

Program Aide &
Volunteer in Training
**Teen Mentor
Leadership**

Training Course
for Cadette, Senior, & Ambassador
Girl Scouts

Revised 8/2026

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INTRODUCTION

When girls teach others, they act as mentors. There is true power for those who mentor others; it promotes positive attitudes and self-confidence. What teenager wouldn't benefit from that?

Becoming a Teen Mentor is an exciting part of a Girl Scouts' individual leadership development and provides a win-win for girls of all ages. As the Teen Mentor, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors gain leadership experience by sharing skills, testing knowledge, and being present for younger people. It improves their interpersonal and social skills and leads to better relationships with their own family members and friends. The act of mentoring promotes healthy human connections, feelings of belonging, and feelings of being needed.

For the younger girls being mentored, it shows them a glimpse at their "near future" with responsible and dependable teenage Girl Scouts. In a recent study involving more than 70 mentoring programs and more than 25,000 young people, researchers affirm that mentoring has a significant effect on positive youth development. (Psychology Today) Mentoring supports three key areas of youth development: (1) social-emotional learning, (2) cognitive learning, and (3) identity formation.

LET'S REVIEW THE NATIONAL AWARDS

C

PROGRAM AIDE
(PA)



S/A

VOLUNTEER IN
TRAINING (VIT)

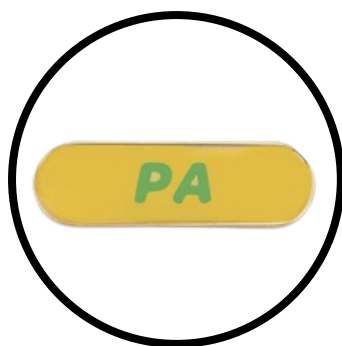


PROGRAM AIDE (PA)

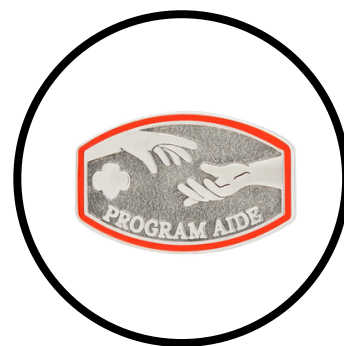
The Program Aide award is for Girl Scout Cadettes in 6-8th grade. To earn this award, a girl:

- Completes this Teen Mentor Leadership Course (this is highly recommended by GSSEF, however not required)
- Practice being a thoughtful role model while building real planning and leadership skills.
- Lead multiple activities—including at least one full troop/group meeting—for younger Girl Scouts.
- Works directly with younger Girl Scouts for a minimum of 3 activity sessions PLUS 1 full-length troop/group meeting.

*Fact: earning this award
is a prerequisite
for The Silver Award!*



Classic Program Aide Award Pin
2011 -2025



New Program Aide Award Pin
2026

VOLUNTEER IN TRAINING (VIT)

The Volunteer in Training (VIT) award is for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors in 9th - 12th grade. To earn this award, a girl:

- Completes this Teen Mentor Leadership Course (this is highly recommended by GSSEF, however not required)
- Finds an adult volunteer mentor who is currently the leader for a troop/group of girls, who will help her earn this award.
- Observe others in leadership, understand the group dynamic - then create and implement a thoughtful activity series or project that lasts at least 4 sessions over a 3 month period.
- The Volunteer in Training is responsible for designing, planning, and evaluating the activities.

