

GIRLS INC. OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

**girls
inc.**

of San Diego County

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About Girls Inc. of San Diego County

About the Volunteer Handbook

This handbook contains everything you need to know about the Girls Inc. of San Diego volunteer experience! It is required reading for all our volunteers, and is intended to ensure you and the Girls Inc. participants have a great experience. It will guide you through signing up, as well as our rules and procedures. Use the volunteer position descriptions to determine what time and effort commitment suits you best, and our programming description to decide which programs you feel your skills are best suited to.

Mission

Girls Inc. of San Diego County provides research-based programming and life-changing support that helps girls in the county overcome gender, economic, and social barriers so they may see college as attainable, resist peer pressure and explore professional fields in STEM that have to date been non-traditional for women. In doing so, Girls Inc. of San Diego County supports the Girls Inc. National mission to inspire all girls to be Strong, Smart, and Bold.

History

Even in sunny San Diego, girls are growing up in poverty, suffering from physical and sexual abuse and facing barriers to college. Girls Inc. of San Diego County was founded as the Girls Club of Vista in 1967 to address these issues by creating a safe, pro-girl environment where girls can explore and celebrate their strengths, develop self-confidence and plan for their future. In 1980, GISD joined the national Girls Inc. organization, and in 2010, we closed our brick-and-mortar center to initiate programming through an outreach-based curriculum in 2013. Having celebrated our 50th year of service in 2017, GISD's programming and support continues to help girls in the county to overcome barriers in pursuit of their academic goals. While Girls Inc. of San Diego County is an affiliate of Girls Inc. National, it is its own 501c3 and is financially independent from the national organization.

Girls Inc., was founded in 1864 to serve girls and young women who were experiencing upheaval in the aftermath of the Civil War. Across the decades, it adapted to meet the specific environmental challenges facing girls and young women, always working in partnership with schools and communities. Today, the organization is headquartered in New York and the network of local Girls Inc. affiliates serves more than 50,000 girls at 1,400 sites in 400 cities across the United States and Canada.

Population Served

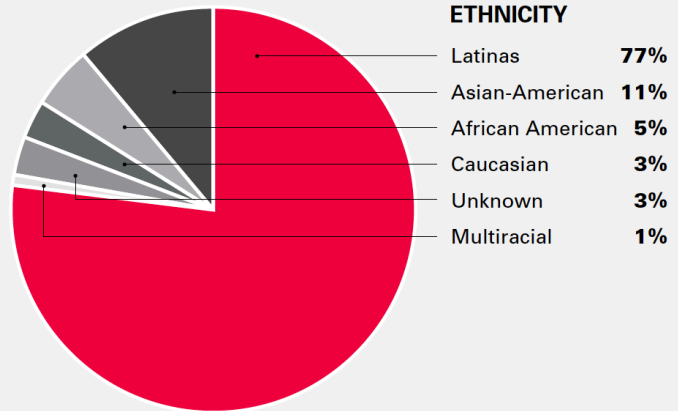
GISD provides programming to girls from under-served, low-income communities. On average, we serve 300 girls with semester-long programs, and many of those girls return repeatedly to participate in multiple programs, semester after semester. Other girls participate in one-time events or workshops that introduce them to STEM concepts, or address a specific community need.

DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

% OF GIRLS SERVED BY AGE GROUP	15%	8-10
	26%	11-13
	52%	14-18

97% COME FROM HOUSEHOLDS LIVING ON \$50,000 OR LESS

93% ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL LUNCH



2017 participant demographics

Board of Trustees

To find out more about our current board members, please visit <http://girlsincsd.org/about-us/leadership/>

Why Volunteer?

Whether volunteering in the classroom, or aiding operations, Girls Inc. volunteers are essential to making a difference in under-served girls' lives. Program volunteers serve as positive role models to girls - by listening, guiding and encouraging girls, volunteers can contribute to their academic and personal development. Operational volunteers donate their time GISD's organization and governance, so that we can continue to deliver high-quality programming to girls.

Getting Started – A step-by-step guide

1) Complete Online Volunteer Application

Fill out our online application, if you haven't already, at <http://www.girlsincsd.org/take-action/volunteer/>

2) Volunteer Orientation

At this orientation session, you will be introduced to Girls Inc.'s mission, values and structure. A member of our staff or board will discuss our programming, rules and procedures. Orientation sessions are hosted in the 4-6 weeks prior to the school semester. Visit <http://girlsincsd.org/take-action/volunteer/> to check the schedule for upcoming orientation events.

