



Proposed Girl Scout Pathways for Girls—Criteria and Definitions

According to the *Blue Book of Basic Documents 2006*, the only requirement for membership is that girls are in grades kindergarten–12, accept the Promise and the Law, and pay annual membership dues. Upon joining, girls choose any one, all, or some of the Girl Scout Pathways to participate in within a single year.

Girl Scout Pathways (Pathways) are the ways girls and adults participate in Girl Scouting. Pathways support the Core Business Strategy priority to “build the best leadership experience that defines activities and outcomes, is differentiated by age-level, promotes consistency, and offers flexible Pathways for participation for all girls 5–17.”

Beginning this spring, the Girl Scouts of Frontier Council, Kansas Heartland, and Western Washington will pilot Pathways in partnership. The GSUSA Pathways team will update the Girl Scout community on a quarterly basis on lessons learned and resources developed through the pilot. National implementation of Pathways will occur during the 2010–2011 membership year and the Virtual Pathway will become available during the 2011–2012 membership year.

In addition, we invite Girl Scout staff and volunteers nationally to help us shape the future of Pathways by completing the Web-based survey launched during the Spring Learning Conferences. Deadline for completing the survey is July 1, 2008.

Girl Scout volunteers and staff play an important role in delivering the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls. Through the Girl Scout Pathways and Single-Entry System pilot, development of the Pathways for Adults will continue and updates will be shared.

The information on the following pages of this document provides criteria, definitions, and examples, including frequently asked questions, on the proposed Girl Scout Pathways for girls. For updates, consultations, or additional information on Girl Scout Pathways, contact Samara Kaufman or Erin Taylor at 800-GSUSA-4U.



Proposed Girl Scout Pathways—Criteria

National consistency in the implementation of Girl Scout Pathways requires all councils to apply the following standards:

- **Be mission-driven:** “Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.”
- **Align to the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience:**
 - All experiences in Girl Scouting incorporate the Discover-Connect-Take Action keys to leadership. Girl Scout experiences are girl-led as much as possible, and encourage learning by doing and cooperative learning processes.
 - Include assessment of outcomes to measure the impact of the experience, determine the necessary modifications, and communicate to internal and external audiences how girls are benefiting.
 - Same high-quality curriculum delivered in all Pathways.
 - Girls work and learn in all-girl environments that encourage them to feel powerful and emotionally and physically safe.
- **Adhere to the *Blue Book of Basic Documents 2006* and *Safety-Wise*:**
 - Girls and adults must join to participate. Eligibility for participation is based on membership requirements and standards in the *Blue Book* and is based on the Girl Scout membership level at the time of the Girl Scout program activity.
 - Adhere to girl and adult ratios and consist of at least five girls from more than one family, as identified in *Safety-Wise*.
- **Be relevant and accessible to all girl and adult populations:**
 - Girls and adults may join at any time. Girls and adults can participate in any pathway, no matter how long she/he has been a Girl Scout member.
 - Be of interest to girls and adults, and ensure that opportunities are available and accessible for all girls and adults to participate in an inclusive way.
 - Financial assistance is offered to any member.
- **Provide opportunities for continuous involvement:**
 - Communicate continuously to keep members engaged, involved, and knowledgeable about all the opportunities that Girl Scouts offers.
 - Track participation by pathway through the Council Enterprise System (CES).
- **Support volunteers through the Single-Entry System (SES) and volunteer structures:**
 - Our systems have to support short- and long-term volunteers.
 - All pathways are volunteer-led and supported whenever possible.
- **Provide consistent volunteer learning opportunities (training):**
 - Ensure that learning opportunities meet the needs of short- and long-term volunteers to prepare them to deliver high-quality experiences to girls, and is completed before they interact with girls.



Proposed Girl Scout Pathways—Definitions

Camp Leadership Experience

The Camp Pathway captures participation in day and resident camp experiences. The essence of camp is out-of-doors and/or includes a focus on environmental or outdoor education.

Day Camp*

Definition:

- Camping by the day or camping within a 12-hour program day
- Consecutive, condensed experience
- Girl must be currently attending or have completed kindergarten
- Three or more hours of program is delivered for three or more consecutive days
- Occasional overnight offered in day and twilight camps
- Can be both volunteer and staff led and supported
- Requires council approval to operate
- Is offered and repeated throughout membership year

Examples:

- Two hundred kindergarten-through-5th-grade girls participate in a weeklong day camp planned and administered by volunteers at a park in their community. Girl Scout Cadettes are invited to participate as program aides.
- The local parks and recreation department collaborates with Girl Scouts to host a three-day camp held over winter break for kindergarten through 5th graders focusing on environmental education and awareness.
- Service unit leads and supports a five-day camp experience for the girls within their jurisdiction at a state park. Or the council leads and supports six weeks of day camp program at a council-owned site.

