



Agenda Item Identification Code
(For National Board Office only):

Girl Scouts of the USA
420 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10018-2798

Agenda Item Submission Form 58th National Council Session

Name of Girl Scout Council(s)

Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys

City

St. Paul

State

MN

If a group of councils is submitting a single agenda item, all councils must be listed on this form.

This council is submitting a Discussion Topic

This is a Final submission

Write the following information exactly as the council wishes it to appear in the *Workbook* if accepted for the agenda.

TITLE OF PROPOSAL OR DISCUSSION TOPIC

Advancing Inclusivity through improved resources and training.

STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL OR DISCUSSION TOPIC, QUESTION, OR ISSUE

(Proposals should be written in the form of a motion)

TOPIC, QUESTION, OR ISSUE

We have girl and adult members with neurodiversity and both visible and invisible barriers to participation and accessing information.

Many of the materials available to Girl Scout Volunteers and families are literacy dependent, whether used in recruitment, badge meetings, or family meetings.

Additionally, appropriate resources and training that are available may be in other councils, difficult to locate, and require time that diminishes a volunteer's capacity to deliver the Girl Scout experience.

Access TO printed and digitized materials, and high-quality, relevant training with access TO easily made adaptations will allow volunteers TO be more inclusive and adaptable in their roles and responsibilities.

Therefore, we recommend:

- 1) Make printed materials more inclusive and accessible by:
 - a) Present information in a variety of ways
 - i) Place critical information first

- ii) Support messages with images and videos
 - iii) Link additional material like video or audio with QR codes for easy access
 - iv) Simplify language and information structure
- b) Use best practices to optimize materials for translation accuracy and reliability using technology.
- c) Improve Health Forms / link to Get to Know Me:
 - i) Provide space for information to help leaders work with their girls, could be special needs, accommodations or “good to know”, go beyond allergies, include food aversions.
 - ii) Space for girls, especially older girls, to share what they need to be successful. “All girls’ voices must be heard. We will provide all girls with a place where they feel heard, and where they have the resources and support, they need to raise their voices and change their corner of the world.”
- d) Create 2 levels of information for choosing and completing badges:
 - i) Adult leader/mentor/parent version
 - ii) Girl level to support and facilitate the Girl-Led leadership progression
- 2) Create Badges for each program level exploring individual differences that include ways we learn. Educate girls though badges about differences and how to accept others and include them.
- 3) Develop a centralized resource library for volunteers that includes:
 - a) A searchable index of
 - i) Documents
 - ii) Articles
 - iii) Activity Plans
 - b) Materials tagged for
 - i) Badge keywords and program levels
 - ii) Skill level, literacy level/requirements, availability of adaptations
 - c) Sourcing from councils and national and is vetted and managed by National.
- 4) Develop a “best of the best” training library for volunteers
 - a) Include badge, journey, meeting and instructional adaptations and guidelines for
 - i) Neurodiversity
 - ii) Visible and invisible barriers to access and achievement
 - b) Utilize the many excellent trainings created and recreated in local councils.
 - c) Develop a submission process where local training could be submitted, or nominated by volunteers and reviewed by GSUSA, to be accessed by all volunteers.

REASONS:

1. What is the issue the discussion topic or proposal is trying to address?

We have girl and adult members with neurodiversity and both visible and invisible barriers to participation and accessing information.

Many of the materials available to Girl Scout Volunteers and families are literacy dependent, whether used in recruitment, badge meetings, or family meetings.

Standardizing training across councils and diverse regions is challenging. General training could be accessed at the GSUSA level, with more specific content provided at the council level. GS Learn could be a key platform for volunteer training—and be extended to guardians. Guardians have

MyGS accounts, they and older Girl Scouts (Seniors and Ambassadors) could have access to training that helps them understand Girl Scouts, support their Girl Scouts, and assist their Troops

There is not currently specific and engaging training for neurodivergent inclusion, parents are often the source of information or must advocate for their Girl Scout. Adults may need alternatives to make volunteering accessible. When volunteers do not know how to deal with special circumstances, if the information is difficult to find or lacking, girls may not join and not get the GS experience. Materials need to have IRL situational examples.