3) Read Volunteer Materials: Volunteer Handbook & Volunteer Agreement

After the orientation, please review the following, which are also available to download at girlsincsd.org:

- The Volunteer Handbook, which you are required to be familiar with, is your source for everything you need, from choosing a relevant program, to knowing the rules and procedures.

- Read, sign and scan the Volunteer Agreement. Please email the signed agreement to volunteer@girlsincsd.org or send it via snail mail to Girls Inc. of San Diego County, P.O. Box 300683, Escondido, CA 92027

4) Participate in Background Check

Within a week of receiving your signed Volunteer Agreement, you will receive an invitation to complete a background check through [Verified Volunteers](#). This request will be sent to the e-mail you provided on the Volunteer Application.

Follow the instructions provided by the Verified Volunteers system. Because GISD provides all its programming to girls at no-cost, we kindly ask that volunteers pay the fee of \$30 to complete the background check. Additional jurisdiction fees may apply. Please visit the GISD Volunteer page at <http://www.girlsincsd.org/take-action/volunteer/> to see the list of potential fees from Verified Volunteers.

5) Sign-up for Your Volunteer Shift

After GISD receives the outcome of your background check you will receive an e-mail about the outcome, with an invitation to sign up for one or more volunteer shifts for the current program semester. The email will provide links to all the active program classes where you can view information about the subject matter and see the days and times available. Please find information about the shift in the “shift notes” section.

Once you have selected a session, you will receive a confirmation e-mail with the time and place of the session. If you have any questions about the process, we invite you to email us at volunteer@girlsincsd.org

6) Arrive Promptly to Volunteer for Your Shift

- Please ensure that you arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled time and report to the Program Coordinator to sign in. Volunteer sign-in will be closed 5 minutes before the scheduled start time of the program – if you arrive after this time you will not be allowed to enter the classroom.
- Please bring a Driver’s License/Photo Identification to the session.

Values and Goals

All Girls Inc. programming should satisfy the six essential elements of the Girls Inc. Experience:

1) Mentoring Relationships

Trusting, mentoring relationship with trained staff and volunteers are essential in helping young people attain skills that lead to success, especially for girls growing up in low-income communities. Girls Inc. volunteer mentors are expected to uphold an environment in which girls feel that adults can help them, respect them and listen to them.

2) Pro-girl, Girls-only Environment

A pro-girls, girls-only environment is one that is physically, socially and emotionally safe, and presents the consistent message that girls can succeed. Girls Inc. staff and volunteers convey the message that girls can make a difference in the world and be leaders.

3) Intentional Programming

Holistic, compensatory and intentional programming exposes girls to a variety of experiences and options they might otherwise not have had access to. Girls Inc. programs are delivered in an organized setting where girls get a chance to create and build things. Volunteer mentors are expected to help ensure this organized and stimulating environment is maintained.

4) Interactive Activities

Interactive activities develop and promote girls' critical thinking skills. Activities at Girls Inc. are designed to put girls in charge of their learning, allow them to constantly try new activities and reflect upon their learnings.

5) Research Based Curricula

Girls Inc. is committed to providing girls with relevant, field-tested, and research-based curricula. Girls Inc. program leaders utilize both informal and formal program quality assessment methods, including the facilitation of feedback from girls, families, staff and volunteers.

6) Sustained Exposure

Young people with regular, sustained exposure to development programs exhibit better civic engagement, social competencies and academic performance, among other things. Volunteer mentors are encouraged to create mentoring relationships with girls that will encourage them to stay in programming.

Programming

People from all vocational backgrounds are encouraged to volunteer as Girls Inc. mentors – there is something for everyone! The guide below is intended to help volunteers understand the different programs, and where their individual skill sets could be most useful. The preferred backgrounds are not mandatory, simply suggestions.

STRONG programs

Girls today face a broad range of challenges to their physical, mental, social and emotional health: food deserts or food swamps, too little physical activity, media and cultural messages overemphasizing the importance of physical appearance; and unrealistic expectations and pressures from a variety of sources, including family and peer groups. In San Diego County, girls learn that they are in charge of their health by gaining the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to lead and sustain healthy lifestyles. In a supportive and safe environment, girls build healthy approaches to food and physical activity, learn to appreciate their bodies and manage stress as key components of their well-being.

