

Guidelines regarding Volunteer Leadership

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1. Disqualification

1.1. Procedure – Overview

The criminal offenses that will generally disqualify a person from volunteer participation and the corresponding process used to determine disqualification are discussed below. The decision to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation remains at all times within the discretion of Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee (GSMIDTN). Factors that may be considered in making such determination include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the criminal conduct, length of time since the criminal conduct occurred, and the tasks associated with the desired volunteer position. GSMIDTN's primary concern is always to safeguard the best interests of its members.

1.2. Procedure – Grounds for disqualification

The following rules generally will apply if GSMIDTN learns (via background screening or otherwise) that a prospective current volunteer has been convicted in the past seven years of one of the following crimes under the laws of the state of Tennessee, another state in the United States, or another country. At all times, GSMIDTN has the discretion to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation as a result of other pre-dating or non-criminal information.

Grounds for disqualification or limitations:

1. Any felony offense, regardless of type
2. Misdemeanor crime against a child
3. Misdemeanor crime involving use of weapons
4. Misdemeanor crime involving violence
5. Misdemeanor crime involving arson
6. Misdemeanor crime of public indecency
7. Misdemeanor DUI, DWI, or possession of any controlled substance
8. Other misdemeanors, as GSMIDTN may determine, including but not limited to theft, fraud, forgery, other crimes of dishonesty, or traffic violations. When an adult in any volunteer position with GSMIDTN has an outstanding debt to or has caused a financial loss to GSMIDTN or its entities, GSMIDTN has the right to remove the volunteer from his or her position.
9. Being a registered sex offender or having a registered sex offender living in the home.
10. Unresolved Situations: If there is an open warrant for the arrest of the applicant, or there is a pending charge with no disposition, the volunteer cannot be placed until the situation has been satisfactorily resolved and the background screening report updated. If the applicant has already begun to serve in a volunteer capacity, his or her participation must be suspended pending disposition of the case or resolution of the open warrant.
11. Other circumstances and general principles: for all other criminal offenses, including traffic violations classified as misdemeanors, self-disclosures of complaints about or arrests for violence or abuse against children, GSMIDTN shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. A prospective volunteer may be disqualified due to non-criminal information, such as negative references, and/or interview.
12. Failure to complete the background check screening application.
13. Failure to submit correct social security number on background screening application.

1.3. Procedure – Failure to disclose:

Failure to disclose the following information may result in disqualification of volunteer status.

1. Any arrests, allegations, pleadings of "no contest", dismissals, or convictions of a crime other than a minor traffic offense (including DUI's, misdemeanors, or felonies).

2. Allegations, complaints, arrests or reports regarding your involvement in child molestation, violence or abuse against children, or neglect (regardless of whether the incident was confirmed or denied).
3. If a member of your household is a registered sex offender
4. Any pending criminal charge against you.

1.4. Procedure – Final action:

GSMIDTN reserves the right to permanently deny anyone a volunteer position if GSMIDTN leadership believes the person is inappropriate for that position. There is no appeal process once a final denial decision has been made by GSMIDTN.

1.5. Procedure – During and after volunteer commitment:

Volunteers are asked to comply with all confidential procedures. During the course of volunteerism, and after the retirement of a volunteer position, sensitive or confidential information shall not be divulged, disclosed, or communicated for any reason.

2. Dismissal

2.1. Procedure – Overview:

In any organization, situations may arise which make it necessary to consider releasing an individual from their volunteer assignment. An action to release an adult volunteer should receive careful and detailed consideration of the possible implications and consequences for both the individual and GSMIDTN.

2.2. Procedure – Role model:

GSMIDTN may release any volunteer who, in conducting the Girl Scout program, advocates, solicits, or promotes a personal lifestyle so as to create a substantial risk that such conduct will be detrimental to being a proper role model for girl members.

2.3. Procedure – Releasing an operational volunteer:

1. The release of any volunteer is taken very seriously and will be investigated objectively to our furthest abilities, and will be kept confidential. If release of the volunteer is under consideration, the appropriate support staff will arrange a conference with the volunteer as soon as possible and advise him or her of the decision. An additional party will be required to attend the discussion. Volunteers will be given the opportunity to resign voluntarily.
2. If a current Girl Scout volunteer is charged or convicted of, pled guilty to, received deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to, certain crimes in the Grounds for Dismissal list (see below), GSMIDTN may ask the volunteer to resign from a position working with the girls. It is at the discretion of GSMIDTN whether to allow the volunteer to continue in any capacity, and any adverse action taken will be done so only after a thorough investigation.
3. Grounds for Dismissal:
 - a. Any felony offense, regardless of type
 - b. Misdemeanor crime against a child
 - c. Misdemeanor crime involving use of weapons
 - d. Misdemeanor crime involving violence
 - e. Misdemeanor crime involving arson
 - f. Misdemeanor crime of public indecency
 - g. Misdemeanor DUI, DWI, or possession of any controlled substance
 - h. Other misdemeanors, as GSMIDTN may determine, including but not limited to theft, fraud, forgery, other crimes of dishonesty, or traffic violations. When an adult in any volunteer position with GSMIDTN has an outstanding debt to, or has caused a financial