Resident Camp

Definition:

- Camping experience in which the campers live at an established site
- Short-term resident camp experience lasts no more than three nights, including:
 - Troop camping
 - Encampments led by service units
 - Council-led core or program weekends
- Long-term resident camp experience lasting typically four or more nights
- Involves at least one overnight and two or more consecutive days
- Can be both staff and volunteer led and supported
- Requires council approval to operate
- Is offered and repeated throughout membership year

Examples:

- Girl Scout Brownies participate from across the council's jurisdiction in a three-night/four-day horse camp at a council property.

* Day camp is *not* an event offered at a camp property. An art camp held in the summer at a local community center that is marketed as "camp" is "special interest."



- Girl Scout Seniors participate in a 13-day resident camp introducing high-adventure sports like hiking, biking, and canoeing.
- A taste of camp program is organized by council staff for all Girl Scout Juniors from across a council's jurisdiction and held at a council-owned site.
- Resident camp experience is organized for Girl Scout Cadettes in partnership with a community organization and held at the organization's campsite.
- Adult volunteer of a troop successfully completes council-approved troop camping training and then facilitates a two-night troop camping experience at a council-owned site.

New *Safety-Wise* standards relating to camp:

- Under the leadership of an adult and with parents, guardians, or other family members participating, a Girl Scout Daisy troop may participate in an occasional overnight camping experience.
- Girl Scout Daisies who have completed kindergarten may independently participate in day and resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights.
- Girl Scout Daisies who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences for four or more nights.

Events Leadership Experience

Definition:

- Different girls participate in each scheduled event
- Can be local, regional, or councilwide events
- Events are stand-alone but girls can participate in multiple events within a year
- Is offered and repeated throughout membership year

Examples:

- Girl Scout council, in partnership with NASA, hosts a science and technology event for Girl Scout Juniors.
- Girl Scouts and a local university collaborate to host an overnight program for teen girls. This program led by campus-based volunteers introduces girls to the college environment.
- Girl Scout Cadettes review the council program catalog and identifies four events she would like to attend.

Special Interest Leadership Experience

Definition:

- Same girls (typically) participate in a series of multiple sessions relating to a specific theme or purpose
- Is offered and repeated throughout membership year
- Is typically short-term unless a girl is participating in a special-interest group, which typically spans a membership year

Examples:

- Group of 25 Girl Scout Brownies consistently participate in program at a drop-in center once a week for up four months.
- Girl Scout council collaborates with the local school district host a three-day experiential institute on leadership for Girl Scout Ambassadors.
- Twenty Girl Scout Daisies meet once a week for eight weeks to participate in the Change Your World journey.
- In partnership with a school district, all fifth-grade girls participate in Girl Scouting during the school day. Program is led by corporate volunteers from a local business and is implemented bimonthly from January through May.



- Twelve girls from different areas throughout the council meet quarterly and act as an advisory group to the board of directors.
- Girl Scout Cadettes meet monthly to complete requirements for the Girl Scout Silver Award.
- Group of Girl Scout Juniors come together to experience girl entrepreneurship through planning and participation in the annual cookie sale.

Travel Leadership Experience[†]

Definition:

- Travel Pathway offers girls leadership and cross-cultural opportunities through regional, national, and international travel
- Travel Pathway includes planning, money-earning activities, and participating in the travel experience
- Girls can participate through a council-sponsored group or with *destinations*
- *destinations* is a nationally sponsored program in which girls apply for a specific destination and meet other girls from across the street, across the country, or across the oceans
- Girls will be provided with the appropriate travel progression or experiences to prepare them for international travel opportunities
- Is offered and repeated throughout the membership year

Examples:

- After three months of planning and money-earning activities, Cadettes head to Chicago for a three-day group getaway. The girls stay at Hostelling International's downtown hostel, earn a Girl Scout patch, take a tour, and see a show.
- Seniors discuss and select a service-learning project focusing on the protection of the Costa Rican rainforest. After two years of preparation, research, money-earning activities, and a progression of smaller trips, they spend three weeks working on a service project in Costa Rica. When they return, the girls coordinate a service project to raise awareness about deforestation in Central America.
- Seniors from across the country apply to the *Girls Empowered to Make Movies destination* in Southern California where they work directly with professional filmmakers to hone skills in writing, directing, editing, acting, cinematography, and production. Every girl gets the chance to fulfill basic crew positions as well as write, direct, and edit a short film of up to five minutes. They work with their council, volunteer advisor, and other girls to earn money and prepare for the destination.
- Ambassadors plan, prepare, and travel to a community within their region to assist in building with a local Habitat for Humanity affiliate for one week.

Troop Leadership Experience:

Definition:

- Series of programs with the same group of girls
- Spans the length of a school year (typically) and meets at least once per month (typically)
- Meetings are primarily face-to-face
- Same girls are in all sessions

Examples:

- Fourteen Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, and Cadettes meet monthly from November through March at a local community center.
- Seven girls that are homeschooled meet weekly as a Girl Scout Cadette troop.
- Community-based mentoring program brings girls and their mentors together once a month over the course of a year to participate in Girl Scout program activities and one-on-one mentoring.