Mind + Body

- Best for volunteers with a professional, academic or leisurely interested in health, sports and nutrition.
- Beneficial to possess an understanding of health challenges facing girls in today's society, e.g. obesity, mental health.
- Preferred backgrounds: Exercise instructors, Public Health administrators, Nutritionists, Physical Trainers, Physical Therapists, Massage Therapists, Psychologists, Medical Doctors, Nurses etc.

- *Due to the personal nature of the program content, we request that only female mentors sign up for these program shifts*

Healthy Sexuality

- Best for volunteers with an interest in women’s issues and sex education. Open to all volunteers.
- Requires tactful and patient handling of sensitive issues. Experience working with pre-adolescent children is a plus. Volunteers are asked not to express personal opinions outside of GISD’s research-based programming.
- Preferred backgrounds: Women’s Studies, Social Work, Teaching/Education, Counselors, Doctors, Nurses, Public Health professionals etc.
- *Due to the personal nature of the program content, we request that only female mentors sign up for these program shifts*

Media Literacy

- Best for volunteers with a comprehensive understanding of various media outlets and how they operate, avid followers of TV, paper and online news.
- Able to identify issues that matter to girls and talk to them about it. Video/Online Editing skills desired. Media equipment for use/sale/rental a plus.
- Preferred backgrounds: Media, Public Relations, and Marketing industries, Women’s Studies etc.
- No special skills required.

Friendly PEERsuasion

- Best for volunteers motivated to prevent drug and alcohol abuse in under-served communities.
- Serve as positive role models to girl participants in how to resist peer pressure.

SMART programs

Academic achievement and high school graduation are important predictors of positive life outcomes. Girls today have greater educational opportunities than ever before, as more girls and women are graduating high school and attending college than in previous decades. Girls Inc. of San Diego County supports girls in achieving their academic and career goals, so girls have equal opportunities to succeed. Today’s generation of girls has the potential to narrow the gender pay and leadership gaps that have long been pervasive in our society, and it is imperative that they are given the tools and supports to do so!

College Bound, Job Ready!

- Best for volunteers possessing a bachelor’s degree, or higher.
- Preferred skills include: thorough understanding of the higher education system, ability to guide through financial aid resources, resume building and screening, standardized testing expertise, personal statement and cover letter writing.
- Representation from all sectors – public or private – is encouraged.

Coding & Computer Science

- Best for volunteers with foundational knowledge in computer science and coding. Knowledge of popular coding languages, in particular Java, Python and Javascript is ideal.
- Moreover, volunteers with a professional or academic background in either hardware, software or webpage development are strongly encouraged to join this session.

Thinking SMART

- Best for volunteers with professional or academic experience in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields.
- The program contains themes in Biotechnology, Ecology, Space Science, Construction, Engineer, Architecture, Environmental Science and more.
- Volunteers should be able to give advice and guidance pertaining to STEM fields, and help girls overcome gender barriers to enter those fields.
- Serve as positive role models of academic and professional success in STEM, run experiments in class.

BOLD programs

The goal of BOLD programming is to increase girls' ability to be safer in their homes, relationships and communities by building their sense of personal power. The girl-focused approach addresses the issues young girls face today and lays the foundation for handling violent scenarios. Through engaging activities, each girl learns about her personal power, being safe in her community, what a friend is, being a friend, basic needs, safety from physical/sexual abuse and people they can trust.

Leadership and Community Action

- Best for volunteers with experience in community action, community organization, campaigning, advocacy, school boards or related areas.
- This is a highly interactive curriculum in which it is suggested that volunteers work one-on-one with girls to devise creative solutions to issues in their communities.

Volunteer Positions

Please note that all opportunities listed below will be uncompensated.

Program Volunteers

Program volunteers, in contrast to Operational volunteers, engage directly with girl participants in a classroom setting. They can fill a variety of roles such as Volunteer Mentors, Program Interns and various one-time opportunities.

A. Volunteer Mentor:

Volunteer mentors are an integral part of Girls Inc. programming, and serve as important positive role models in a girls-only environment. Volunteer mentors attend a minimum of 4 sessions per semester, each session lasting around 1.5 to 2 hours. During the sessions, volunteer mentors will assist the Program Coordinator in delivering Girls Inc. programming, and work directly with girl participants. Volunteer mentors do not maintain contact with the girls outside of the after-school program.