*Fact: earning this award
is a prerequisite
for The Gold Award!*



Classic Volunteer in Training
Award Pin
2011 -2025



New Volunteer in Training
Award Pin
2026



RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TEEN MENTOR

- Carefully review the criteria for earning the awards.
- Utilize this Teen Mentor Leadership Course provided by your council to support you.
- Commit to dedicating the appropriate amount of time and service to activities.
- Arrange and agree upon mutually convenient meeting dates/times with adult volunteer(s) to plan and discuss how to work with the troop/group.
- Create a dedicated file, notebook, or other ‘tool’ to capture notes, plans, etc.
- Maintain a record of the time spent on earning the award.
- Attend all meetings of your troop/group; if you are unable to attend due to an emergency or extenuating circumstance, must make every effort to notify adult volunteer(s) in advance.
- Arrange for transportation to and from meetings and/or events.
- Provide your adult volunteer(s) with a signed parent/guardian permission slip and Health History form if/when you plan to travel with a group.
- Read and follow the guidelines in GSUSA’s Safety Activity Checkpoints and GSSEF’s Volunteer Policies & Procedures manual.
- Verify the adult volunteer(s) has arranged for required supervision of girls; even as a Teen Mentor you should not be left alone with girls or counted as an adult (as part of required ratios).
- Remember, as a Teen Mentor, you are providing service in a leadership capacity. Make sure you assert yourself politely and professionally – and actively learn by doing.



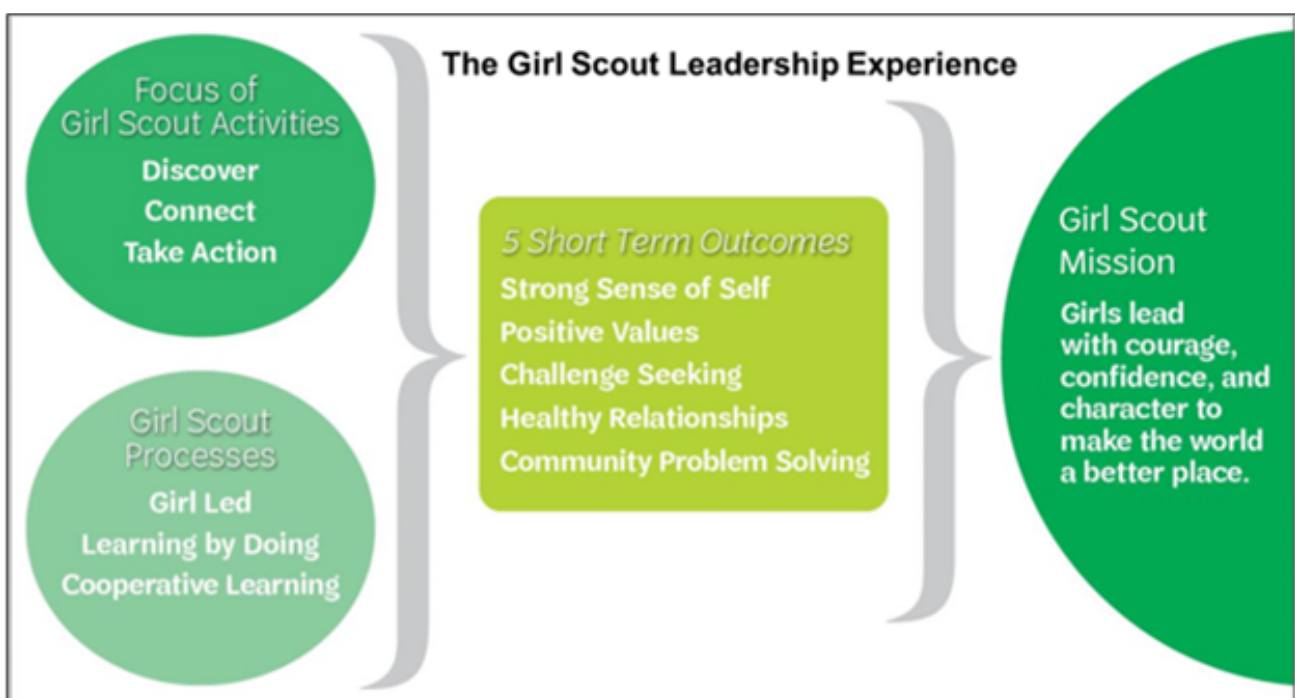
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADULT VOLUNTEER MENTOR

- Do read and sign the Adult Agreement for the participation of a PA/VIT (See page 28).
- Do arrange planning time prior to the session in which your PA/VIT will be working with you.
- Do explain the culture and preferences of your troop/group with your PA/VIT prior to the first meeting or activity.
- Do inform your PA/VIT in advance of a change or cancellation of a meeting time or location.
- Do give your PA/VIT opportunities to demonstrate leadership with your troop/group.
- Do give ongoing and real-time feedback to your PA/VIT so they can learn from you and grow more confident.
- Do participate in brief but meaningful evaluations at the end of each session or meeting with your PA/VIT.
- Do not ask your PA/VIT or allow her to be left alone with younger girls, be counted as an adult in girl/adult ratios, drive girls or peers, or serve as a first aider or lifeguard.
- Do sign off on the final Time Log sheets (see page 29).

