair-Share," where group members think of ideas on their own, then share in pairs, and finally come together to combine their thoughts for even more ideas.
- Generate lots of ideas. Come up with as many ideas as possible without worrying about whether they're good or not. For example, use an activity such as "Fishbowl," where one person shares an idea and others listen. Then, the others can "jump into the bowl" with new ideas or build on what has been said, creating a flow of
- ideas. Alternatively, simply have everyone write down ideas on posters or slips of paper.
- Visualize your ideas. Organize the group's thoughts in a way that's easy to see and understand. For example, try "Spider Mapping" to see how ideas connect like a web: write a main idea in the center of a page and draw lines out to smaller ideas.
- Turn it into a game. Add a playful twist to brainstorming. For example, play "Roll the Dice" by assigning each number on a die to a different topic or category, such as "Outdoor activities," "Favorite foods," "Animals," or "Travel destinations." Roll the die, then have the group brainstorm ideas related to the number rolled.

### **Team-Building Activities**

Combining different leadership styles and personalities can enhance teamwork—each approach brings a unique perspective, making all types of leaders valuable in building a team. Use these activities to highlight and practice teamwork:

### **Group Activities: Team Building**

Help campers learn to work together, communicate, and build trust as a team. Start with activities that are simple and give everyone personal space, so people feel comfortable. As the group's bonds strengthen and confidence grows, the activities can become trickier and involve the group working more closely together.

- **Get creative.** Arts, music, and drama bring campers together to express themselves and discover hidden talents. You might do anything from creating SWAPs to painting, from campfire improv to building bird feeders.
- Play together. Sports such as soccer or basketball keep campers active while working toward a shared goal. Games can include anything from board games to video games to outdoor activities such as tag.
- Try bonding activities. Bonding activities promote cooperation and teamwork. Once the group members know one another, activities such as a trust walk or human knot can strengthen relationships. These types of activities might also give group members a chance to learn more about one another. One example is a "Line-up" activity, where the group organizes themselves alphabetically or by birthday, favorite color, or another characteristic without talking.
- **Explore Camp.** Take on new adventures as a team. From archery to kayaking, outdoor activities can help campers plug into nature together! Activities like hiking and canoeing help campers develop a love for the great outdoors while moving their bodies and having fun as a group.

### **Group Processing and Reflection**

Moments for processing and reflection happen all the time at camp. A group might meet at the start of, throughout, and at the end of the day. Taking time to consider what they've experienced can help campers to better understand what they've learned and how this knowledge can help them in the future.

### **Group Activities: Processing and Reflection**

- Create space to share feelings. When your group checks in, find out how they're feeling in the moment and about the activity or day in general. You might find a creative way to do this, such as asking them to choose an emoji related to their mood, describe how they feel as a type of weather, or simply share one "feeling" word for a group pulse check.
- Encourage individual reflection. Make time for campers to think quietly about their own experiences. For example, you might have the group write in journals, either free-form or by responding to a prompt, such as, "What aspect of nature do you feel connected to today, and why?" Or you might lead campers through a guided meditation, have them doodle, or do anything else that gives them time to reflect on how they feel, what they've observed, and what they've learned.
- Support the group through tough moments. Groups encounter all different kinds of challenges—from tensions that grow during a difficult hike to conflict between certain group members. When a challenge occurs, encourage positive communication and active listening. Allow everyone involved time to share their feelings and their ideas about possible solutions. Use calming or grounding activities such as breathing exercises, group stretches, or reflection circles that help the group calm down, focus, and work together to find solutions.

■ Reflect on the past, present, and future. Organize processing and reflection time to consider both what has happened and how it can help in the future. For example, use a structure such as "Rose, Bud, and Thorn," where campers share something positive that's happened (rose), something challenging (thorn), and something with the potential to grow or improve (bud). Another reflection technique is "What? So what? Now what?" to discuss what happened, why it matters, and what can happen or change as a result.

### How to Resolve Conflicts

- **1. Acknowledge.** It's easy to ignore an issue, but you must acknowledge a conflict to resolve it.
- **2. Define.** Each side needs to agree on what happened. Asking questions and engaging in active listening can help.
- **3. Listen.** Each person involved in the conflict should have a chance to openly share their perspective without being interrupted.
- **4. Take care.** Each person should acknowledge how the other/s feel/s. If needed, apologies are made.
- **5. Find a solution.** Considering all sides, what could be a possible solution? Agree on a way forward.
- **6. Plan.** How will you put the solution into action? What's needed to make it happen?

### Large Group and All-Camp Community Activities

Plan and incorporate large group activities into the main camp schedule before campers arrive. These events often require more preparation than small group activities and are typically organized by the program or camp director.

- Around The World—camp exploration challenge: Create a map with various "stops" around the camp. At each stop, campers complete a challenge to earn a passport stamp. The first group to collect all the stamps wins a prize.
- Counselor Search—camp-wide scavenger hunt: In their units, campers follow clues to find their counselor. Each group is given a starting clue that leads them to a counselor who isn't their own. However, this counselor gives them a clue to find another counselor, who gives them the next clue, and so on, until the campers finally reach their own counselor. Once
- they do, the group brings their counselor back to the starting place where everyone gathers and celebrates.
- Camp Field Day—outdoor camp games: Set up activity stations with quick, active games such as a water balloon toss, kickball, and tag. Campers can rotate in groups or choose activities freely.

### Other Large Group and All-Camp Activities

- Talent show
- Capture the Flag
- Trivia

- Open mic
- Kickball
- Bingo

- Dance party
- Campfire
- Karaoke

### **Chapter 15: Program and Activity Planning**

### Introduction

Picture this: A Girl Scout scaling a climbing wall, practicing knot-tying, or earning a new badge around a crackling campfire. These are just a few of the exciting possibilities awaiting campers at Girl Scout camp. Our programs are designed to spark curiosity, boost confidence, and create unforgettable memories.

At the heart of every high-quality Girl Scout camp program is the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). Through our camp program, we aim to:

- Ignite Girl Scouts' passion for the outdoors
- Encourage Girl Scouts' environmental stewardship
- Help Girl Scouts develop essential outdoor skills

When we combine these elements with thrilling adventures like hiking and camping, we see amazing results. Campers leave satisfied, eager to return, and equipped with skills that last a lifetime.