- loss to GSMIDTN or its entities, GSMIDTN has the right to remove the volunteer from his or her position.
- i. Being a registered sex offender, or having a registered sex offender living in the home.
 - j. Unresolved Situations: If there is an open warrant for the arrest of the applicant, or there is a pending charge with no disposition, that application cannot be approved and the volunteer cannot be placed until the situation has been satisfactorily resolved and the background screening report updated. If the applicant has already begun to serve in a volunteer capacity, his or her participation must be suspended pending disposition of the case or resolution of the open warrant.
 - k. Other circumstances and general principles: for all other criminal offenses, including traffic violations classified as misdemeanors, GSMIDTN shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. A prospective volunteer may be disqualified due to non-criminal information, such as negative references.
 - l. Failure to disclose any of the above within 10 days to GSMIDTN.
4. Volunteer Misconduct: Adult volunteers are expected to conduct themselves with respect to the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law. The following volunteer misconduct situations may result in the dismissal from a volunteer position:
 - a. **Theft:** Any concerns relating to misappropriation or misuse of Girl Scout funds or theft of equipment, materials, or supplies. This includes funds or equipment at the council, service unit, or troop level.
 - b. **Excessive absenteeism or inability to perform responsibilities:** not completing the agreed to term or service, or demonstrating no improvement in performance after being coached multiple times by GSMIDTN staff or service unit team member.
 - c. **Continuous or malicious slander:** Continuous or malicious gossip or derogatory attacks concerning anyone associated with Girl Scouts. This includes Girl Scout volunteers, parents, and GSMIDTN staff.
 - d. **Serious behavioral concerns:** This includes the use of drugs or alcohol while participating in Girl Scout activities, threats of violence (personal injury, defamation of character, etc.) physical fighting, arrest and yelling/verbal aggression towards girls, volunteers, or staff.
 - e. **Breach of Confidentiality:** Sharing confidential information about girls or volunteers with outside parties that are not privy to said information. This includes the use of Girl Scout contact information and materials for personal use or gain.
 - f. **Refusal:** Actively choosing not to subscribe to or adhere to GSMIDTN policies, procedures, and program expectations.
 - g. **Failure to cooperate** with a financial audit or dispute resolution investigation.
 - h. **Failure to complete** membership registration and/or background screening when directed by GSMIDTN.
 - i. **Failure to submit** the correct social security number on background screening application.
 - j. **Failure to abide** by the duties and responsibilities as outlined in the position description.
 5. The service unit manager responsible for overseeing the volunteer is responsible for notifying their membership regional executive at GSMIDTN if they become aware of a situation involving one of the above bulleted items. The regional executive should then notify the director of membership. After reviewing the facts, the team may ask the volunteer to step down from the position.
 6. Background screenings include a time frame of at least seven years: therefore, it is appropriate that the volunteer must be dismissed or put in a position restricted from working with girls for a minimum of seven years from the disposition of the offense. The length of this time frame and all other considerations related to the volunteer's position are at the sole discretion of GSMIDTN.

2.4. Procedure – Restriction of activity:

1. If a current Girl Scout leader or assistant leader is charged with or convicted of, or has pled guilty to, received a deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to certain crimes, he or she may have restrictions on her or his volunteer activities or responsibilities.
2. In keeping with the denial guidelines for incoming volunteers, an ongoing volunteer who has been charged with or convicted of, or has pled guilty to, or received a deferred adjudication for or pled no contest to certain crimes, judgment or probation may be asked to step down from their volunteer position and not allowed to become a leader or assistant leader if the incident or knowledge of the incident is within seven years. At the end of this time frame, it is within the sole discretion of the GSMIDTN to determine whether the volunteer can be placed in a leadership position working with the girls.
3. Volunteer misconduct as described within the standards and procedures section of *Volunteer Essentials* may result in restriction of leadership duties.

2.5. Procedure – Restriction from money handling:

If a volunteer has been charged with or convicted of, or has pled guilty to, received a deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to misdemeanor crimes involving theft, fraud, forgery, or other crimes of dishonesty in the event that the person is allowed to continue as a volunteer, that person will be restricted from management of Girl Scout money.

2.6. Procedure – Current arrest or conviction:

Arrests of current volunteers, and current volunteers who have pled guilty or no contest to certain crimes, or who have been placed on probation or deferred adjudication for crimes that are brought to GSMIDTN's attention, will be handled in a similar manner to open warrants and pending charges for prospective volunteers. The activities of the volunteer will be restricted while GSMIDTN researches the matter. It is at the discretion of GSMIDTN to determine whether the person should be suspended from all volunteer positions or be allowed to continue.

2.7. Procedure – Service unit manager or team member or leader:

There are occasions where current service unit managers or current service unit team members are not reappointed or are removed from their current service unit positions. This may occur after the following:

1. A thorough review of position performance based on the position description, and observable documented information.
2. A review of records of attendance and participation in formal and informal training sessions and meetings.
3. A personal interview with the volunteer at the earliest opportunity. The volunteer will be told of the specific performance area(s) that is not satisfactory.
4. Efforts will be made to help the volunteer achieve satisfactory job performance within a specific time period.
5. If a satisfactory level of position performance is not achieved within the designated time period, official notice of release from the volunteer position will be communicated to the volunteer.
6. The health, safety, or welfare of girl members, other volunteers, or staff is endangered.

Note: Volunteers are released from their volunteer position only; this does not cancel their membership in Girl Scouts. All circumstances, including all written documentation and communication concerning release from a volunteer position, are strictly confidential and will be protected.

In addition to the items listed in the procedure **for releasing an operational volunteer**, a service unit manager or a service unit team member may be removed or not reappointed for the following reasons:

1. Persistent or continual refusal to support and promote council initiatives.
2. Persistent or continual negative and disparaging communications about the Girl Scout organization, "Council", staff or other volunteers.
3. Failure to adhere to compliance requirements as designated in the position description.
4. Failure to follow GSMIDTN policies, standards, and procedures.
5. Failure or refusal to communicate/return calls or emails from staff or other volunteers in a timely manner.
6. Failure to stay current with GSMIDTN communications.
7. Failure or refusal to partner/cooperate with council staff.