UNDERSTANDING THE GIRL SCOUT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is the foundation of all Girl Scout program activities, describing what girls do in Girl Scouts, how they do it, and how they will benefit from their participation.

Girl Scouting is a program designed to create girls of Courage, Confidence, and Character, who make the world a better place. It does so through the National Program portfolio – a collection of unique and powerful curated activities and awards that guide girls through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.



THREE KEYS TO LEADERSHIP

Girl Scouting guides girls to become leaders in their daily lives, their communities, and the world—helping them become the kind of person exemplified by the Girl Scout Law. Research shows that the courage, confidence, and character they develop as Girl Scouts follows them throughout their lives.



FUN WITH A PURPOSE

Girl Scouting isn't just about what we do; it's also about how we do it. Girls will give any activity a try as long as the mentor (that's the teen or adult volunteer) guiding them takes the right approach. Girl Scout activities ask mentors and volunteers to engage girls in three ways to make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities:

1

GIRL LED

2

**LEARNING BY
DOING**

3

**COOPERATIVE
LEARNING**



DISCOVER THE LEADER IN YOU

Let's take some time to think about valuable and powerful leadership skills. Sometimes you hear people say that someone is a "born leader," but anyone can learn leadership skills and improve their natural leadership gifts.

Often, great leaders are genuine and curious learners. Never complacent - great leaders always seek to learn more. They recognize that learning is a lifelong endeavor; they find joy and energy in learning about new ideas, places, skills, people, and concepts.



PRACTICING SELF-AWARENESS

When you are self-aware, you understand your strengths and challenges and know what activities and people help you to be healthy and thrive. Additionally, you will be able to understand the difference between who you are and how others may see you.

- Self-awareness is the ability to tune in to your feelings, thoughts, and actions.
- Being self-aware also means being able to recognize how other people see you.
- People who are self-aware recognize their strengths and their challenges.

SUPPORTING OTHERS WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS

As a Teen Mentor, you need to stay attentive to the needs and preferences of others. Some people can have mixed emotions when they meet someone who is "different" - they can become anxious because they don't want to say or do "the wrong thing." This can lead to avoiding communication or interpersonal contact.

Girl Scouts is an inclusive and welcoming organization with a universal acceptance policy. As a Teen Mentor, you will now play a crucial role in adding to the engagement and acceptable atmosphere for Girl Scout activities.

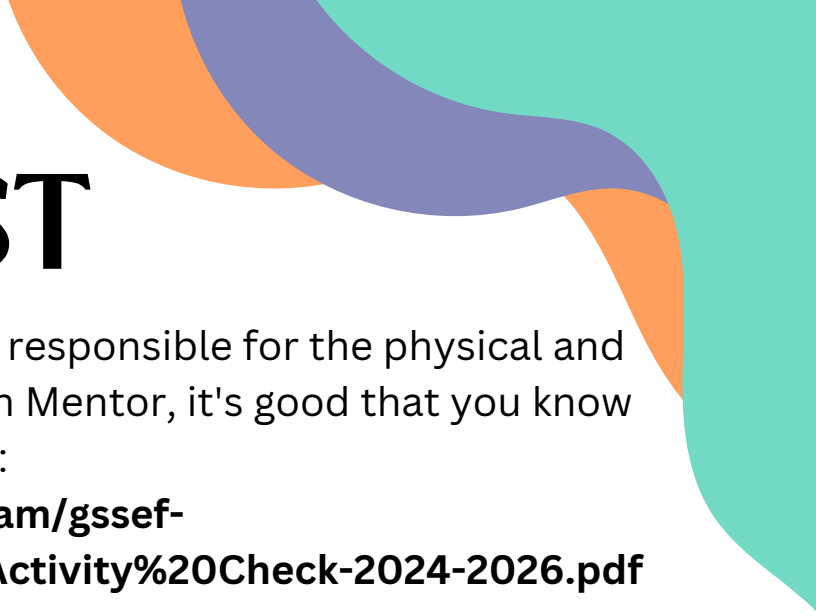
Always ask the troop/group leader if there are any girls in your group who have different learning styles or need a little extra help.

