

Service Unit Meeting Guide

Dear Service Unit Manager,

Thank you for volunteering your time and providing the adults in your service unit with an opportunity to gather. Service unit meetings are interactive, giving veteran troop leaders the opportunity to pass along ideas, traditions, and experiences. It is a time when adults can form a Sisterhood and build everlasting relationships.

Together with your team of volunteers, you create a tight-knit sense of community, providing personal assistance and helpful resources to every volunteer within your service unit.

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Qualities of a Great Girl Scout Leader

Honesty

You are a trusted representative of your service unit and of Girl Scouts. If you strive to make honest and ethical decisions, your team will too.

Ability to Delegate

Where there is trust, there is strength! The ability to delegate tasks to appropriate team members is one of the greatest skills you can have.

Communication

Be clear and be knowledgeable about what you want done or the information you wish to convey. If you can't explain it, they can't understand it.

Sense of Humor

Always try to find the smiles inside the struggles! If you strive to find the "funny" and positive side of any situation, your teammates will too!

Confidence

When setbacks occur, help assure everyone that everything is going to be okay. Be a source of encouragement and calm during life's little storms.

Commitment

Lead by example. If you expect your team to work hard and give of their time and talents, always do your best to do the same.

Positive Attitude

When setbacks occur, help assure everyone that everything is going to be okay. Be a source of encouragement and calm during life's little storms.

Creativity

Problems don't always have clear solutions and sometimes the best ideas take a little time to fine. Always try to think outside the box!

Ability to Inspire

Motivation is key to achieving your goals. Keep everyone's spirits high by appreciating hard work and recognizing team members' strengths.

Intuition

Use your best judgement. Trust your gut. When there is no roadmap telling you where to go or how to proceed, trust yourself and trust your team.



Preparing for the Service Unit Meeting

Service unit meetings are provided by a team of skilled and trained volunteers, called a service unit team. Each team is comprised of various positions to support the goals and needs of their community. The size of a service unit team and the jobs performed vary from service unit to service unit.

Core service unit team members are those that are part of the basic structure of any successful service unit team. They are fundamental roles that support the basic functions of the service unit – recruiting, supporting, engaging, and recognizing volunteers, and in turn the girls.

Some volunteers may serve in various roles throughout the year. Additionally, due to size, capacity, and other factors, some service units may choose to divide up the roles of the positions differently among different team members.

The service unit team traditionally consists of the following core positions:

- Service Unit Manager
- Service Unit Recruiter
- Service Unit Mentor
- Service Unit Troop Organizer
- Service Unit Treasurer
- Service Unit Fall Product/Cookie Program Manager
- Service Unit Event Coordinator
- Service Unit Recognitions Chair



Planning Service Unit Meetings

Running a service unit meeting is an important responsibility of the service unit team, especially the Service Unit Manager. Preferably, these meetings should happen monthly and should focus on the specific needs within your service unit. Ideally, 20% of the meeting should be spent on announcements and service unit business; the other 80% should be spent on collaborating with each other, mentoring each other, planning events, and learning new skills.

Before meeting as a full-service unit with all troops represented, a meeting should be held with the members of the service unit team to plan the year, create a budget, and discuss what is to be presented to the service unit at large. This meeting could be held a few hours prior to the first full-service unit meeting or on another day. Conducting this meeting is a very important part of building the leadership of your service unit.

It is critically important that the service unit meetings are kept to a specific time schedule. They should start and end on time unless the participants have been warned that the meeting could run longer than usual. Remember, your time—and the time of all the other participants—is valuable and should be honored. Make sure you do not spend too much time presenting information that could have been learned via notes or a post-meeting email/text; instead, spend most of your time on learning opportunities and activities.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

Provide time in the meeting for the different grade level groups to meet and share information and concerns
Include a “fun thing” on the agenda (i.e., learning a new song, playing a game, having a contest, teaching a new craft)

Regularly thank individuals and recognize special services or achievements

Have something at each meeting that the leaders can take back to their troop

Using Meeting Time Wisely Tips & Suggestions:

Start on time. End on time or early. Always!

If your volunteers want to stick around and talk afterward, they should be given a window of time to do so. Sometimes being given the opportunity to share ideas is the best use of your time together.

Be prepared to keep the building open longer than the scheduled time but know when/if the building manager needs to lock up the facility.

Be consistent with your meetings. The opportunity to share information and have “face time” with service unit team members and other leaders can make a huge difference in a volunteer’s Girl Scout experience. Data shows us that leaders who regularly attend service unit meetings feel less overwhelmed, and more confident leading their troops.