Key responsibilities include:

- Serve as adult mentor and point of contact to under-served girls in San Diego
- Engage in educational activities with girl participants
- Provide support and guidance to help girls identify their own strengths and resources
- Build a trust relationship with girls by sharing experience and giving advice
- Assist with coordinating and trouble-shooting in a classroom setting

- Contribute specific professional skillsets to activities i.e. coding expertise, job and college counseling
- Attend and participate in mandatory orientation session

Requirements:

- Punctual and reliable attendance
- Encouraged to attend Volunteer Orientation
- Read and sign Volunteer Agreement
- Verified Volunteers background check

B. Program Intern (unpaid):

Program intern is an unpaid position designed for students, at the undergraduate or graduate level, who want to gain experience and academic credit in the field of education and/or social work. After receiving comprehensive training and shadowing the Program Coordinator, the Program Intern will be allowed to independently lead after-school Girls Inc. programming. Program Interns are expected to commit for **30-40 hours per semester** and **weekly in-person/telephone meeting with Program Coordinator**. Key responsibilities include:

- Serve as a positive role model for girls and create a pro-girl environment where all girls are welcome
- Mentor girls to make their own positive choices
- Lead fun, hands-on lesson plans and activities that deliver on the Girls Inc. experience
- Work in partnership with principals, counselors, sight contacts and other individuals who are essential to sustaining an outreach program model
- Seek opportunities to learn from the Program Coordinator and deepen your knowledge of the Girls Inc. program model
- Fully participate in program training and shadowing to onboard and learn about the Girls Inc. experience and ideals
- Commit to lead one program class per week for up to 15 weeks during the Spring or Falls Semesters, and 8 weeks during the Summer semester
- Prepare for each class beforehand and record attendance afterward; Document outcomes for each program and the end of the semester and record in the GISD database
- Meet weekly with the Program Coordinator in person or via conference call at the discretion of the Program Coordinator to report on successes, barriers and critical issues

Requirements:

- Ability to commit to 30 hours minimum per semester
- Enrollment in undergraduate or graduate degree program in relevant field and required to complete internship for academic credit
- Independent means of transportation to and from sites
- Previous experience working or volunteering with children ages 8-18
- Verified Volunteers Background Check

C. One-time volunteer opportunities

One time volunteer opportunities will be announced to those in the GISD network when available.

Career Panels

One-time volunteers, specifically professionals from the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, are invited to Career Panels. Here, they are invited to talk about the company they work for and their specific role. More importantly, they answer questions from the girls and provide them with valuable professional insight into fields that have to date been non-traditional for women.

Field Trips

Occasionally, one-time volunteers are needed to serve as drivers and/or chaperones for our academic and professional field trips to explore various companies and universities in the San Diego area.

Requirements:

- Vehicle must be owned by the volunteer
- Proof of vehicle insurance required
- Valid CA driver's license
- Verified Volunteers background check (potentially including driving record check)
- Ability to commit for 4-5 hour time frame

Operational Volunteers

Operational volunteers are volunteers who are involved in running to organizational side of GISD. These include the Board of Trustees, Committee Leads and Members, and ad-hoc volunteers.

A. Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is our governing body and is responsible for the financial and organizational governance of Girls Inc. of San Diego County. Our board members are often experienced professional women with extensive personal, professional and non-profit networks. The Board is comprised of Executive Members (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Governance and Secretary) and Committee Leads on the following committees:

- Development
- Corporate partnerships
- Community partnerships
- Events
- Volunteer management
- Board recruitment
- Marketing
- STEM

Board members' responsibilities include:

- Support the organization's mission and purpose
- Provide financial, legal and ethical oversight
- Ensure effective organizational planning
- Determine, monitor and strengthen the organization's programs and services
- Boost the organization's public standing and reputation

Requirements:

- Ability to commit 8-12 hours per month for meetings and activities

- Participation in monthly board meetings in person or via telephone
- Commitment to donate to the organization. Dues are \$1,000 per fiscal year
- Fill out a Board Application

B. Committee Members

Committee members are dedicated members of the GISD community who have professional expertise in a certain area and want to devote their skills to a specific committee or committees.