What Inclusion Is:

- Being responsible for all girls and their needs
- Understanding that peer-learning is side-by-side even though goals and abilities may differ
- Providing resources and support for all girls

What Inclusion Is NOT:

- Isolating small groups of girls based upon only abilities or goals
- Placing girls with different abilities into separated groups away from the others
- Activities that exploit things such as race, religion, upbringing, family structure, etc.



SAFETY FIRST

Every volunteer in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls. As a Teen Mentor, it's good that you know where to find this information too:

<https://www.gssef.org/content/dam/gssef-redesign/documents/Safety%20Activity%20Check-2024-2026.pdf>

Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls:

Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and screened by the council. One volunteer in every group must be female.

Get parent/guardian permission:

When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian and obtain written permission. Follow council procedures for approval, certificates of insurance, etc.

Be prepared for emergencies:

Work with adult volunteers to establish procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost people, and site security. Create a list of girls' parents/guardian contact information and keep on hand in an easily accessible location. Always keep a well-stocked first-aid kit, and health history forms.

Use the buddy system:

Using the buddy system, girls are paired into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it.

GRADE-LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS: DBJ



Daisies
Grades K-1
Ages 5-7

- Build on the unique strengths of each girl.
- Establish appropriate rules; involve girls so they see themselves as responsible decision-makers.
- Try to be at the girl's eye level (kneel, sit, etc.)
- Daisies learn by hands-on doing! Sometimes can be messy!
- Daisies like responsibility.
- Remember, Daisies want to be grown up like you!



Brownies
Grades 2-3
Ages 7-9

- Focus on the talents/skills of the group.
- Offer help in small doses - but stay observant.
- Encourage respect for differing religious, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Help them feel pride and value diversity.
- Girls learn best by doing. Encourage them to try new things on their own. Girls need to feel positive about themselves. You must accept each girl as she is, with her strengths and weaknesses.
- Involve each girl's family members as much as possible.
- Brownies have a relatively short attention span.
- Brownies are very enthusiastic!

AGE-LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS: DBJ



Juniors
Grades 4-5
Ages 9-11

- Focus on the girl's individual talents/skills.
- Encourage girls to solve problems without interfering.
- Girls like to "demonstrate" their skills.
- Encourage "buddies," not cliques.
- Encourage respect among peers. Girls are more self-conscious. Help them build a positive self-image.
- Girls prefer to understand the entire process and desired outcomes before starting an activity or project.
- Allow girls to work on projects in groups or pairs. Doing things with friends is critical for their comfort.
- Juniors like to help younger girls.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

As you work in a group, conflicts among members of the group are likely to occur. Conflict occurs when different girls want different things at the same time or when girls want the same thing at the same time. Another type of conflict is called "internal conflict" which occurs when you must make difficult choices, or you are having trouble deciding.

Steps to Resolving Conflict in a Group Setting

1. Clearly state the problem
2. Suggest solutions and compromises
3. Play "What if" when choosing a solution
4. Make a decision
5. Take action

Conflicts can be temporarily uncomfortable, but if worked out correctly, it can be a way groups build a stronger way to work better by solving challenging situations together.