For more on camp traditions, activities, and the GSLE, see chapters 2 and 14. For information on program evaluation, see chapter 16.

### Resources

GSUSA Outdoor Progression Chart: Use this chart in our appendix to help plan outdoor experiences for Girl Scouts of all ages.

### Planning Your Camp's Activities

Camp directors typically plan their programs early in the membership year to include in registration materials like the camp guide and camp confirmation packet. As the summer approaches, you'll oversee activity scheduling and may delegate planning to your program director, activity specialists, or unit counselors.

Remember, every camper is unique. Work closely with campers and their families to pinpoint accommodations that showcase each child's strengths and talents.

**Pro Tip:** Check with your program/Girl Scout experience team for new activity ideas. Feel free to share this chapter directly with your camp staff to get everyone on the same page.

### Designing a Camp Program or Activity

Early in the membership year, each of your camp's programs will need to have some basic details confirmed for your registration materials (see chapter 4), such as the theme and major camp activities for each session. Camp program planning is a year-round adventure.

Sample Timeline for Program Planning						
When?	Tasks					
September	<b>Review feedback from the previous summer.</b> As part of your post-camp season debrief for the past summer (see chapter 16), review last summer's feedback and registration numbers. What worked? What needs a refresh? Use this data to set goals for the upcoming season.					
October	Confirm sessions and develop the camp guide. Decide on session goals, dates, and capacity.  Work with your marketing team on camp guide layout and content.					
November	Share details for registration and develop the camp confirmation packet. Work with Marketing to create the camp confirmation packet as well as Data/IT, Customer Care, and any other teams to prepare for camp registration. See chapter 4 for more information.					
December	Post the camp guide and camp confirmation packet. Upload the final camp guide and camp confirmation packet to your registration website.					
January	<b>Draft your program schedule.</b> Begin to create a program schedule for each session, including check-in/check-out processes and the times, locations, and number of campers and staff for all advertised activities, all-camp activities, and unit activities. If your council is able, share the schedule with DEIRJ practitioners or your HR professionals for review and feedback.					
February	<b>Finalize your program schedule.</b> Lock in your schedule and create a list of needed contracts (such as for campsites, ferries, activities), supplies, equipment, additional staff or experts, and anything else needed for your programs.					
March-May	<b>Prepare for the programs.</b> Once the majority of registrations are in, confirm all the supplies, equipment, and/or any vendors for each activity in each of your programs. For example, you might need to order supplies and create vendor contracts.					
June	<b>Train your camp staff on the programs.</b> As part of your staff training, share a roster of campers and the theme for each unit. Train staff on any program materials (looking through badge booklets, roleplaying all-camp activities, etc.) before campers arrive and have them help set up the different program activities around camp. Find more information on staff training in chapter 11.					
Throughout the Camp Season	<b>Facilitate your programs.</b> Support your camp staff in facilitating the planned programs. While much of the planning will have been completed at this point, staff may find that they need to come up with filler activities, such as short games and song singing (see chapter 14 for ideas). Be ready with backup plans for rainy days or unexpected changes.					

Remember, diversity is key! Make sure your programs reflect a wide range of interests, experiences, ways of engaging, cultures, and backgrounds. Consider how factors like physical abilities, cultural background, and past experiences might affect participation, and find ways to honor each camper's unique strengths.

The chart below highlights important aspects to address when planning your camp programming.

	Key Elements of a High-Quality Program or Activity
When?	Tasks
Health and Safety	<ul> <li>Safety is the foundation of any successful camp program. Key considerations include</li> <li>Staff Training: Train at least one staff member per activity in relevant emergency procedures, including severe weather protocols. All staff should hold first aid/CPR certifications.</li> <li>Specialized Certifications: For activities like lifeguarding or archery, staff must have the required certifications.</li> <li>Staff-to-Camper Ratio: Maintain the required staff-to-camper ratio for all activities.</li> <li>Documentation: Collect all necessary permission slips and liability forms before activities begin.</li> <li>Equipment and Facilities: Regularly maintain all facilities and equipment. Conduct and log safety inspections before each activity.</li> <li>Medical Awareness: Brief staff on any medical conditions or allergies that might affect camper participation. Make accommodations or modifications as needed.</li> </ul>
Inclusivity	<ul> <li>When planning your programs:</li> <li>Design activities that reflect a wide range of interests, experiences, ways of engaging, cultures, and backgrounds.</li> <li>Be sensitive to cultural, religious, and individual differences in your planning.</li> <li>Consider how factors like physical abilities, cultural background, and past experiences might affect participation.</li> <li>Evaluate potentially sensitive topics for appropriateness.</li> <li>Be sure programs don't perpetuate stereotypes about groups (e.g., girls like pink) or rely on assumptions (e.g., everyone's parents speak English).</li> <li>Make necessary accommodations to allow all campers to participate fully.</li> <li>Find ways to honor each camper's unique strengths and abilities.</li> <li>Allow campers to wear activity-appropriate clothing they're comfortable in.</li> <li>When possible, incorporate elements of the local community's diverse environment.</li> </ul>
Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)	<ul> <li>Incorporate the core elements of the GSLE into your camp programs.</li> <li>Use Girl Scout programming and the three processes: girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning.</li> <li>Allow campers to explore their interests and lead when possible.</li> <li>Encourage teamwork to accomplish goals.</li> <li>Offer multiple activity options or variations to cater to different interests.</li> <li>Involve campers in the planning process when feasible.</li> </ul>
Skill Development	Offer opportunities for campers to grow and develop new abilities.  Provide chances for campers to learn new skills or build on existing ones.  Design progressive programs appropriate for different ages and ability levels.  Offer qualified instructors for specialized skills.  Use the Badge and Award Explorer to incorporate national programming.  Record badge steps or other program completions for each Girl Scout.
Flexibility and Adaptability	Be prepared to adjust your program as needed.  Have backup plans for outdoor activities in case of inclement weather.  Prepare extension activities for campers who finish early.  Be ready to modify activities to accommodate all campers' needs and abilities.
Feedback	Regularly assess and improve your programs.  Set up a system for collecting camper feedback.  Designate a staff member to review feedback and suggest improvements.  Regularly evaluate and refine programs based on feedback and observations.

