

# Delegate/ Alternate Handbook

# Delegates... You're Important!

Representing Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana (GSK) is an honor and a privilege. The delegate system somewhat mirrors our elected legislators who represent constituents. You are nominated by your peers and elected by those who are members of your area association. When you accept the nomination, you are proudly stating your commitment to place the needs and desires of the council and area association members above your own personal interests.

We encourage you to become a voting member of the GSK delegate assembly. This delegate handbook will answer many of your questions and help you understand the importance of the delegate role in representing Girl Scout members in the GSK council. For more information, please refer to the bylaws of Girl Scouts of Kentuckiana.

## **Included in this handbook are:**

Differences between governance and operational functions;

Delegate election process;

Delegate responsibilities;

Definitions to help you understand the delegate role.

## **Delegate Election Process and Responsibilities of Delegates**

There are two parts to the success of the council: Governance/council leadership (policy) and operational management (program). It is important to understand the differences and role of each. Generally speaking, governance volunteers create policy and operational volunteers deliver program. However, our bylaws state that at least one member of our policy-making board of directors must be an operational volunteer.

### **Governance (Policy)**

- Fulfill charter and legal obligations
- Establish strategic plan
- Represent GSK vision to the community
- Ensure organization's long-term sustainability
- Make, review, and change policies
- Approve an annual budget
- Protect the council's assets
- Monitor management of the council
- Hire and evaluate the CEO

### **Operational/Management (Program)**

- Administer Girl Scout program
- Develop procedures for registration
- File government reports properly and on-time
- Direct work of employed staff and operational volunteers
- Implement policies
- Implement strategic plan
- Plan/administer budget
- Appoint, train operational volunteers

**As you can see, there is a definite division of the two parts. You might be wondering who is responsible for each of them.**

Governance is provided by the Board of Directors and the Board Development Committee who receive input and feedback from the members of the delegate assembly.

Operational management is provided by staff and operational volunteers.

## **Delegate Election Process**

The chair and vice chair of each area association are members of the delegate assembly from their area. In addition, each area association is entitled to elect one or more delegates depending on the number of girls registered in the area. A slate of delegates is nominated by the area nominating committee at the fall area meeting. A slate of alternates is also nominated. An alternate may serve in place of a delegate who is later unable to serve. The committee attempts to recruit a representative slate which may include both adult and girl members who will be 14 years of age or older by January 1 of the year they will serve. Elections must be held and results reported no later than December 31 of the year prior to an annual meeting. The Board of Directors may elect up to 10 delegates-at-large to enhance the diversity of representation within the delegate assembly. Delegates-at-large and those elected by their area associations serve one-year terms beginning January 1.

# Responsibilities of Members of the delegate assembly as Defined by Article III, section 5 of the GSK bylaws

## Each delegate shall:

- Elect the officers of the council, the members-at-large of the Board of Directors, the members of the Board Development Committee, and delegates to the National Council meeting.
- Determine general lines of direction for Girl Scouting with the jurisdiction of the council by receiving and responding to reports and information from the Board of Directors with input from area association members.
- Amend the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws, provide input and vote on the bylaws.
- Take all other action requiring membership vote.
- Conduct such other business as may, from time to time, come before the delegates.
- Objectively represent and vote the voice of his/her area association.

## Definitions You Might Find Helpful

### Annual Meeting

This meeting, required by our bylaws and state statutes, is held once a year and includes all elected delegates. It provides one way for the membership to guide the Board of Directors and to take action that enables the council to implement the mission. The annual meeting is open to all GSK membership.

### Area Association

Within the council there are geographic regions specified by the Board of Directors, known as area associations. The area associations (areas) are governance bodies. Each registered adult member of the council and each girl fourteen years of age or older shall be a member of one (1) area association of the member's choice. The member may only vote or stand for election in that area. Area associations meet in the fall and spring of each year. In addition to electing officers in the spring and delegates and alternates in the fall, they provide opportunities for volunteers to meet and discuss matters of interest, to recognize the contributions of members, to receive information from the Board of Directors and to provide feedback to the board. In addition, some areas may provide girl program as a way to improve the quality of Girl Scouting in the community.

## **Board Development Committee**

The Board Development Committee (BDC) works with the board and the CEO to assess the needs of the council board. It then presents the delegate assembly with a single slate of nominations for board positions to be filled. The BDC consists of seven members, of whom two are board members. The CEO serves as a non-voting member of the committee. The members of the committee are elected by the delegates of the council for a term of no more than two years or until their successors are elected.