Parts of the Service Unit Meeting

1. Welcome (5 min) — This is the beginning of your meeting. Introduce the service team, especially if you have new leaders attending. Greet members at the door and use name tags. It will help those who are new to connect with everyone. You might explain how the members of your team service in the area. Distribute the meeting agenda. This is also a great time to do a flag ceremony and say the Girl Scout Promise and Law together.

2. Icebreakers & Team-Building Games (5-10 min) — Icebreakers and team-building games are a great addition to service unit meetings. These games traditionally give people an opportunity to get to know each other and/or learn new skills. Always try to include information on how volunteers can use these games with their girls, possibly explaining how to alter them for younger or older girls. These games can get more challenging as the year moves on and people get to know each other better. If you need suggestions for games and activities, enlist your service unit team to inquire about books on ceremonies and games or other resources that may be available from your local leadership center.

3. Business - Announcements & Upcoming Events (25-30 min) — This is the third part of your service unit meeting. Here you will present service unit information, such as membership numbers, treasurer report, council information, information about upcoming service unit, recruitment or community events, Product Sales, etc.

4. Volunteer Enrichment - Training or Activity (25-30 min)— The majority of your time together should be devoted to the enrichment of the volunteers. Remember that volunteers will continue to show up when you offer them something. Bring in speakers from your community, or facilitate a Journey, badge, or other outcomes-based training or activity. Be creative! Make sure to ask the leaders in your area about what they would like to see at the meetings. Many times, the service unit team is made up of experienced leaders, so be sure to keep your whole audience in mind when planning service unit leader meeting activities and training.

Consider who can lead the training. Volunteers within your service unit might excel in certain subjects, and you may find a volunteer who is willing to share their experience with others. If you cannot find someone to facilitate a particular training, contact your Membership Manager to request help finding and scheduling someone to attend and facilitate.

Another great use of volunteer mentors is to engage Girl Scout alumnae. Many alumnae continue to stay engaged and can offer many activity suggestions and resources. Some are even willing to travel and assist with troop meetings or events. Your Membership Manager may be able to help contact alumnae in your area.

5. Closing (5 min) — This is the final part of your service unit meeting. Thank everyone for attending, emphasizing the accomplishments of the meeting, etc. Closing time is the perfect time for a friendship circle or short game. You could ask the volunteers to share something that they learned during the meeting or have used since you last met. It is also the best time to remind your volunteers of the next meeting date and time.

Planning and running an informative, helpful, and timely meeting can be easy. If you need additional guidance or if you need help getting the runaway meeting back on track reach out to your Membership Manager.

Basic Elements of a Good Service Unit Meeting

Arrival Activity / Refreshments / Start-Up (5-10 min)

Consider adding a self-directed activity, which leaders can do when they arrive early for the meeting. The activity should not require a lot of time to complete and little if any, clean-up. Supplies for the pre-meeting activity should be set up and ready for the leaders when they arrive. This activity gives the service unit team time to greet people as they arrive and keeps attendees busy with something structured.

Some possible examples include:

A photo album with pictures of the past or the most recent service unit event to look at.

Pick a single topic such as “behavior management” or “something my troop did that I am proud of” and put out index cards. Ask leaders to write down and share one of their best practices or recent activities.

Put out a veggie or cheese and cracker tray — people tend to bond over food.

Part 1: Welcome (5 min)

Have an official start to the meeting. We can never emphasize the Promise and Law enough. Some service units have older girls do a flag ceremony if there is time.

Part 2: Icebreakers & Team-Building Games (5-10 min)

Do a Google search for simple and quick ice breakers for your service unit meetings.

Part 3: Service Unit Business (25-30 min)

Have an agenda. Print it and stick to it. People feel good when they can visually see that the group is accomplishing tasks. Give them only what is necessary. Data dump overkill, grinding personal axes, and wandering bunny trails tend to frustrate and annoy people.

Part 4: Volunteer Enrichment (25-30 min)

Pick one from the four options below:

1) Grade Level

Roundtables Good places for leaders' concerns to be expressed and advice to be shared

2) Training Snippet

Teach them a skill at each meeting.

3) Program Snippet

Have something at each meeting that the leader can take back to use with her troop.

4) Sharing Time

Allow time for leaders to share the troop activities that they are proud of.

