

## **“What support or resources are currently missing that would help you succeed in your role as a volunteer?”**

### **1. Training & Development**

Needs: More Accessible, Relevant, and Consistent Training

- Timing and notice: Training schedules are unpredictable and shared too late.
- Consistency: Personnel and training content change too often; it's hard to keep up.
- Format:
  - More in-person training options
  - Ongoing webinars and office hours with recordings or summaries
  - Online library of on-demand training with the ability to suggest/request topics
- Specialized Training:
  - Outdoor adventures (e.g., lifeguarding, high adventure, canoeing)
  - Conflict resolution and troop dynamics (for both leaders and girls)
  - Support for multi-level troops, girls with extra needs, and Juliette troops
  - Tradition-based training (e.g., skits, flag ceremonies, Girl Scout history)
  - Certification for girls to teach skills (e.g., fire, knives)
  - “Train the Trainer” for adults and older girls
- Tailored Learning:
  - Scale training by experience level
  - Add a “quick start” virtual meetup for new leaders
  - Offer role-specific guides and checklists (e.g., for Cookie Chairs, CTCs, etc.)
- Recognition of training from other councils

### **2. Website, Tools & Communication**

- Citrus website is outdated, hard to navigate, and cluttered with old links
- Training records are hard to access—leaders need to see:
  - Completion dates
  - Prerequisites for events
  - Safety certification tracking for volunteers
- Calendar visibility: Trainings and events need to be on a shared, updated calendar
- Requested Enhancements
  - Centralized knowledge portal or “leader hub”
  - Clear hotline/support line for events, last-minute issues, or emergencies
  - After-hours support (not just M–Th, 9–5)
  - Staff directory so volunteers know who to contact for what
  - Simplify event and troop registration for mobile devices
  - Add the ability to easily add girls to closed troops

### **3. Volunteer Recruitment & Retention**

- Resources missing for recruiting leaders and community team members
- Need talking points, templates, and printed guides to use during recruitment
- Consistent support for Friendship Troops
- Lack of tools to track why girls and volunteers leave
  - Volunteers want data/metrics on retention and drop-off reasons
- Better succession planning and leadership pipeline resources

#### 4. Programs, Properties, and Events

- Programming Support
  - More council-run or supported activities like:
    - “Badge-in-a-day” events
    - STEM, softball, dance, kickball, clubs, etc.
    - “My Guy and Me” / Daddy-daughter events (hasn’t happened in 3 years)
    - Cross-age programming between younger and older girls
- Camps and Property Access
  - Camp reservation system should be fairer and more accessible
  - Need more open dates and events at properties
  - Property use should be easier and more consistent across locations

#### 5. Product Program (Cookies & Fundraising)

- More cookie training sessions, including:
  - Dummy system for practice before sales open
  - Equity in cookie booth assignments
- Support for using Cookie Cash toward summer camp
- Fundraising beyond cookies – resources for diversified fundraising

#### 6. Support Materials & Logistics

- More kits and boxes for checkout (STEM, legacy, experience boxes)
- Printable or downloadable new leader handbooks, mentor documents
- Physical materials to help leaders save time on admin tasks
- Continued support from staff who can show up and assist at events
- Mentors or liaisons for new leaders and community leads

### **“What is a recent challenge you faced as a service community, and how can we help you?”**

#### 1. Volunteer Recruitment & Retention

- Challenges
  - Difficulty recruiting new leaders, co-leaders, and volunteers for key roles
  - Burnout from the same people taking on too much
  - Retention issues, especially when leaders’ own girls age out
  - Volunteers are overwhelmed due to lack of understanding of roles

#### 2. Communication & Council Support

- Challenges
  - Delayed or unclear communication from council
  - Information doesn't always reach all community leaders or volunteers (e.g., only going to leads)
  - Lack of in-person support or presence at community meetings/events
  - Not enough guidance or accountability from council when issues arise

- Feeling of favoritism or inconsistency between larger/smaller communities

### 3. Engagement & Participation

- Challenges
  - Declining leader attendance at community meetings (same few show up)
  - Lack of social connection or excitement, especially for older girls
  - Virtual-only options make it easier for leaders to disengage
  - Volunteers don't feel heard or included in decision-making
  - Events feel repetitive or not impactful

### 4. Facilities & Meeting Space

- Challenges
  - Difficult to find affordable, accessible meeting spaces for troops and events
  - Schools are charging fees or denying access to spaces
  - No consolidated list of available venues

### 5. Product Program & Fundraising

- