






Becoming a Volunteer

Volunteering for Girl Scouts will be one of the most satisfying and gratifying things you will ever do. No matter what your role, the place to start is with the five steps below:

	<p>Volunteer Interest Form</p>	<p>Complete the Volunteer Interest Form. Go to www.gsnorcal.org and click on "Volunteer".</p>
	<p>Select Your Role and Register as a Member</p>	<p>Search the Participation Catalog and select the opportunity that is right for you. Either enter a specific troop number you've been given, or enter your zip code and choose from the offerings near you. Select unsure if you don't find what you're looking for or would like additional assistance.</p> <p>If you'd like to learn more about different roles, log in to our Volunteer Learning Portal at training.gsnorcal.org Once you've chosen your role, you'll pay your membership fee, and agree to the Volunteer Policy.</p>
	<p>Background Check</p>	<p>Enter your required information into the secure system. All information you provide will be treated confidentially. Note that you won't receive information to complete your background check until you select a volunteer role above.</p>
	<p>Girl Scout Playbook</p>	<p>Head over to the Girl Scout Playbook for an introduction to volunteering with Girl Scouts.</p>
	<p>Adult Learning Courses</p>	<p>Click on your role in the Volunteer Learning Portal to take the modules designed just for you. training.gsnorcal.org</p>

Volunteer Interest Form

When you complete the Volunteer Interest Form, you will provide your basic contact information.

Select Your Role

You will either:

- Provide the troop number of the troop you wish to join. Once you enter the troop number you've been given, you will choose the role you'd like. The choices you'll have are:
 - Troop Leader
 - Troop Cookie Manager
 - Troop Fall Product Manager
 - Troop Treasurer
 - Troop Helper (these may include some of the roles shown below)
 - Troop Driver
 - Troop Camp Advisor
 - Troop Backpacking Advisor
 - Event Manager
 - Troop First Aider
 - Troop Trip Advisor
- Search the Participation Catalog for the right role for you. You'll be able to specify your zip code and opportunities within certain mileage from you. After completing registration, watch for an email with a link to complete your background check.

After you specify your role, you'll pay your membership dues to GSUSA and become an adult member.

Terms & Conditions

GSNorCal's terms and conditions inform parent/guardians and prospective volunteers of [GSNorCal's Volunteer Policy](#) and the volunteer's obligation to self-disclose any fact or circumstance that would call into question being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of young people, as well as inform them that their membership registration is non-refundable and does not guarantee placement.

Registration Questions

Who must register?

All adults who are doing anything with a troop need to register as volunteer members and complete a background check. In Girl Scouts, it's safety first.

Registered adult members are automatically covered with the Girl Scout Activity Accident Insurance for the entire membership year (Plan 1). It is recommended that all adults who will participate in any meeting or activities be registered. If an adult is not a registered member and going to attend an outing, then the troop must purchase additional insurance for each event where unregistered adults or children (including siblings) are present. Adults not registered or background checked cannot be used in the [adult-to-girl ratios](#) for supervision of girls at meetings, events, trips or activities.

Can unregistered adults or children (tagalongs) attend meetings or events?

Yes. If an adult attends a meeting or activity as a visitor, (e.g. guest speaker or audience member), and is not providing supervision in the adult-to-girl ratios, they need not be registered. This person would not be covered under Girl Scout insurance, and this should be made clear to them. The same is also true of children (siblings or friends) attending an activity as a non-participating visitor (such as an audience member at a ceremony.) If the child will be included in any activities, additional insurance must be purchased.

It is the responsibility of the adult volunteer team of any troop to ensure that all adults or children who participate in Girl Scout activities (including siblings) are:

- Registered members so that they will automatically be covered under the Girl Scout Activity Accident Insurance (Plan 1)
 - If a girl's family does not have their own personal insurance, then the troop should purchase (Plan 3P)
- Or, any unregistered children or adults participating in the meeting or activity are covered by purchasing additional activity insurance (Plan 2).

Additional insurance is very reasonably priced and can be arranged by sending an online request to the council's Risk Management team: [Plan 2 Event and Trip Insurance Enrollment Plan](#)

Questions regarding additional insurance can be directed to insurance@gsnorcal.org [[Safety-Wise: Girl Scout Activity Insurance](#)]

Can an unregistered adult attend an overnight event or activity?