### **Incorporating Progression and** Girl Scout Programming at Camp

Girl Scout programming is designed to offer progressive levels of challenges and rewards through badges and other activities. This progression allows campers to build skills over time and encourages them to return year after year. Remember, campers might join at different ages and skill levels, so offering a variety of programs is key.

### Strategies for Implementing Progression at Camp

- Build on previous skills. Offer programs that build on campers' skills from previous years. Use national programs, which are often designed with progression in mind.
- Provide certified instruction. Make sure certified instructors are available for specialized activities like archery, swimming, and boating.
- Offer different program durations. Consider shorter "sampler" programs (such as three-day programs) to build confidence. Gradually increase program length and complexity as campers gain experience.

■ Design progressive trip and

- travel programs. For activities like backpacking, create a progression. For example, start with day hikes, move to overnight trips, progress to two- or three-night excursions, and end with five- to seven-day backpacking adventures.
- Track progress. Have staff record completed badge steps or other program achievements. Use councilprovided badge forms if available. Provide completion records to caregivers at the end of the camp session.

### **Keep It Girl-Led!**

The girl-led approach is a cornerstone of Girl Scouting and can help campers shape their own experiences. While much program planning happens before camp, find ways to incorporate camper choice throughout. For example:

- Provide activity options for campers to choose from.
- Encourage variety within activities (such as choosing art mediums and roles in skits).
- Let campers choose the order of activities.

- Encourage modifications to game rules or creative additions.
- Promote variations on traditional camp activities.
- Consider offering "Choose Your Own Adventure" themed sessions.
- Hold meetings for campers to vote on activities or events.
- Create a suggestion box for new ideas.

### Prepare camp staff to facilitate girl-led experiences effectively:

- Teach facilitation techniques designed to guide campers without taking over.
- Emphasize the importance of open-ended questions to encourage camper problem-solving.
  - Discuss how to balance safety with allowing appropriate risks for growth.

### Share these tips with camp staff

### to help them embrace the girl-led approach:

- Start small. Introduce one or two girl-led elements at a time.
- Be patient. Allow time for campers and staff to adjust to this approach.
- Celebrate successes. Recognize when campers take initiative, show leadership, or listened well to other campers.
- Learn from challenges. Use difficulties as teaching moments

for problem-solving.

**Resources for Planning** 

**Progressive Programs** 

Award and Badge Explorer: Use this tool

to find national programs spanning the

outdoors, STEM, entrepreneurship, and

Council Programs: Check with

complement national offerings.

your council for local programs that

**GSUSA Outdoor Progression Chart:** 

Found in the Appendix, this chart is an

excellent resource for planning age-

appropriate outdoor experiences.

life skills.

■ Seek feedback. Regularly ask campers and staff how to improve girl-led practices.

### **Using Outside Vendors for Activities**

Occasionally you might want to add extra excitement to your camp program with activities not available on your property. This could include:

- Off-site adventures like white-water rafting or horseback
- Bringing in vendors for on-site activities like a climbing wall or boat rentals

If you decide to use outside vendors, check with your leadership team about safety requirements, liability concerns, and insurance needs. (For more on risk management, see chapter 5.) Remember, the goal is to create a camp experience that's safe, inclusive, and packed with opportunities for growth and fun.

### **Chapter 16: Surveys and Evaluations**

### Introduction

Surveys are your key for understanding and improving your camp's programs, food, staff, and more. By collecting feedback from campers, staff, and caregivers, you'll uncover patterns and data that can transform your camp experience.

Plus, surveys help you measure your camp's success. When you ask campers questions that tie directly to

your goals, you'll see just how well you're hitting the mark. Camp directors who use survey results to finetune their programs often find themselves with more happy campers returning year after year.

This chapter explores how you can create, analyze, and use surveys to keep your camp thriving.

### Camp Survey Ideas

Tailor questions to your camp's specific goals and programs. Consider questions such as these for your surveys:

### **For Campers**

- What was your favorite activity and why?
- How was your experience with the staff?
- Did you feel supported?
- How would you rate the food?
- What's one thing you'd change about camp?

### **For Staff**

- How prepared did you feel for your role?
- Any suggestions for additional training or resources?
- Ideas for new activities or programs?

### **For Caregivers**

- How satisfied were you with pre-camp communication?
- Have you observed any changes in your camper?
- How likely are you to recommend camp?

### **Crafting Your Survey**

Follow these steps to create surveys that will give you the insights you need:

- 1. Set your goal. What do you want to learn? Is it overall satisfaction, activity preferences, staff performance, or ideas for improvement?
- **2. Create a timeline.** Set a deadline for the survey, reporting, and presenting the findings.
- 3. Choose a platform. Consider what platform will be best for your survey. Will an online survey work best, or do you need a paper version due to limited internet access at camp?
- 4. Design your questions. Mix it up with multiple choice, short answer, and open-ended questions. Ask for specific examples to get detailed feedback. Keep it concise—shorter surveys often get more thoughtful

- answers. If possible, make your survey anonymous to receive more honest feedback.
- **5. Share and thank respondents.** Let respondents know why their input matters and how you'll use it. Always thank them for their time and insights.

### Making Sense of the Data

Set aside time after each survey and at the end of the season to review all feedback provided. Once you've gathered your feedback, it's time to put the results to work:

- 1. Look for patterns. Note any common themes (positive and negative) that can help with future planning.
- 2. Find areas for improvement. Where can your camp improve? Is it programs, facilities, communication, or safety?

- 3. Celebrate the successes. Recognize what your camp is doing well and build on these areas.
- **4. Communicate the results.** Share the results with everyone who needs to be informed and who will help improve your camp program, such as staff, leadership, volunteers, and other council employees.
- 5. Create an action plan. Set specific timelines, goals, and staff roles for each area you'd like to address.
- 6. Make the changes. Start implementing changes, some of which might begin before the next camp season.
- 7. Follow up with respondents. Let staff, campers, and/or caregivers know when you've acted on their feedback. It shows you value their input.
- 8. Repeat. Collect surveys and feedback regularly to make sure you're meeting the needs of your staff, campers, and caregivers.