Conflict Resolution Techniques

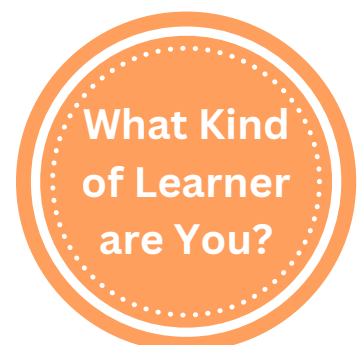
1. **Mediation:** Each girl has a chance to tell her side of the story, one at a time, and then suggest some solutions. Together as a group, the girls try to choose one solution.
2. **Active Listening:** You, or a member of your group, restates what each girl involved in the conflict has said. By restating what has been said, you can discover the reason for the conflict.
3. **Time to Work It Out:** The girls in the group go off by themselves for a short and pre-determined period of time. No more than 10 minutes is recommended. When the time has expired, the girls return with their agreed-upon solution.

LEARNING STYLES

Learning styles are the various ways in which people learn and process information. They can impact how your learners (the girls) understand, retain, and apply new knowledge. That's why understanding their learning styles can help improve the learning process and ultimately lead to better performance and more enjoyment in participating in activities you design and lead.

There are three predominant learning styles:

- **Visual:** Seeing, images, diagrams, videos, etc.
 - Visual learners learn best by seeing new information. Visual learners prefer to read or see the information in a written format or in graphics or pictures that represent the information.
- **Auditory:** Hearing lectures and having discussions
 - Auditory learners learn best by listening to new information and need to hear it to fully understand it.
- **Kinesthetic:** Movement and hands-on activities
 - Kinesthetic learners prefer hands-on experience to learn and acquire new skills or information. They often don't need to read directions to do an activity.





TEACHING TIPS

Leading is teaching, and teaching is leading. As a Teen Mentor, you are taking on the responsibility for both. As you work with adult volunteers to lead activities - and eventually design activities yourself - you will benefit from these helpful tips about planning, preparing, and then (finally!) teaching.

- Communicate at their eye level whenever possible.
- Use each girl's first name when addressing her.
- Speak calmly.
- Keep directions clear and simple.
- Always say "Please, Thank you, and You're Welcome".
- Enforce rules fairly - girls need and want clear and fair limits.
- Let girls find out things for themselves. Offer help in small doses. Encourage girls to solve their own problems.
- Show you are interested in the girls' ideas.
- Praise often!



1

PLANNING



2

PREPARING



3

TEACHING

WORDS THAT HELP

You may have heard this phrase: It isn't what you say - but how you say it. Learning how best to communicate with others is a critical life skill. How we communicate with young people can shape their experience. That's a big responsibility! Positive words have a powerful effect on young people. Studies have shown that the language we use with children can significantly influence their self-esteem and emotional resilience. With these tips about communication, words, tone, and message delivery - you can get your message across with ideal results.

Consider implementing the **T.H.I.N.K.** Method with your group:
T - Is it **true**? **H** - Is it **helpful**? **I** - Is it **inspiring**? **N** - Is it **necessary**? **K** - Is it **kind**?

Examples of I-Messages	Examples of You-Messages
• I need help cleaning up now. • I don't think we have time for that song today. • I feel upset when I see glue on the floor. • I can't hear you, let's try again. • I don't think I understand.	• You sure made a mess. • Can't you see we're out of time? • You can't be trusted with the supplies. • You better pipe down! • You're not making any sense.

BE THE MEETING PLANNER

As a Teen Mentor earning the PA or VIT awards, you will plan an activity, and eventually, you will be asked to lead the whole meeting, activity, or ceremony. Here is a helpful tool for organizing your ideas and plans so they run smoothly.

Meeting, Activity or Ceremony Logistics	Supplies and Set-Up	Meeting/ Activity Opening
Delivering the Main Program Activity	Snack or Wiggle Break?	Meeting/ Activity Closing
Clean Up	Personal Reflection	Feedback from other volunteers

FORMS AND TIME LOGS

Permission/Agreement Forms:

Having your parent/guardian and volunteer mentor agreement forms signed is essential for a smooth and successful experience while earning PA and VIT awards. These forms help ensure that everyone involved has a clear understanding of the expectations and criteria necessary to complete the award. By establishing this agreement, you create a supportive environment where both mentors and guardians are aligned with your goals, making the process more enjoyable and effective. This mutual understanding helps you stay on track and fully benefit from your award experience.