Yes. It is encouraged that all adults be registered, however, unregistered adults may attend an overnight under the following circumstances:

- Make sure that there are always at least the minimum number of qualified adults supervising the girls any time they are participating in a Girl Scout meeting or any kind of activity. [[Safety-Wise: Adult-to Girl Supervision Ratios](#)]
- Ensure that all the adults, who are providing supervision and are counted in the adult-to-girl ratio, are registered members and have cleared the adult background check.
- Ensure that all the adults who are providing supervision and are counted in the adult-to-girl ratio are aware of the other adults who are providing supervision—at no time should an unscreened or otherwise unregistered adult substitute for their supervision duties.
- Examples: Unregistered adults and/or adults who are not background screened cannot escort unrelated Girl Scouts to the restrooms, perform any First-Aid, supervise activities, drive girls, etc.

How often do I need to register?

Adult volunteers must register each year, or can become a lifetime member. Girl members must also register each year. Registered members are covered by Girl Scout insurance and can serve as Girl Scout volunteers if they are 18 years or older. If you want to be a Troop Driver for the troop, you must be at least 21 years or older. The membership year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30.

What if I change my name or contact information?

Should you begin using a hyphenated last name, change your last name, or change your contact

information, it is necessary to notify the council. For name changes, please email info@gsnorcal.org To change your contact information, please log in to your membership community account at www.gsnorcal.org and click on My GS or email info@gsnorcal.org

What if I don't have a computer (or smart phone or tablet) and cannot register online?

If you will need to complete your registration using paper forms, the girl and adult membership forms are found here www.gsnorcal.org/forms (search using 'membership') along with the additional form needed for the paper registration process ([Registration & Renewal](#)).

Adult Background Check

Who must be background checked?

Before any adult (regardless of citizenship status) can volunteer with GSNorCal, she or he must complete their adult background check. In Girl Scouts, it's safety first. Volunteer roles include the following:

- Troop Leader
- Troop Cookie Manager
- Troop Fall Product Manager
- Troop Treasurer
- Troop Helpers, some roles include:
 - Troop Driver
 - Troop Camp Advisor
 - Troop Background Advisor
 - Event Manager
 - Troop First Aider
 - Troop Trip Advisor

Possible Outcomes of Adult Background Check Process

At the time of the adult background check, volunteers will be either:

- eligible to serve as Girl Scout volunteers,
- or disqualified from serving in any volunteer position.

If GSNorCal becomes aware of omissions or inaccurate information on documents or a previous or subsequent arrest or conviction of a crime, depending on the severity of the crime and at the discretion of GSNorCal, clearance will be revoked and a volunteer will be removed from duties until the situation is resolved to the satisfaction of the council.

Any Girl Scout volunteer who is formally accused of, charged with, or under investigation by authorities for any automatically disqualifying offense (or offenses which might result in disqualification at the discretion of GSNorCal), will not be allowed to volunteer until disposition of the charge. The following procedures will be followed. A volunteer so accused is required to:

- Suspend all Girl Scout activities and duties until the matter has been resolved.
- Turn over all monies, materials, and records to a designated representative of the council until the matter is resolved.

The accused is considered innocent until proven guilty.

Confidentiality

Girl Scouts of Northern California has taken great care to ensure that the background check process is completely secure. Our vendor, Sterling Volunteers, uses state-of-the-art technology and adheres to the highest standards to ensure that all information is secure.

Your sensitive personal information is never transmitted to GSNorCal. All information that is received in the volunteer screening process is treated confidentially. Your clearance status (whether eligible or disqualified) will be shared only with staff or volunteers working directly with the person, only as needed. The reasons for a disqualification will always remain confidential.

The reports are sent to GSNorCal only and are not shared with any other agencies or organizations. The information is confidential and cannot be used against you, other than to deny your application to work as a volunteer. GSNorCal will not report any information, including citizenship status, to any government agencies.

People who are undocumented may be concerned about the background check process. It is not required that our volunteers be citizens, and citizenship/documentation status is not considered in screening our volunteers. We do require all volunteers to complete an adult background check.

How do I complete the background check?