Their responsibilities include:

- Devoting 6-8 hours per month to the committee
- Effectively collaborating with committee leadership on projects
- Attending once-monthly meetings or conference calls

D. General and Event Volunteers

General volunteers: Ad-hoc volunteers deal with a variety of general and administrative tasks within the organization, depending on the needs of the Board and Committees. There is no set time commitment for this volunteer position. Tasks can range from creating social media content, to helping with event planning to answering calls and emails.

Event volunteers: Girls Inc. of San Diego County holds a Graduation Celebration in May for our high school seniors. There are opportunities to volunteer to:

- Event set up
- Staff the registration table

Those interested in a more long-term commitment to events are welcome to apply to join the Events committee.

Policies and Procedures for Volunteering with Girls

Time commitment and attendance

At Girls Inc., we build trust relationships with participants through punctuality and consistency. Therefore volunteers are expected to:

- Attend a minimum of 4 sessions per semester
- Arrive in a timely fashion, 15 minutes before each session in order to be signed in.
- Cancel attendance at least one day in advance of the session
- Read all communications by email or text

Confidentiality

GISD is committed to keeping staff, volunteer and participant information confidential. Therefore, we ask volunteers to NOT share any of the following under any circumstances:

- Names
- Phone numbers, e-mail addresses, addresses
- Sign-up forms
- All other confidential personal information
- Curriculum material (this is protected by copyright)

Volunteers are permitted to take photos of girls during the session after verifying with the Program Coordinator that the girls in question have a signed photo release form. These photos may NOT be shared on any public platform.

Boundaries

Girl participants in programming are minors from vulnerable, low-income communities. As such, it is extremely important that volunteers maintain professional boundaries in order to ensure a trusting relationship.

- Volunteers are not permitted to exchange phone numbers and social media information with girls, and are not permitted to communicate by text, calls or social media before, during or after the program.
- Volunteers are expected to discuss only age appropriate topics with the girls: follow the lead of the curriculum. If in doubt, ask.
- Volunteers are not permitted to spend personal time with participants outside of structured programs and events.
- Volunteer mentors are expected to assist the Program Coordinator as directed. The Program Coordinator maintains the authority to direct volunteers' actions.

Mandatory Reporting

- Our Program Coordinators and Program Interns are Mandated Reporters, and have been trained as such. If a volunteer suspects child abuse, he/she must report the suspicion to the Program Coordinator immediately.
- The main types of abuse are physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Warning signs include seeming excessively withdrawn or anxious, extreme behavior (extremely compliant, demanding, passive aggressive), frequent and unexplained injuries, and more. A complete list is found here: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect.htm>
- If a child confides in you, it is best to remain calm and not show shock or disgust and then report the incident immediately. Do not attempt to make any promises, or say that you won't tell anyone.

School site policies

- Volunteers are expected to arrange their own transportation to the school sites
- If you are unable to attend your scheduled volunteering session, you must cancel your shift *at the latest* one day before.
- You are expected to arrive at the school site 15 minutes before your scheduled start. Admittance to the program closes 5 minutes before the class start time and volunteers will no longer be able to gain admittance to the program.
- Please bring a driver's license/other valid photo identification to the site.
- Personal belongings: Volunteer mentors are asked not to bring personal belongings to the school site. GISD will not be held responsible for any belongings lost or stolen during the volunteering session.
- Legal prescription drugs: individuals on potential behavior-altering medication cannot volunteer.
- Drugs and Alcohol: illegal drugs, alcohol and smoking are strictly prohibited in and around volunteering sites. It is especially prohibited to share these substances with GISD program participants.
- Volunteers are not allowed to bring food items to the session.

- To maintain full attention and focus on the girls, volunteers are asked not to use their phones to call or text at any time during the session.
- Injuries: GISD is not responsible for any injuries occurring on-site. If an injury occurs, you must immediately notify the Program Coordinator.

Social media policy

In compliance with both school and confidentiality guidelines we ask volunteer mentors to adhere by the following rules:

- If you want to take a picture of a girl participants, please ask the Program Coordinator whether she has a signed photo release form beforehand.
- Please do not post any photos to your personal social media pages, and do not share them with individuals outside of Girls In. of San Diego County.
- Please do not share any personal information about the girls, or about other volunteers, on your personal social media pages and/or chats. This includes names, addresses, emails, phone numbers, etc.
- Please do not identify the locations the school sites nor geo-tag your location in real time as this is a safety hazard

- End -