Use this table to guide your discussion and planning:

### Debriefing the Summer with Your Council

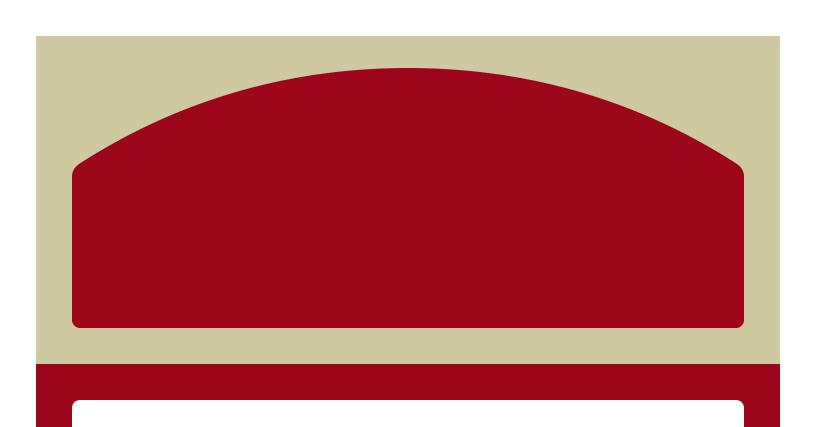
After the end of the summer (September or October), meet with your camp leadership team and other council teams (Marketing, Finance, HR, Property, Retail, Data, and Program) to review the summer and plan for an even better next year!

This meeting is your chance to:

- 1. Share your story. Present survey feedback, registration data, budget information, photos, videos, and compelling camper and staff stories.
- 2. Evaluate performance. Assess how well you met your goals for the season.
- 3. Identify trends. Look for patterns in feedback that suggest areas for improvement or expansion.
- 4. Brainstorm improvements. Collaborate on ideas for enhancing various aspects of camp.
- 5. Create an action plan. Develop a timeline for implementing changes before the next season.

Post-Camp Season Debrief				
What to Share	Areas to Review: Actions to Consider			
■ Survey feedback	■ <b>Programs:</b> Refine offerings to better suit your campers' interests.			
■ Registration and budget data	■ Retail: Update inventory based on recommendations.			
■ Photos and videos	■ Food Service: Revamp menu options.			
■ Camper and staff stories	■ Staffing: Adjust structure; consider specialized instructors.			
	■ Facilities: Plan necessary upgrades or new amenities.			
	■ Marketing: Refine strategies to reach potential campers.			
	■ Budget: Plan for major investments or adjustments.			

Don't Forget! GSUSA's Unpacking Camp session typically happens in September. It's a fantastic opportunity to compare notes with other Girl Scout camp staff from across the country.



## SECTION 5: Appendix



Appendix					
Chapter	Resource	Purpose			
2	Camper Ages and Stages	These resource sheets include information on the GSLE for each Girl Scout level at camp and tips for what supportive adults can do to make camp a great experience for all.			
5	Sample Summer Camp Staff Emergency Guidelines and Procedures	This set of protocols can be adapted for your camp. All camp staff should be trained and familiar with your camp's emergency procedures.			
6	Camper Health Care Log	This is an example of a basic vital log sheet that can be used by or adapted for health care staff to mark down campers' vitals when providing assistance and care to them.			
8	Sample Menu	This gives an overview of how campers and staff can be fed over a two-week camp session.			
9	What to Ask Your Camper	Camp staff can share this handout with caregivers at check-out to support campers as they continue to build and reflect on their camp experience once they return home.			
10	Camp Staff Interview Guide and Sample Questions	This provides examples of questions to ask and techniques on how to interview applicants for camp positions.			
15	GSUSA Outdoor Progression Chart	Use this chart to help plan outdoor experiences for Girl Scouts of all ages.			

Resources on gsConnect					
Chapter Resource Purpose					
3	Camp Costing Tool	Use this interactive Excel spreadsheet to create your personalized camp budget. This costing tool combines income with staffing, program supply, and food costs to help you determine what the camp fee per camper should be.			
5	Sample Equipment Inspection Forms	This spreadsheet contains sample forms for activities including cycling, archery, boating, paddleboarding, and zip lining that can be adapted for your camp to document equipment inspections.			

### The Daisy Girl Scout Experience at Camp: K-1 (Ages 5-6)



	Variety of Activities	Supportive Adults (& CITs!)	Girl Scout Processes
Daisies	<ul> <li>Are curious, imaginative, and active.</li> <li>Want to get outdoors, try new things, be creative, and make friends.</li> <li>Take longer getting ready, moving from place to place, and eating.</li> <li>Need time to rest and recover.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>View their camp staff and CITs as caring role models, authority figures, and "fun purveyors."</li> <li>Are generally comfortable with direction and clear rules.</li> <li>Can be easily frightened by being alone, the dark, and animals.</li> <li>May need help understanding what they need.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Show independence by going to camp.</li> <li>Are learning group cooperation, sharing skills, and what it means to be part of a team.</li> <li>Love and learn best from physical and participatory activities and games.</li> <li>Understand some letters and numbers.</li> </ul>
Staff and CITs	<ul> <li>Plan a mix of outdoor, make believe, and other camp activities.</li> <li>Introduce GS traditions, songs, and games to build spirit, sisterhood, and belonging.</li> <li>Include transition time, countdowns for tasks, and rest (nap or quiet time).</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Provide clear direction, ongoing guidance, and conflict resolution support.</li> <li>Listen to campers' feelings and stories with interest, and reassure them that they're safe.</li> <li>Make time to address basic needs (e.g., water breaks, bathroom stops).</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Engage Daisies with a variety of quick, participatory activities that keep them creative and active.</li> <li>Help them to choose what to do.</li> <li>Have them work together in small groups or one large group.</li> </ul>

### The Brownie Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 2-3 (Ages 7-8)



### Variety of Activities

### Supportive Adults (& CITs!)

### **Girl Scout Processes**

### ■ Want to try new things and learn skills with friends.

- Are growing and ready for more physical activities.
- Love to build and experiment.
- Want to feel accomplished in what they do.
- Are developing a sense of self and their interests.
- Need and welcome guidance.
- Want to behave well, and can take direction and complete tasks.
- Are deepening their friendships.