To generate an email to complete your background check:

- Log into your own My GS Community (click on the My GS link at the top of the page www.gsnorcal.org) and select a volunteer role (if unsure, select Troop Helper).
- Once you have selected a volunteer role, you will then receive an email from our trusted vendor, Sterling Volunteers, with a personal link to submit the electronic background check for Girl Scouts of Northern California.
 - If you used the link in your email and too much time has passed, or you navigated away from the Sterling Volunteers page, simply click on the link in the email again to ensure that the background check is connected with Girl Scouts of Northern California.
- Sterling Volunteers will send you an email confirming that you have submitted your information when you complete that step
 - This email is not the same as confirmation of your approval to volunteer
- NOTE: If you haven't selected a volunteer role, you won't receive the email from Sterling Volunteers. Any adult who completes registration as a "volunteer" will automatically receive an email with screening instructions.

How much does the adult background check cost?

The price can vary if your driver's license is out of the state of California, or if you live in certain counties, but the fee starts at \$11.75. If the background check fees will cause financial hardship for your family, you can request financial aid. When submitting your background check through our vendor, Sterling Volunteers, you may elect to pay some or zero dollars, opting for the council to cover the fees. Your background check will then be processed at little or no cost to you.

Who must complete the adult background check this year?

All new volunteers and renewing volunteers who completed the electronic background check in 2018-2019 or before are required to complete adult screening this year.

How often do I need to complete the adult background check?

Currently adult background checks must be repeated every three years during renewal (background check for resident camp volunteers must be repeated annually, consistent with American Camp Association requirements). GSNorCal performs an annual audit of our background check process, and makes adjustments according to the findings of our audit. Changes to the background check process will be announced to our volunteers.

What if I completed my background check by fingerprinting?

There is no fingerprinting option for background check, however, volunteers who previously completed their background check by fingerprinting with GSNorCal do not have to complete their background check again if there has been no lapse in membership.

I'd like to complete my adult background check using fingerprinting.

The council no longer offers a fingerprinting option for our adult background check, but those who previously completed fingerprinting will not have their background check expire as long as there has been no lapse in membership.

Who ensures that the background check is completed?

The troop or group's adult volunteer team makes sure that adults are properly registered and background checked. You can check the troop tab in your member profile (click on MyGS on www.gsnorcal.org). Many troops ask the adults to register and complete their background check when the girls are registered as members to avoid disappointment (if they try to complete their adult background check just prior to certain activity or trips and cannot complete the process quickly enough).

The adult volunteer team must also ensure that girls are always supervised by an adequate number of registered and background checked adults (minimum numbers per Adult-to-Girl ratios). [[SAFETY-WISE: Adult-to-Girl Ratios](#)]

Those adults providing supervision should be aware of which other adults are also registered and background checked and providing supervision (and which aren't). Unscreened adult visitors may never be counted in the minimum adult-to-girl ratios for supervision, nor should they be present without sufficient numbers of registered and background checked adults who are supervising the girls. Adults who are not registered or background checked may not attend overnight activities.

I've had an adult background check done for another organization. Can I ask that organization to share my results with Girl Scouts of Northern California?

No. State law prohibits organizations from sharing information with other agencies. However, there are some screening vendors (including our vendor, Sterling Volunteers) who can share your screening results with multiple organizations with your authorization. If you believe that your background check might be shared, contact info@gsnorcal.org for further assistance.

Must all drivers complete adult background checks?

Yes. Drivers are the only adults who are ever alone with girls and it is important to take steps to ensure the safety of girls at all times. Driving records are part of the background check process.

We will have an astronomer come to a meeting to talk about constellations. Must that person be registered and background checked?

No. The minimum number of registered and background checked adults must be present at all times and will provide supervision for the girls while the astronomer is visiting.

May parents who have not been background checked visit during meetings or attend outings with the troop?

Adults who have not been background checked may not attend overnight activities. As long as the minimum number of background checked adults are present to provide supervision for the girls at all times, it is acceptable for adults who have not been background checked to attend meetings or day trips as visitors. Supervising adults should be made aware of who their fellow supervising adults are and those adults present who are there as visitors and have not been background checked.

Are there people who cannot attend Girl Scout activities?

Yes. Anyone who has been convicted of a violent crime or crimes against persons, including registered sex offenders, may not attend Girl Scout activities where girls are present.