All training materials, at every level, could reflect a broad understanding of inclusivity. This includes not only physical disabilities but also examples and guidance around other types of differences. Trainings that feature subject matter experts—rather than just volunteers—offer significant value. Expert-led topic-specific discussions are especially impactful.

Additionally, appropriate resources and training that are available may be in other councils, difficult to locate, and require time that diminishes a volunteer's capacity to deliver the Girl Scout experience.

2. Are there other ways to address this issue?

Currently no, VTK is not Girl-friendly and does not lend itself as a “resource-hub” with space for alternatives and easy search functionality.

Badge Explorer does not meet the need. It has limited search functionality, does not link back to activity plans, adaptations, and is not program level / developmentally / barrier friendly.

3. How does this proposal improve Movement governance or policy? OR how does this discussion topic inform Movement strategy?

“Every Girl Scout has their own curiosity, dreams, and talents—so when they come together to decide which of the thousands of Girl Scout activities to try, the sky's the limit.”

If they can read, or have the materials read to them. Adults are encountering a wide range of attention spans, behaviors and diversity that challenge their skills. The Girl Scout Movement is improved when caring adults can access and find the resources and receive training that helps them be understanding and adaptable.

4. Does this agenda item have Movement-wide significance? Does it apply to all councils?

We are an organization that is rooted in values set forth in our [Girl Scout Law](#), including honesty, fairness, caring, courage, and respect for self and others. These are hallmarks of Girl Scouts' broader commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice. That diversity, equity, inclusion, and [racial] justice extends to the issue we have identified and yes, it applies to all councils.

5. Is this agenda item time-sensitive? What happens if it is not addressed at NCS 58?

With membership and volunteering both declining, and because the volunteer experience directly impacts the Girl experience, fulfilling our commitment to more than 700,000 volunteers to provide

resources, training, and support to serve all girls equitably is imperative to the health and sustainability of our organization. Continuing as we have always done it – with each council creating and “housing” resources and training in duplicity and redundancy reduces council capacity and sustainability, and when those resources and trainings are not optimized for search functionality, they diminish the volunteer’s capacity and satisfaction. Bottom line, if it is not addressed, the hard job of being a leader, just continues to be hard, without improvement. Is it a crisis? Urgent? That depends on the POV. We think it is time-sensitive, because change takes time, but it is not a crisis.

Discussion Notes

FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PROPOSALS

Indicate the projected expenditure and impact on resources for councils and the national organization, for a five (5) year period.

We, the national delegates, do not have the resources to answer this question. We do believe that by implementing systems where 1. Materials follow an accessibility guideline, and provide for alternative abilities (English Second Language, Learning Disabilities, etc.) then 2. material, resources and training that exist (and are created in the future) within local councils can be indexed, tagged, rated/ranked, and shared via a central “Volunteer Resource HUB” at the National Level, and linked to council sites, financial cost-savings can be recognized in many areas and improve local sustainability, as well as volunteer and girl experience. The net may not be a savings, but the benefits will outweigh the cost.

Marnie Overman

Marnie Overman

5/26/25

Signature and Printed Name of chair, council board of directors

Date of council board meeting

Open Comment and Collaboration Period: April 7-May 14, 2025

To submit for Open Comment and Collaboration, completed forms must be emailed to BoardOffice@girlscouts.org, copying abeck@girlscouts.org, with subject line: Draft Agenda Item from [INSERT COUNCIL(S)].

Final Submission Deadline: May 30, 2025

Final submissions, signed off by your council(s) board chair must be emailed to BoardOffice@girlscouts.org, copying abeck@girlscouts.org, with the subject line: Final Agenda Item from [INSERT COUNCIL(S)].

Please note that if a group of councils is submitting a single agenda item, the submission form should be signed by each council’s board chair.

If additional space is needed, please attach a separate page.