Time Log:

Equally important is the proper completion of your time log. Capturing your timeframe is essential. Your time log should accurately reflect this period and detail your interactions with the girls/troop/group you are assisting. The time log sheet(s) require the signature of your Adult Volunteer Mentor prior to submission.

Requesting Final Approval:

Once you have completed the work and captured the dates, activities and hours spent on the time logs (included in this packet), email them **with both** agreement forms (included in this packet) to customercare@gssef.org for final council approval. This usually takes one week. With your email approval you can purchase the award and wear it proudly!



Girl & Parent/Guardian Agreement Form for the Teen Mentor Leadership Course

By completing and signing this form, I/we agree that I/we:

- Have reviewed the Teen Mentor Leadership Course and understand the criteria for earning the Program Aide (PA) and/or Volunteer in Training (VIT) awards, and agree to the expectations required for completion;
- Commit to dedicating/supporting the appropriate amount of time and personal service suggested by the Teen Mentor Leadership Course;
- Will maintain dedicated activity file, notebook, or other 'tool' to capture time spent, plans, assignments, etc. related to the Teen Mentor Leadership Course;
- Commit to attending/supporting all meetings of your assigned group and will communicate about emergencies or extenuating circumstances;
- Will arrange for/provide transportation to and from meetings and events;
- Will provide a signed parent/guardian permission slip and Health History form; and
- Will follow guidelines in GSUSA's Safety Activity Checkpoints and GSSEF's Volunteer Policies & Procedures manual.

Girl Scout Name: _____ **Troop #:** _____

Email: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____

My signature indicates my understanding and agreement.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Email: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____

My signature indicates my understanding and agreement.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**Submit this form, with the Adult Volunteer Mentor Agreement form and finalized Time Log,
to customercare@gssef.org for council approval.**



Adult Volunteer Mentor Agreement Form for the Teen Mentor Leadership Course

By completing and signing this form, I agree that I:

- Have reviewed this Teen Mentor Leadership Course;
- Understand the criteria for the Program Aide (PA)/Volunteer in Training (VIT);
- Agree to keep open lines of communication with the parent/guardian and troop leader of this Teen Mentor;
- Will arrange a suitable planning time prior to each session in which this Teen Mentor will be working with me and my group/troop;
- Will give this Teen Mentor authentic opportunities for demonstrating leadership with my group/troop and inform her of changes or cancellations;
- Will not allow this Teen Mentor to be left alone with younger girls, will not count them as an adult in girl/adult ratios, will not allow them to drive girls or peers or serve as a First Aid certified volunteer or Lifeguard;
- Will provide meaningful feedback on an ongoing basis to help her improve planning, organization, and leadership skills;
- Will participate in a meaningful evaluation process;
- Will assist in the completion of the time log (as needed) and
- Will follow guidelines in GSUSA's Safety Activity Checkpoints and GSSEF's Volunteer Policies & Procedures manual.

☐

Program Aide (PA)

☐

Volunteer in Training (VIT)

Girl Scout Name:

Parent/Guardian Name:

Troop Leader Name:

My signature indicates my understanding and agreement.

My Name:

Email:

Cell Phone:

Signature:

Date:

Submit this form, with the Girl & Parent/Guardian Agreement form and finalized Time Log,
to customercare@gssef.org for council approval.



PA/VIT TIME LOG

Submit the finalized Time Log (all pages) WITH the Girl & Parent/Guardian AND Adult Volunteer Mentor agreement forms to customercare@gssef.org for council approval.

Girl Scout Name: _____ Troop: _____

My signature indicates role as this Girl Scouts' Adult Volunteer Mentor and my approval of the final time log to earn this award (circle one): **PROGRAM AIDE** (or) **VOLUNTEER IN TRAINING**

Name: _____

Email: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date	Activity	Time Spent (Hours)

This page may be duplicated to accommodate the dates of service.
Signature of the Adult Volunteer Mentor is required on each separate time log page.