Part 5: Closing / Clean Up (5 min)

Bring them back together. Ask what the most valuable thing they got from tonight's meeting was. Give them the date and time of the next meeting. Invite them to help clean up after the meeting. Thank them for coming. Wish them a great night. Involving others in the clean-up can help make stronger connections.

Service Unit Meeting Suggested Topics

Month	Topics
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage troop leaders to participate in the fall product program• Encourage troops to host or join recruitment events• Ensure all girls and troop leaders have renewed memberships.• Provide training on troop event notifications and activity and approvals.
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome new troop leaders to the service unit.• Remind troop leaders that girls must have a current membership to join the fall product program.• Ensure new troop leaders know how to open bank accounts
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate an investiture/rededication ceremony into the meeting.• Share information about Girl Scout volunteer training options and the Girl Scout progression.• Talk about the roles of the service unit team and any team vacancies.
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inform troops of the upcoming cookie program and let them know they must be registered to participate.• Begin to plan the service unit Cookie Kick-off and ask volunteers for support• Troops must begin to identify the Troop Cookie Manager.
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inform volunteers of details for the service unit Cookie Kick-Off.• Host a special welcome event for new troop leaders.• Hold a training on troop finances and strategies for talking to girls about money.
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold a refresher of options for volunteer training and the Girl Scout progression• Inform troop leaders of the details for the service unit World Thinking Day• Introduce council and service unit volunteer appreciation awards and applications
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host a troop leader training about the Troop Annual Financial Report (AFR) submission.• Talk about the best practices in planning to spend troop funds.• Celebrate Girl Scout week!
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebrate National Girl Scout Leader Day!• Encourage troops to host recruitment table and their school's open house.• Host a training about completing the council and service unit award applications.
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage troop leaders to renew their troop's Girl Scout memberships.• Host a workshop for completing the Troop Annual Financial Report (AFR).
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebrate volunteers with a special event.

Seating Suggestions

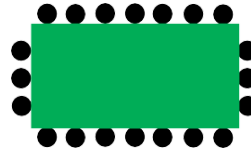
Select the seating arrangement that makes the most sense for your meeting. It is always a best practice to plan a seating arrangement where participants can read each other's body language. This visibility allows participants to have a greater awareness of the emotional state and intention with which a comment is made. Greater awareness can lead to less confusion and misinterpretation of comments.

Collaborating or Community Building

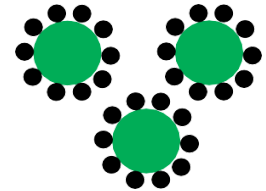
These seating arrangements are best suited to any gathering with the intent of collaborating or building relationships within the community. These seating arrangements are also best for avoiding or addressing conflict.

In these seating arrangements, everyone is placed in an equally valued position. Participants can also easily read each other's expressions and body language.

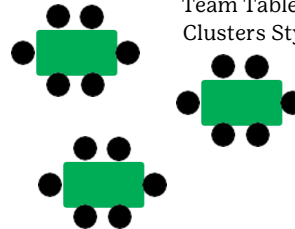
Conference Style



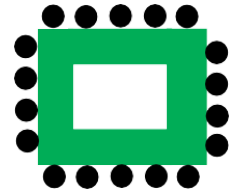
Banquet Rounds Style



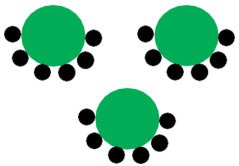
Team Tables/
Clusters Style



Hallow Square Style



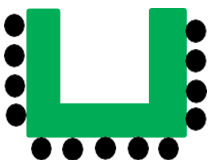
Crescent (Half) Rounds Style



Chevron Style



U-Shape Style



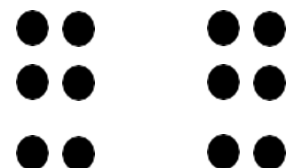
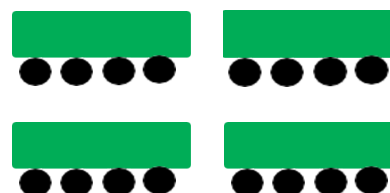
Learning with the Community

These seating arrangements are best suited for a meeting or training where participants will be learning from a formal presentation. In these seating arrangements, all participants can look toward a presenter and the displayed materials with ease. They can also read each other's expressions and body language. The leader of the presentation can move between the formal presentation and the participant activities with ease.

Auditorium Style



Classroom Style



Seating for Presentations

In these arrangements, the presenter stands at the front with all eyes turned toward them. These arrangements are best when the role of the audience is only to listen and ask questions.