- Are taking initiative, especially with tasks like dressing and grooming.
- Are starting to see others' points of view but are still largely focused on themselves.
- Perform well through organized, hands-on activities with friends.

### ■ Include badges and activities that are active, moderate in duration, and focused on trying new things.

- Explore all camp offerings, including horseback riding, canoeing, swimming, and large group games.
- Encourage campers to try new foods, and teach things like rolling sleeping bags and shoelace-tying tricks.
- Include time to rest and reset.

- Provide clear expectations.
- Help campers make decisions and set goals. (Try a checklist or kaper chart!)
- When something doesn't go as planned, assure campers they still learned something!
- Support the group's social dynamics, but also encourage new connections, collaboration, and traditions that build sisterhood.
- Encourage "bite-sized" choices and multiple opportunities for leadership.
- Have campers work in pairs and small groups.
- Do activities that emphasize "we" instead of "me" to build cooperation and teamwork.
- Support routines and give reminders, especially for wake-up and bedtime.

## Staff and CITs

Brownies

### The Junior Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 4-5 (Ages 9-10)



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	Variety of Activities	Supportive Adults (& CITs!)	Girl Scout Processes
	Want to be busy, learn new things, and grow.	Are getting closer to or entering puberty.	Are developing a deeper sense of self and others.
Juniors	Can stay engaged for longer periods of time.	■ Can identify and monitor their basic needs yet are still too	Are learning independence and how to lead others.
	Have the fine and gross motor skills for sports and skill building.	young to fully self-supervise.  • Are developing their own opinions but are self- and	<ul> <li>Are silly and childlike while also responsible and thoughtful.</li> </ul>
	Have an understanding of the world that has expanded beyond themselves.	group-conscious. They want a best friend and to be part of a group.	<ul> <li>May be nervous about what others think and sensitive to criticism.</li> </ul>
		Look up to staff, CITs, and older campers.	
	■ Encourage campers to try new things and follow their	■ Help campers explore independence and feel	■ Encourage campers to make decisions and lead.
	interests.	supported to try and fail.	■ Use brainstorming games to
Staff and CITs	<ul> <li>Try physical activities such as zip lines, horseback riding, and</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Listen, ask questions, and be mindful of campers' needs.</li></ul>	get everyone to share their opinions.
and	canoeing.	■ Support them in navigating	■ Encourage campers to
aff	<ul> <li>Earn badges and incorporate service.</li> </ul>	friendships and resolving conflicts as group dynamics	persevere through challenges.
S	■ Be goofy as a way to inspire	shift.	<ul> <li>Offer various opportunities for leadership.</li> </ul>
	campers' love of camp!	<ul> <li>Still share reminders about personal hygiene, cleanliness, and routines.</li> </ul>	

### The Cadette Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 6-8 (Ages 11-13)



### **Girl Scout Processes** Variety of Activities Supportive Adults (& CITs!) ■ Are undergoing physical and ■ Are ready to go, seek new Are ready to lead yet often challenges, and explore. emotional changes with choose activities to please puberty. the group (not actually what ■ Can experience more that Girl interests them). Scouts has to offer, like field ■ Want independence but need trips, overnight travel, and an authority figure to guide ■ Are self-focused—most aware outdoor adventures. them. of themselves. ■ Learn best by diving in and ■ Value the opinions of their ■ Thrive in a supportive group of doing things themselves, peer group more than those friends who help inform their which they very much want of adults. self-image and views. to do. ■ Are anxious about fitting in, especially as romantic relationships may begin. ■ Explore all of camp, such as ■ Be supportive of campers in ■ Involve campers in group climbing adventures, kayaking, different phases of change, decisions, activity planning, and backpacking overnight. for example by offering private and problem solving. spaces for dressing, validating ■ Build in time for informal ■ Encourage campers to work Staff and CITs feelings, and helping campers discussions among campers. with people outside their regulate their emotions. usual group. ■ Give encouragement and ■ Offer healthy snacks between honest praise. Role-model Avoid activities that may fuel meals and encourage comparison or require physical your enthusiasm for camp! campers to get enough sleep. competition. ■ Involve the group in proactively setting rules and boundaries.

### The Senior Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 9-10 (Ages 14-15)



	Variety of Activities	Supportive Adults (& CITs!)	Girl Scout Processes
Seniors	<ul> <li>Have a more mature appreciation of Girl Scouting and everything it offers.</li> <li>Think about larger issues and new ideas.</li> <li>Are old enough to take advantage of unique Girl Scout experiences and opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Are becoming more and more independent.</li> <li>Are open to pursuing guidance/connection from adults outside of their families.</li> <li>May have relationships with peers of the same age and older or younger campers.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Know more about their interests and what they want to do.</li> <li>Have an increased ability to think abstractly.</li> <li>Can consider the "big picture" but may be unable to apply it in the moment.</li> <li>Experience strong emotions and peer acceptance that can drive their decisions.</li> </ul>
Staff and CITs	<ul> <li>Help Seniors find topics, issues, and interests they care about and want to learn more about.</li> <li>Support activities such as over-night travel, camping, and outdoor adventures.</li> <li>Remind Seniors that Girl Scouting is cool!</li> <li>Encourage returning campers to come back as CITs.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Support changing dynamics at camp, including friendships and relation-ships.</li> <li>Honor Seniors' same-level connections as well as provide opportunities for multilevel engagement.</li> <li>Offer a safe space for Seniors to share ideas, reflect, and support one another.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Encourage Seniors to seek leadership opportunities big and small, to create their own unique experience at camp.</li> <li>Give them the tools to find their own opportunities.</li> <li>Keep activities action oriented and make room for friendship-based activities.</li> <li>Help create a supportive, lowstress environment for Seniors to have fun in.</li> </ul>

### The Ambassador Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 11-12 (Ages 16-18)



### growing into young adults who know themselves, their values, and what they want for the wider world.

### ■ Are excited to make camp and the world a better place.

Variety of Activities

Are future focused and

■ May have participated in Girl Scouts' CIT or other leadership programs.