## **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors consists of the officers of the council, (Chair, 1st Vice Chair, 2nd Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and the CEO who serves as a non-voting member) and 18 directors (members-at-large). The Board of Directors is selected from members of the communities GSK serves and may or may not have a background in Girl Scouts. The board may also include one or more girl members who are non-voting but otherwise fully participating. These positions are filled by the Board of Directors for one-year terms based on recommendations from the Board Development Committee after the review of applications from girls who will be in the 11th or 12th grade at the time of service.

## **Corporation (Council)**

GSK is a corporation (council) made up of all registered members; a body created by law and authorized for purposes as stated in its Articles of Incorporation and bylaws. The membership of the corporation consists of all registered adult Girl Scouts and girl members age 14 and over.

## **Delegate Assembly**

The delegate assembly consists of delegates from area associations, delegates-at-large, delegates to the National Council Session, members of the Board of Directors, and members of the Board Development Committee.

## **GSK Council Delegate**

A registered Girl Scout adult or girl member who is age 14 and over, elected from a specific area association to represent his/her area membership at the annual meeting. More than one delegate represents each area. The exact number is determined by a formula based on membership. This position has a one-year term with an option to be re-elected. As representatives of their areas, delegates are the communication link between the areas and the Board of Directors and are an important part of the Democratic Process in GSK. In addition to being this link, delegates vote on changes to the bylaws, the slate of officers and members-at-large of the Board of Directors, national delegates and alternates, and Board Development Committee members.

## **National Council Delegates**

Every three years, GSUSA holds a national convention and business meeting. Each council elects delegates to represent them at this meeting. These delegates then report back to the council membership the actions at that session. Those who wish to become delegates to represent GSK at the GSUSA national convention submit applications to the Board Development Committee who reviews them. The BDC then presents nominations as part of the slate to be voted on at the annual meeting. The Board Chair and the CEO will schedule training prior to the national conference and hold discussions open to all members on voting items.

## **Governance Volunteer**

A volunteer who is involved with making policy for the council such as Area Delegate, Area Chair, Board Committee/Task Group member, and Board Member.

## **Operational/ Management Volunteer**

A volunteer who is involved with delivering program to girls such as Troop Leader, Service Unit Manager, Trainer, or Operational Task Group member. This volunteer may also have a governance position.

# Tips For Delegates

You may be wondering how to fulfill your responsibilities as a delegate. Here are a few tips to get you started. You will probably think of more as you gain experience.

- Remember that this position goes beyond “going to the annual meeting.” You are a part of the link between your area and the Board of Directors.
- As a council delegate take time to formally and informally talk with members in your area to gather feedback—you are the voice of members in your area
- Talk with volunteers and girls who have been delegates in the past. They will be happy to help you.
- Ask your Area Chair to send you any information about board topics as they come up. The agendas for board meetings are sent to ACs a few days before the meeting, and a summary of the meeting is sent a few days afterward. These will give you an idea of matters that are important to the board.
- Attend your Area Meetings. Your AC will probably have some talking points from the board and lead a discussion on the topics. Listen attentively and give input.
- Remember that you are elected to represent your area, but you don’t have to agree with everyone—in fact you won’t be able to agree with everyone because there will be many opinions.
- As the Annual Meeting approaches, you will receive a workbook telling you about the activities at the Annual Meeting, and giving an agenda for the business meeting. There will be topics for discussion at the meeting, as well as the slate for positions to be elected. Read the materials carefully and be ready to discuss at your training.
- Attend the training given by the AC for delegates and alternates and discuss with others any questions you have.
- As a delegate you are “informed, but not instructed.” This means you listen carefully and with an open mind to all opinions, and then decide for yourself which way to vote. Your delegation does not need to agree and/or vote as a group. You should vote your conscience. You may even change your mind as you listen to speakers at the Annual Meeting.
- Go to your Service Unit Meeting and talk with the volunteers about matters that are concerning to them.
- If there are Service Units in your area not represented in the delegation, discuss with others in your delegation how you as a group will get their opinions.
- Express your concerns to the board through email:  
**[board@gskentuckiana.org](mailto:board@gskentuckiana.org)**.
- Be prepared to participate in other ways as requested by the board. There may be surveys, straw votes, etc. for delegates, and the board really does want your opinions.