Managing Your Service Unit Meeting

Set a schedule for the year for your service unit meetings. Service unit meetings can come in multiple forms — a “business” style meeting, program training, networking opportunity, etc. Clearly communicate the schedule in advance to leaders. Information that can be shared electronically should be sent out after the meeting. Every service unit meeting must offer a “take away” for leaders, tangible, or intangible. Everyone’s time is very limited and valuable. Be sure to plan every meeting as an opportunity to share, educate, and reward your volunteers.

Arrange for a meeting space:

School, church, community building, or a business with a large room.

Work with service unit team members and volunteers for an agreed-upon day and time.

The suggested meeting time is 1 to 1.5 hours.

Arrange chairs/tables so everyone can see.

Work together to set the agenda:

Solicit topics from team members which can be discussed.

Determine the best order of topics and how much time is needed.

Conduct meetings in an efficient manner with a defined timeline.

Work in a partnership with the team. Assign roles. Ensure assignments are clear and reasonable in terms of time, skills, and resources.

Ensure that team members connect with each other and are empowered to make presentations and informed decisions.

Call the meeting:

Use the simplest method — email/text, or phone. Setting a standard date and time is beneficial in establishing regular attendance.

Decide if any equipment is needed (markers, laptop, etc.)

Allot time for open-floor discussion and sharing of new ideas.

Set the climate:

Greet volunteers as they arrive, especially new leaders who may be accompanied by Council’s Membership Manager. Have name tags.

Make sure all necessary handouts are present.

The service unit agenda is either emailed or printed for all attendees.

Arrange for a note-taker, if needed.

Conduct the meeting:

Start on time.

Adhere to the agenda guide discussion (see page 10).

Summarize the conclusions reached

Don’t read to them.

Keep it short.

Speak clearly, vary your speed/pitch, and don’t rush.

Have other team members present and involve the audience if possible.

Use humor but avoid jokes

Smile, look at your audience, and have fun!

Follow up with notes, reminders, etc. Notes should be shared with all troop leaders, not just those in attendance.

Volunteers should not be penalized for missing a meeting.

Volunteers should be well informed.

Staying on Track

Meeting Guide

Ensure that a meeting guide is available for each service unit meeting. The meeting guide should include a list of meeting participants and topics. Indicate the time allotted for each topic to help keep the meeting on track.

Post the meeting guide online or send it in an email prior to the meeting. Having access to the meeting guide early helps attendees know what to expect and prepare. You can also bring extra meeting guides to the meeting for those who may need them.

See page twenty-one (21) for a service unit meeting guide template.

Meeting Notes

Detailed meeting notes are critical because they help you coordinate the activities of your service unit community. Service units are busy! Remembering all the tasks and deadlines would be difficult without notes. Meeting notes serve as a reminder to you and your volunteers about agreed-upon tasks and goals.

Meeting notes also offer a reference for clarification. They are the official record of the discussion and agreements made at each meeting.

*Tip: Make it a practice to offer the notes to the group for approval. Then post them so they are available to the service unit community. This helps ensure transparency and accountability.

Service Unit Meeting Guide		Date:
Group roles		Group norms
Facilitator: _____		⇒ Honor the facilitator
Time keeper: _____		⇒ One mic
Note taker: _____		⇒ Make space, take space
Task manager: _____		⇒ Stay solution-oriented
Encourager: _____		⇒ Speak with intent
		⇒ Assume best intent
		⇒ Eye on the mission
Agenda		My next steps
Time	Topic	1.
		2.
		3.
		4.
		5.
Meeting notes		

Service Unit Meeting Engagement

Choose the activity and identify the facilitator for each agenda topic.

*Tip for a success: A variety of activities lead to greater participant engagement.

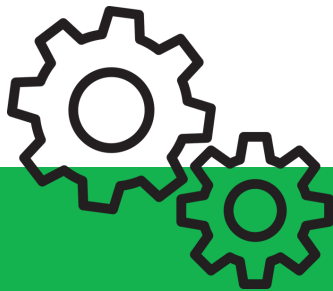
Break-Outs or Rotations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break-outs: Troop leaders can break into groups by program level, interest, or topic of support. • Rotations: Set-up a series of small sessions and troop leaders can rotate, spending a short time at each session.
Community Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community building strengthens the volunteer relationships in your service unit. Activities can include games that allow volunteers to share about themselves and learn about each other.
Fast Fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast Fundamentals are quick activities to do at service unit meetings.
Action/Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action/ Reflection is any activity that asks meeting participants to identify an action, provide feedback on that action, and then see their feedback integrated into future activities and events.
Troop/ Girl Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girl Scouts can be included in service unit meetings. • Troops can present, facilitate activities, or take on leadership roles in the service units.
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation is a formal explanation of a topic to an audience.
Appreciation/ Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation and recognition and expressions or acts of gratitude. Sometimes a thoughtful act of appreciation is the extra incentive volunteers need to do their best.
Fun!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make space to smile! Incorporate fun, silly, and warm habits into your meetings. Sometimes fun can be as small as smile or simply greeting someone by name.