### Supportive Adults (& CITs!)

- Are developing their own network of supporters and tangible skills.
- Are assessing risks and rewards more accurately.
- Are engaged in deep relationships with peers that can matter as much as family.
- Thrive with a network of supporters.

### **Girl Scout Processes**

- Have increased confidence. and sense of self.
- Are able to lead with their values, hopes, and ideals for themselves and others.
- Are proud of their individuality but may be anxious for peer acceptance.
- Are able to assess risks and rewards today and in the future.

### ■ Help them have fun, reflect, and celebrate all they've done across their years at camp.

- Encourage returning campers to come back as CITs, CIT 1s to come back for CIT 2, and CIT 2s to apply for camp staff positions after the end of the summer.
- Provide Ambassadors with opportunities for sisterhood and memorializing their time as Girl Scouts.

- Adjust how they interact with Ambassadors who are now young adults.
- Help them understand life's questions and their role in the world.
- Encourage their interests and help them brainstorm opportunities for their futures.
- Provide support and ideas to help make Ambassadors' desires a reality.

- Support Ambassadors in driving their own camp experience in terms of pace, types of activities, etc.
- Offer leadership opportunities at camp and through Girl Scouts-e.g., leadership awards and highest award projects.
- Celebrate Ambassadors' achievements and provide opportunities to promote their confidence to lead in any area.

## Staff and CITs

Ambassadors

### **Summer Camp Staff Emergency Guidelines and Procedures**

As a staff member, you play a crucial role in maintaining the safety and well-being of campers. Familiarize yourself with these guidelines and be prepared to act swiftly and calmly in any emergency situation.

Types of Emergencies Included:						
Weather People-Related Technical						
<ul><li>Hurricane warning</li><li>Tornado warning</li><li>Lightning</li></ul>	<ul> <li>Injury/illness</li> <li>Missing camper</li> <li>Missing swimmer</li> <li>Unknown visitor</li> <li>Armed intruder</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Fire</li><li>Electric outage</li><li>Contaminated food</li></ul>				

### Weather Emergencies

Stay alert for dangerous weather alerts on the radio/ TV broadcasts, internet, and phone. When you receive a weather alert:

- 1. The camp director will follow up with you and other appropriate staff members.
- 2. Bring all campers out of danger and to the designated area based on the weather conditions. If in a building, stay away from any windows and doors; stay close to the center of buildings. Maintain your composure and reassure campers. Use non-threatening language and actions. Remember, you are the adult in charge. Discuss events with other staff on a need-to-know basis only.
- 3. The camp director or their designee will monitor weather conditions and manage communication with caregivers.
- 4. When you hear the all-clear signal, you may allow campers to resume their day.
- 5. If severe weather persists for over an hour, the camp director will notify the council office.
- 6. Be prepared to assist with safe transportation of campers if needed.

### **People-Related Emergencies**

Reminder: As a camp staff member, you are a statemandated child abuse reporter. Report any signs or suggestions of molestation or abuse according to proper procedures.

### **Injury or Illness**

- 1. Treat all injuries or illnesses as serious until proven otherwise.
- 2. Accompany the camper to the health office, or if the injury/illness is minor, send them with a buddy.
- 3. The health supervisor will attend to the camper's needs and record their name, injury/illness, and treatment in the first aid log.
- 4. If the camper needs rest, they will remain in the care of the health supervisor.
- 5. In cases of ongoing discomfort, the health care supervisor will call the parent/guardian for pick-up.
- 6. If the camper rejoins their unit, send a note home explaining the injury/illness.
- 7. In cases of serious injury or illness, the health supervisor will call 911 and alert the camp director and council administrative office. The camp director will contact the camper's parent/guardian.

### **Missing Camper**

- 1. Report to the camp office immediately with the following information:
  - a. Camper's name
  - b. Time last seen
  - c. Place last seen
  - d. Description of what camper was last seen wearing
- 2. Listen for the predetermined emergency code from the camp director. Direct your group to the designated meeting spot for attendance.

- 3. If you're an "A" counselor, stay with the campers to keep them calm. If you're a "B" counselor, prepare to be assigned to a specific search area.
- 4. The camp director will remain available to contact emergency help or administer first aid. Be prepared to answer questions about any additional information (for example, if you saw any strangers in the area, does the child like to wander, and were they homesick?).
- 5. When you hear the predetermined signal or code, the search is over.
- 6. If the camper is not found within 30 minutes, the camp director will call the local police and council administration office, and notify the camper's parent/ guardian.

### **Missing Swimmer**

- 1. If you're at the waterfront, listen for the waterfront director's predetermined emergency code and help clear the water of swimmers.
- 2. If you're the designated counselor, conduct a buddy check away from the water area and report to the camp director.
- 3. Direct your campers to the designated area for attendance.
- 4. If you're waterfront staff or designated response reserve staff, conduct a water search, followed by a search of the surrounding area.
- 5. If the camper isn't found, follow land search procedures as described in the missing camper section.
- 6. The camp director will call necessary authorities if the camper isn't found within 30 minutes.
- 7. For injured campers found in the water, follow proper rescue procedures. The camp director will call 911.
- 8. For campers who are found and are not injured, the health supervisor will determine if any follow-up is needed.

### **Unknown Visitor**

- 1. Make sure all visitors check in at the camp office and receive a visitor badge to be worn where visible while on camp property. This also applies to council staff visiting or walking through camp.
- 2. If you spot an unknown visitor, approach them to determine their intent. Keep campers at a safe distance.

- 3. Escort peaceful visitors to the camp office to check in.
- 4. If a visitor is hostile (uses forceful actions/language, is otherwise threatening, or refuses to leave), immediately notify the camp director or their designee.
- 5. Upon notification, the camp director will contact police and notify the council administration office.
- 6. Direct your campers away from the hostile visitor until police arrive.