[†] The travel pathway is *not* showing up only to go on a trip or just taking a field trip.



- Girl Scout Ambassador troop meets monthly to participate in the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience, community service, and prerequisites for their Gold Award.
- Girls meet together once a week at their juvenile detention center to participate in Girl Scout activities.

Virtual Leadership Experience[‡]

Definition:

- Virtual Pathway is an online Girl Scout community that provides girls with the opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting regardless of their geographic location
- Is led by a virtual volunteer
- Participation is through a Web-based platform developed by GSUSA
- Includes interactive and high-quality program activities in a safe, secure online environment supplemented by live events regionally, nationally, and globally
- Is offered and repeated throughout membership year
- Primary interaction is virtual via the Internet

Examples:

- Cadette Girl Scouts from across the country meet online twice a month to participate in interactive programming about healthy living and body image.
- USA Girl Scouts who live overseas meet monthly with girls who live in the United States to participate in Girl Scout program activities using the Change Your World journey.
- Ambassador Girl Scouts interested in the environment meet monthly to participate in interactive, online program on water preservation. They also plan a trip to the local wetlands.

[‡] The national implementation of the Virtual Pathway is scheduled for the 2011–2012 membership year.



Proposed Girl Scout Pathways—Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can members participate in more than one pathway?

A: Absolutely! GSUSA encourages multipathway participation for girls and adults. The Council Enterprise System (CES) will track the multiple ways that members choose to participate.

Q: Will councils be able to create their own pathways?

A: No. The Core Business Strategy charge is to create nationally consistent and flexible opportunities for girls and adults. As Girl Scout Pathways are implemented, all opportunities offered to Girl Scout members must align to the Pathways framework and criteria.

Q: How do individually registered girls (Juliettes) fit into the proposed framework?

A: Individually registered girls can participate in any pathway. When a girl or adult joins the organization, she or he becomes a Girl Scout member. All members can choose any one, all, or some of the pathways to participate in within a single year.

Q: What is the difference between the Events Pathway and recruitment events?

A: All programs delivered in the Events Pathway incorporate the Discover-Connect-Take Action keys to leadership and the girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning processes. To join the Events Pathway, all girls must be registered. The Events Pathway is a core Girl Scout experience where the intent of participation is in multiple events throughout the year.

To participate in recruitment events, membership is not required. The intent of a recruitment event is to market the New Girl Scout Leadership Experience to potential members. Potential members will learn about the ways to participate in Girl Scouts at recruitment events.

Q: Are girls who only participate in short-term pathways considered “real” Girl Scouts?

A: Yes! No matter which pathway a girl chooses, she is an actual Girl Scout. According to the *Blue Book of Basic Documents 2006*, the only requirements for membership are that girls are in grades kindergarten–12, accept the Promise and the Law, and pay annual membership dues.

Q: How will outcomes differ between pathways?

A: The goal of measuring outcomes is to give us the ability to understand the effect that the Girl Scout Leadership experience has on girls. The longer a girl participates in Girl Scouting, the greater the effect the outcomes will have on her.

Q: Many councils already offer most of these pathways. How is this framework new?

A: Girl Scout councils nationwide already deliver program in innovative and flexible ways. However, the development of Girl Scout Pathways captures the best of what is currently offered nationally and organizes these offerings internally to promote national consistency.

Q: What is the Girl Scout Passport?

A: In the future, the Girl Scout Passport will replace the membership card. This new membership credential will track a member's experiences in different Girl Scout Pathways as well as inform members about the Girl Scout Pathways available at each Girl Scout grade level. The Passport will be distributed to every member of Girl Scouts, whether participating for one day or the full year. A Girl Scout Passport prototype will be piloted and available to all members during the 2010–2011 membership year.

Q: How will councils build capacity to support the implementation of pathways?

A: A major part of the vision for Girl Scout Pathways is to expand and leverage what we have been doing well for many years. To move into the future, Girl Scout councils will need to focus on building systems and infrastructures that will support the expansion of all pathways. For example, the augmentation and redesign of volunteer support structures, marketing strategies, and using the Council Enterprise System



(CES) will help us expand these particular pathways and provide meaningful leadership opportunities for girls in ways we never have before.

Q: How can staff and volunteers remain a part of the ongoing conversation?

A: All councils are invited to participate in ongoing “conversations” that GSUSA will be hosting. To stay informed, contact pathways@girlscouts.org. To get involved in the development of Girl Scout Pathways, contact Samara Kaufman and Erin Taylor at pathways@girlscouts.org, and visit Membership and Volunteerism’s Pathways OCN page to read and download information. Volunteers can contact either their council staff or e-mail us at pathways@girlscouts.org to get copies of the downloadable information.