Action/Reflection

Reserve time at each service unit meeting for action/reflection. Action/Reflection is an important process because it ensures that the service unit consider its ever-changing community and responds to those changes. It is a key activity in keeping the service unit healthy and sustainable.

Action/Reflection in a Real-World Example

- Take an action: The service unit hosted their first Cookie Kick-Off at a local outdoor park.
- Consider the impact of the action: Girls and adults who attended the Cookie Kick-Off submitted a brief survey at the conclusion of the event.
- Discuss the impact within a community: The service unit team read the surveys at their team meeting and looked for themes in the feedback. Girls reported that they wanted more time to complete activities. Adults reported that the location did not provide enough parking.
- Alter the action in view of community feedback: The service unit team presented the feedback at the next service unit meeting and said that next year the Cookie Kick-Off can be extended, and the team would like suggestions in finding a new location.
- Return to the action stage and repeat the process: In the weeks before the next Cookie Kick-Off, the service unit team sent a survey to all the leaders in the service unit asking for help in finding a new location. The Cookie Kick-Off was also extended from two hours to three hours.



The action/reflection activity does not need to be complex. You can simply provide leaders with an opportunity to discuss a topic. Then, ensure that the insights they share are considered in any action the service unit takes. Topics discussed can be service unit processes (such as registering for encampment) or service unit events and activities. You can be creative. Just remember to:

1. Identify an action.
2. Welcome positive and negative feedback.
3. Consider the feedback as you take future actions to benefit your service unit community.

Meeting Roles

Your service unit meetings will run smoothly and be more productive if you request that volunteers in your service unit fill these important roles and carry out their designated task at each meeting.

Facilitator	The facilitator is the person directing the meeting. This person does not need to lead the meeting by speaking, but this person ensures the meeting moves forward in a time-effective and collaborative manner.
Time Keeper	The time keeper has their eye on the clock and gently nudges the group or the facilitator when it is time to transition to the next topic or activity.
Note Taker	The note taker keeps written record of what is discussed and decided at each meeting.
Task Manager	The task manager keeps record of the tasks that are assigned throughout the meeting. Tasks should be documented on a group and individual basis. All tasks should be recorded and posted with the notes for transparency and accountability.
Encourager	The encourager ensures that the meeting is positive and solution-oriented. If the group begins to vent, the encourager will intervene with a positive statement to redirect the discussion.

Have your service unit create a set of group norms. A group norm is an agreement that defines how a group will interact in meetings and during activities. Having norms in a place is important for several reasons:

- Norms help your service unit team members carry out their tasks.
- Norms set expectations about how people will be treated and how they may treat others.
- Norms keep confusion and conflict to a minimum when they are shared with a group and enforced.

Once you have your service unit team in place and meeting roles defined, discuss and adopt norms.

Common Norms

Norm	Description	Girl Scout Law
Honor the facilitator	Look to the facilitator's lead in directing the meeting.	Friendly and helpful
One mic	Only one person speaks at any given time.	Considerate and caring
Make space, take space	Share your ideas and ensure that others have their opportunity to share as well. Ensure there is space for everyone to have the change to speak.	Honest & Fair
Stay solution-oriented	Work together to be collaborative problem-solvers. Stay solution-oriented by offering ideas that move the conversation closer to resolution. Avoid venting or complaining.	Friendly and helpful
Speak with intent	Often, you'll need to accomplish a lot in a meeting with limited time. "Speak with intent" asks participants to make mindful contributions. Some things to ask yourself before speaking. Is your comment about the topic at hand? Does your comment express a new idea? Will your comment honor the facilitator? Does your comment move towards a solution? Is your comment a valuable use of time?	Responsible for what I say and do, respect myself and others
Assume Good Intent	o assume good intent simply means that you give people the benefit of the doubt, even when it appears that their ideas are in conflict of your own. Often a problem or issue can be addressed in more than one way. Respond with kindness.	Make the world a better place
Eye on the mission	Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place! Remember, all meeting participants are working towards the same goal.	Courageous and strong

What do I do if the group does not practice the norms?