### **Armed Intruder**

In cases of an armed intruder on camp property, prioritize keeping yourself and campers safe. The following steps should be taken in order when possible:

- 1. **Run.** If safe to do so, evacuate the danger zone with campers and staff. Use designated evacuation routes and proceed to the nearest predetermined safe meeting place. If you're on the water, quickly move boats away from the shore to a safe distance. If you can't reach an evacuation route, move away from the danger zone in any safe direction. If separated from the group, stay calm. Camp leadership will locate you.
- 2. Hide. If evacuation isn't possible, find a secure space to hide with campers. Use any available room that can be secured, including non-program buildings, maintenance buildings, or sheds. Lock the doors, turn off lights, and stay quiet. Move away from doors and windows. Silence all electronic devices.
- 3. Contact the camp director. Once in a safe location, if possible contact the camp director. Provide your location and any information about the intruder. The camp director will immediately call 911.
- 4. As a last resort, act with physical aggression to disrupt the intruder. Do this only if your life is in imminent danger and you cannot run or hide. Use improvised weapons like fire extinguishers or chairs. Commit to your actions with the intent to neutralize the threat.

### Technical Emergencies

### **Fire**

1. Remove campers from danger and notify the camp director, who will contact the fire department. Stay with campers. Bring any camper or staff member needing first aid to the nearest safe station.

- 2. For small structure fires, use fire extinguishers if you're trained. In all other cases, either call 911 or wait for the fire department.
- 3. Fire drills will be conducted within 24 hours of the start of each camp session. For two-week sessions, an additional drill will take place during the second week.

### **Electric Outage**

- 1. Maintain composure and reassure campers using nonalarming language and actions.
- 2. The camp director will alert the power company or repair person, monitor conditions, and update staff when possible.
- 3. If instructed, help turn off electrical appliances and fixtures throughout the property.

4. Be prepared to adjust your unit's schedule, replacing electricity-dependent activities with alternatives.

### **Food Contamination**

Follow the procedures in the "Injury or Illness" section.

### **Important Note for All Emergencies:**

Communicate! It's extremely important to share information during emergencies: use walkie-talkies, cell phones, and word of mouth. Use plain language. Take alerts seriously. If you see something, say something!

### Camper Care Health Log

Camper N	lame:					DOB:		Unit:	
Date	Weight	Issue	Temp	Blood Pres.	Pulse	Respiration	Pain	Action	Initials

### Sample Camp Menu

Below is a sample two-week meal schedule for campers arriving on Sunday and leaving Friday after lunch. During breakfast, a fruit and cereal station is available, and during lunch and dinner, there is a salad bar. For all these meals, an alternative—such as a grilled cheese sandwich—may also be offered.

Meals are served where food is in separate dishes, and people can choose what to put on their plates. For example, if the meal is spaghetti and meatballs, there is a bowl of spaghetti, a dish of meatballs, a bowl of pasta sauce, and a side of garlic bread.

Sample Camp Menu									
Week 1	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday			
Breakfast	Breakfast		Breakfast burritos and hashbrowns	Waffles and bacon	Muffins, eggs, and bagels	Cinnamon rolls, fruit, yogurt, and muffins			
Lunch		Chicken tenders and tomato soup Meatball subs Chicken bacon ranch sandwiches		Hot dogs with chili and macaroni and cheese					
Dinner	Pizza	Spaghetti with tomato sauce and meatballs	Fajitas	Cookout	Roast turkey, stuffing, gravy, and mashed potatoes				
Week 2	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday			
Breakfast		French toast sticks and sausage	St Maple Pancakes with Egg sandwiches toppings		Waffles with fruit and whipped cream				
Lunch		Cheese- burgers and fries	Chicken tenders	Steak and cheese subs	Pulled pork and macaroni and cheese	Crispy chicken sandwich			
Dinner	Pizza	Teriyaki chicken with rice and veggies	Ground beef tacos	Cookout	Garlic chicken with pesto tortellini				

### What to Ask Your Camper: Conversation Starters

Your Girl Scout just had an awesome time at camp! They may have learned new skills, taken on adventures, and made new friends. Use these conversation starters to talk to your Girl Scout about their camp experience and build on what they learned:

### **Social Interactions**

- Tell me about a new friend or friends you made. What was your favorite thing to do together?
- Who was your favorite counselor? What was your camp unit's name (if they had one)?
- Did you work on any team projects or activities? How did that go?

### **Camp Activities**

- What was your favorite camp activity? Why did you enjoy it so much?
- Did you try something new or challenging? What was that like?
- Tell me about the campfires or campfire circles. What songs did you learn? Can you teach me one?
- What did you make at your cookout? Could we try making it at home together?

### **Personal Growth and Emotions**

- What's something you're proud of accomplishing at camp?
- What was it like sleeping away from home?
- Was there a moment when you felt nervous? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about something that made you laugh or feel really happy at camp.

### **Nature and Outdoor Experiences**

- What was your favorite part of being outdoors?
- Did you learn anything new about nature or the environment?
- Did you see any interesting wildlife?

### **Looking Forward**

- Did you see other campers doing something you'd like to try next time?
- If you could change one thing about your camp experience, what would it be?
- What skills or activities from camp would you like to continue practicing at home?

Remember to listen actively, ask follow-up questions, and share in your camper's excitement about their experiences!

### Camp Staff Interview Guide and Sample Questions

Use this guide to structure interviews for both new and returning camp staff. Adapt it to fit your camp and council's specific needs.

The interview process is an important opportunity to put your DEIRJ commitment to work. Having a process that is equitable and inclusive will support you in hiring a dynamic, versatile team. Ways to be equitable and inclusive in your hiring process include:

- Work with your DEIRJ team to finalize the interview questions and process before you begin.
- Partner with your HR and/or DEIRJ team to conduct the interviews. Panel (2-4 people) interviews are a best practice for counteracting any individual biases we might have about candidates.
- Create an objective system for scoring applications and interviews. This will help you prioritize candidates who are the most experienced and skilled, not just those we feel the most immediately comfortable with.
- Communicate with candidates early and often about the hiring process, to ensure they feel respected and valued throughout.