If a group member doesn't follow norms, it's usually because the expected behaviors aren't everyday behaviors for that member. As a member of the service unit team, you can take action by asking these questions:

- **Does a new norm need to be established?**

Here's an example of when you might need to establish a new norm. Let's say a person is taking over meeting time by expressing a grievance. Perhaps the service unit needs to create a norm and/or process for expressing grievances. Listen with patience, recognize that the person has a concern to express, and acknowledge that there is no structure for how to do so. Address the person's concern in a way that feels best now. Then propose the creation of a new norm at the next service unit meeting.

- **Does the person know the group norms?**

Your service unit team selects and creates your initial group norms. Share the norms with the entire community. Be mindful, too, that the service unit community is always changing. Members will enter and leave the group. It's a good idea to post group norms at each meeting and to remind attendees about group norms before the meeting.

- **Is the person intentionally trying to disrupt or control the meeting?**

If the answer is NO: Do not address the behavior during the meeting. Wait until after the meeting and then privately discuss the norms together. Remind the person that group norms ensure that meetings are effective and welcoming spaces. Ask the person if the norms are not meeting his or her needs. Consider if the norms need to be revised.

If the answer is YES: When a person intentionally disrupts a meeting, it can be stressful for all in the service unit. Take a moment to acknowledge your emotional state. You may feel hurt, frustrated, or angry. However, it's important to set your feelings aside and focus on re-establishing norms. You can pause the meeting and bring up the norms. Ask what norm is not being followed. Talk about why the norm was established.

If you're able to re-establish norms, continue the meeting and follow up with the disruptive person in private afterward.

If the group can't re-establish norms, end the meeting. Explain that without group norms, the meeting cannot be effective and that continuing is not a good use of volunteers' time. After the meeting, privately discuss the norms with the disruptive person. Remind the person that group norms ensure that meetings are effective and welcoming spaces. Ask the person if the norms are not meeting his or her needs. Consider if norms need to be revised.



Spice Up Your Service Unit Meetings

1) Plan ahead! Use your service team meetings to draft your agenda. Ask your team members:

- What needs to be accomplished?
- What decisions need to be made?
- What ideas need to be generated?



2) Develop your agenda, type, print, distribute it, and adhere to it.

- Incorporate Council's monthly service unit agenda topics in your own agenda.
- Solicit additional topics from team members, and others involved in the meeting.
- Determine the best order of topics
- Decide how much time is needed for discussion on each topic Decide what resources and equipment are needed.

3) Start and end on time! This is extremely important. Show your volunteers that you value them. Keep meetings to no more than 1.5 hours but reserve your meeting space for 2 hours. If your meeting is only an hour, it probably isn't interactive at all. Allow leaders an extra half an hour after the meeting to ask questions and socialize. Balance business and fun. If the meeting is ALL business, it's boring. Give them something useful to take home and use with their troop. Give them a reason to want to attend the meeting every month.

4) Have team members present different parts of the agenda. This will break up possible monotony.

5) Do not spend time at the meeting on agenda items that don't involve all the troops such as grade-level event discussions. Discuss specific program-level events in program-level breakout sessions. That way everyone doesn't have to listen to information that is not pertinent to them.

6) If you are distributing flyers, ensure that they contain all necessary information, including contact information to answer questions. Don't read the flyer to the audience! Just give the highlights.

7) Promote and publicize service unit events as far in advance as possible. Give out the event flyer at least 2-3 months in advance. Remind the group at the next meetings about the upcoming events. Make sure that the Service Unit Event Coordinator is available after the meeting to answer questions and take registrations. This keeps time involved to a minimum and everyone does not have to sit through the same information several months in a row.

8) Use Council's monthly newsletter to inform the group. List deadlines and reminders at each Service Unit meeting for events that require registration. Tip: Have display boards for level and/or Council Information

Ways to Make Your Service Unit Meetings Interactive

- 1) Set a fun tone! The Service Unit Manager and team need to be upbeat, fun, and energetic. Your enthusiasm and willingness to help will create a good atmosphere.
- 2) Devote meeting time to hands-on activities rather than lecturing or flyer and newsletter reading.
- 3) Have refreshments available that volunteers can help themselves to. Rotate hostess duties by school, troop, or level. Hospitality provides the snacks and supplies and takes care of set-up and clean-up.
- 4) Model meetings upon what a Girl Scout meeting for girls might be like. Inform people through activities that teach, instead of lectures and reading.
- 5) Have workshops on ceremonies, songs, games, ideas for thanking parents, service projects, etc.
- 6) Teach techniques like “how to teach games/songs”, “how to get parents to help”, etc.
- 7) Have an opening and closing which leaders can participate in, and then use with their troops.
- 8) Change up seating arrangements. Seat people in different ways: by school, Girl Scout program level, random, separate leaders from the same troop, place those who have girls who will be bridging with the next program level, etc. This helps people network with each other.
- 9) Use round tables or clusters of chairs instead of classroom/theater-style seating.
- 10) Have service unit team members speak to their parts of the agenda from wherever they are in the room instead of standing up front and center.
- 11) Move people to another table, room, or part of the room for different activities (i.e., move into the hallways and do a ceremony).
- 12) Have icebreaker activities at the beginning of the meeting. This allows people to meet one another.
- 13) Give out “leader bucks” and then have occasional auctions to spend them. These can be earned for meeting attendance, contributing to the service unit, sending in permission slips on time, taking on a team position, helping with a committee, taking additional girls, etc.
- 14) Have an enrichment activity at every meeting. These activities are endless and can be taught by anyone who has the skillset to do so. Ceremonies (flag ceremonies, Kaper Charts, bridging, etc.), camp songs, outdoor cooking, Volunteer Toolkit training, Annual Report training, Annual Awards training, etc. Invite someone from the community to come and speak at your Service Unit (Take Action Projects, etc.)
- 15) Have “trivia” questions throughout the meeting. Throw prizes to the people with correct answers. This helps get the information out about Volunteer Essentials, Council Policies, Safety Activity Checkpoints, etc.
- 16) Have display boards for leaders to document their attendance at meetings, events, training, when they’ve done a service project. This can be a simple sticker chart but can be very helpful at service unit award time!
- 17) Make name tags to be worn at each meeting. It’s easier to talk to someone new if you at least know their name. Collect the name tags after each meeting to hand out again next month.
- 18) Have a troop sharing table — craft, program idea, field trip, take action project, etc. where leaders can see hands-on examples of something they can do with their girls. Have veteran leaders sign-up at the beginning of the year to provide this at each meeting. Be sure to include instructions or contact information on the table for those who would like to learn more.

Ways to Make Your Service Unit Meetings Well Attended

- 1) Publish a calendar of meetings and dates and hand it out at the beginning of the year. Make sure that your Service Unit Mentor and Council's Membership Manager have this list as well, so dates and times can be shared with new leaders who will be joining throughout the year. Always add the date, time, and location for the next meeting on the bottom of your agenda.
- 2) Meet on the same day, at the same time, and place every month.
- 3) Send a reminder email or text 1-2 weeks prior to each meeting. When the attendance drops during the year, make sure to make a personal call to each leader to remind them of the next meeting, and if they are not able to attend send a replacement parent.
- 4) Aim at having event registration deadlines that coincide with service unit meetings.
- 5) Have someone from the service unit team be a greeter at the door and say hello as leaders arrive. Have leaders take their name badges and direct them to any seating you are using for the meeting.
- 6) If your leaders have young children and coming to the monthly service unit meetings is a challenge, consider asking an older girl troop to babysit in another room. The older girls will be able to earn "Service to Girl Scouting hours" for doing so.
- 7) Make the agenda visually exciting and attractive. Use graphics and/or colored paper. Be sure to leave some blank space for writing notes.
- 8) Have a theme! Incorporate it into your agendas, recognitions, ceremonies, everything! Use it to tie your year together (i.e., teach a different knot at every meeting, give everyone a new recipe at each meeting).
- 9) Reward people for being on time with "leader bucks", candy, a special sticker on their nametag, etc. A little recognition shows your appreciation that they made this meeting a priority.
- 10) Hand out swaps at each meeting. Attendants can pin them on their nametag.
- 11) Encourage troops to make table centerpieces as a craft project and give them away at the end of each meeting. You must be present to win!
- 12) Have door prizes. Nothing fancy, just fun or thematic. Be sure to have a drawing several times throughout your meeting. Again, you must be present to win!
- 13) Say THANK YOU! Remind leaders that what they are doing is important and how much you appreciate them making the extra effort to provide the best program experience for girls.
- 14) Assign "Girl Scout Sisters" or "Leader Buddies" who call each other to see how things are going, remind one another about the meeting and ride to meetings together.
- 15) Encourage your service unit team to be proactive. Ask them to call new leaders and invite them to the meetings. Have them call people who don't attend and find out why they didn't show—do they need a ride, a babysitter for their child(ren), or someone to sit next to?