### 1. Prepare for the interview.

Before you start interviewing:

- Create two sets of interview questions—one set for new applicants and one for returning staff who are applying for a position. Aim for ~12 questions for a one-hour interview.
  - ☐ Develop scenario-based questions to determine how applicants might handle typical camp situations—not only will they be in a rugged outdoor environment, but they'll also be in the role of a caregiver. Sample questions can be found on the next page.
- Create a scoring rubric. You'll score each candidate's responses immediately after the interview, to help you objectively keep track of how qualified they are for the role. Weight questions based on how big of a factor they will be in your decision about candidates. For example, scenario questions could receive up to 10 points, core interview questions up to 5 points, and less critical interview questions up to 3 points. You can include a final "Consider for hiring? Yes/Maybe/No" alongside the total score. This will make decision-making much easier once you've completed all the interviews!

Prepare to share key information about your camp.

- ☐ Number of staff and campers
- ☐ Descriptions of the site and accommodations
- ☐ Program sessions and dates
- ☐ Wi-Fi/cell phone service
- ☐ Staff break policies
- ☐ Position details
- ☐ What a typical camp day looks like

### 2. Start with introductions.

To begin the interview:

- Introduce yourself and your role at camp.
- Ask the applicant about themselves.
  - ☐ For new applicants, ask about their Girl Scout experience, how they heard about your camp, and their motivation for applying.
  - ☐ For returning staff, inquire about their activities since last summer (travel, education, new skills) and how these experiences apply to their desired role.

### 3. Describe the role.

Provide an overview of your camp and the position:

- For new applicants, highlight what makes your camp unique (Girl Scout camp in general as well as your specific camp).
- For returning staff, focus on role expectations and how you can support their goals for the upcoming summer.

### 4. Interview the applicant.

- Start by asking if the applicant has any questions about the camp or role.
- Use your prepared questions, tailored for either new applicants or returning staff.
- To support a fair and inclusive process, ask the same questions of all applicants (in the new track or the returning track). This allows all applicants the same opportunity to share their strengths and experiences, and prevents our personal feelings about an applicant (whether positive or negative!) from shaping the course of the interview.

### 5. Score the interview.

- Use your prewritten rubric to score a candidate's responses immediately after the interview.
- Each candidate will have a total score and a recommendation for hiring. This objective data is a key equity tool and will be very useful to you, especially if you go through a long interview process.

### Sample Camp Staff **Interview Ouestions**

- 1. Unit staff are the primary caregivers for campers, helping them throughout the day. Describe your experience caring for others. What do you enjoy about working with children?
- 2. Considering our camp's mission and activities, what skills make you an asset to our team?
- 3. When a project requires more effort than you anticipated, what do you do? What have you learned about yourself when this happens?
- 4. How do you make boring tasks fun? If you have a specific example, I'd love to hear it.
- 5. When you have conflict with a peer or colleague, how do you resolve it? What is your approach to conflict?
- 6. Considering our camp's focus on leadership and community, what's your idea of a perfect camp experience for you? For the campers?

- 7. We are intentional about building a camp community with campers and staff from a range of cultures, identities, backgrounds, and abilities. Tell me about your experience being a leader of a diverse group. How do you create a welcoming environment for all? And why is this important to you?
- 8. Weather doesn't always cooperate at camp. How would you entertain 20 campers on a rainy day?
- 9. Homesickness is common at camp. How would you help a homesick camper who wants to leave?
- 10. Sometimes camp life can be surprising. What would you do if camp isn't what you expected in terms of environment, facilities, or overall experience?
- 11. In a supportive camp environment, what do you expect from your supervisor?
- 12. At camp, we limit technology. How do you manage without using your phone during work hours?
- 13. Based on our conversation today, what questions do you have for me?

You may want to shape these questions to your camp's specific needs, roles, and culture. The goal is to understand how a candidate's skills and experiences align with your camp's values and objectives. Remember to be consistent in how you interview all applicants, to give everyone the same opportunities to share.

## girl scouts

# Outdoor Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent in the outdoors, including how to plan and organize outdoor skill and invite her to challenge herself further outdoor activities. Acknowledge a girl's mastery of an by taking that next step up and out! Outdoor fun can be endless when girls lead.



## Move Out

Plan and take a short walk outside.

Meet Out

Discuss being prepared for the weather.

look, listen,

feel, and

experiences

outdoors. Talk about

in the

Share past

smell. Share

outside to

Look Out

Do activities to explore nature.

> what was observed

Plan and carry out an indoor sleepover.

more about

why they're

special.

places and

outdoor

favorite

Learn

discovered. what was

Wonder what

else can be

seen in the

outdoors.

Plan and take a short and easy hike.

in a day pack. what to take Discuss

Dress for the weather.

snack or lunch. Plan a healthy

stay safe in the earn how to outdoors.

## Sleep Out

carry out an overnight in backyard. Plan and a cabin/

Cook Out

Discuss what to pack for the sleep out.

care for camping earn to use and gear.

outdoor skills. practice new earn and

Plan a menu cooking skill. with a new

campsite Discuss

fun activities. organization. Plan time for

**Properly** of Waste Dispose

Plan and take an outdoor trip for

Adventure Out

Camp Out

earn and practice a

several days.

new outdoor skill.

outdoor cooking

skill.

Learn a new

olan and take a 1- to 2-night camping trip.

responsibility for planning. Take more

skills and use safety

check points.

Develop first-aid

Learn and practice a new outdoor skill.

and make arrange-

ments.

Budget, schedule,

outdoor cooking Learn a new

Participate in an

budget, then buy and pack food. Plan a food

Feach and inspire

service project.

environmental

others about the

outdoors.

Practice campsite set up.

Plan an agenda that includes fun activities.

experiences to be

Imagine new

nad outdoors.

the surrounding Explore/protect environment.

eave No Trace

orinciples.

Practice all

on Durable Surfaces & Camp Travel

Considerate

of Other

Visitors

Plan and cook a simple meal outdoors.

**Explore Out** 

supplies needed gear and food Make a list of

needed to cook practice skills Learn and a meal.

Practice hand and Review outdoor dish sanitation. cooking safety.

Create a Kaper Chart for the cookout.

Respect Wildlife Campfire Impacts

Plan Ahead & Prepare

LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES:

eave What You Find

Minimize



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