Delegating Tasks

Delegating is one of the core concepts of management leadership. However, the person who delegated the work remains accountable for the outcome of the delegated work.

As a manager of volunteers, for you, “delegating tasks” means entrusting someone you have appointed to do a specific job—usually on their own without your assistance or interference. If you have the right person in place, your role as a volunteer manager will become much easier, and your team will become more efficient and successful in achieving its goals. It is important to delegate work to allow team members to become comfortable in their position, build skills, execute creative ideas, and demonstrate their leadership abilities in the service unit.

The “I’d Rather Do It Myself” problem.

I can do it better I can do it faster I feel it’s my job
I don’t trust anyone else to do it.

What happens if you don’t delegate?

You over-extend yourself. People stop volunteering to help. Resentment and ill-feeling build. No new leadership is developed.

Why delegate?

Because you can’t do it alone.

Because you build a team of experienced volunteers.

Because you develop skills and confidence in others.

The Dos and Don’ts of Delegating:

DO:

Be sure the person understands what the job is on the front end and make sure that you are both “on the same page” about what specifically needs to be done.

Maintain regular communication and contact with the person to whom you have entrusted the task in order to show encouragement and support.

Show your appreciation whenever you have the chance. Be interested in other ideas and viewpoints.

DON’T:

Coerce people into jobs they’d rather not do.

Let someone continue in a job when nothing is getting better.

Ask the wrong person to do the job or just choose a “warm body” Overload people.

Ask the same people repeatedly.

Remember, to engage volunteers. You must support them by allowing them the opportunity to answer questions, share their talents, and share their expertise.

Finding Success in Succession

Succession planning helps ensure that you can fill future openings in service unit team positions. When you plan for succession, you identify and develop volunteers, so they are prepared to assume open team roles. Service unit teams thrive when candidates for open positions are committed and when the pool of candidates is diverse.

To maintain healthy succession, roles are ideally filled for a 3-year commitment.

Year 1: the volunteer runs the program and identifies a potential successor. Communication with that potential successor should commence.

Year 2: The successor shadows the Service Unit team member in their role.

Year 3: The successor hands-on fulfills the Service Unit role while being guided and mentored every step of the way by the existing Service Unit team member.

Tips and tricks to succeed:



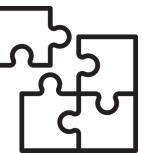
- Look beyond current troop leaders; consider former troop leaders, lifetime members, parents, and community members.
- Speak with enthusiasm about volunteering with the service unit. Potential volunteers are always listening.
- Always be on the lookout to identify the strengths of the adults in your community. Ask them to join a position that is a natural extension of their skills.
- Prioritize the development of new service unit leadership over service unit traditions. It can be hard to let a new volunteer take on a role or plan an event that has been traditionally carried out in a specific way. Keep in mind that your role is to coach volunteers when they take on new opportunities. Allow them to develop their own style and to try new things.

Habits to avoid:



- Avoid negative talk about Girl Scouts or the service unit. Volunteers are always listening. Avoid waiting to ask a volunteer to take on more responsibilities until the last minute.
- Avoid using a narrow vision of what leadership or events look like in your service unit. Encourage a spirit of risk-taking and innovation when asking new volunteers to tackle service unit projects.

Strategies for succession:



- Send a survey to leaders asking them to nominate a fellow volunteer for a role.
- Work with your Council's Membership Manager to identify potential team members.
- Partner with the volunteer stepping down to coach a fellow volunteer toward stepping into the role.
- Encourage volunteers to accept small service unit roles and then coach them toward positions of higher responsibility.
- Have fun! Volunteers will be drawn to a team that is lighthearted

Service Unit Meeting Guide

Date: _____

Group roles	Group norms
Facilitator: _____ Time keeper: _____ Note taker: _____ Task manager: _____ Encourager: _____	⇒ Honor the facilitator ⇒ One mic ⇒ Make space, take space ⇒ Stay solution-oriented ⇒ Speak with intent ⇒ Assume best intent ⇒ Eye on the mission

Agenda		My next steps
Time	Topic	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Meeting notes

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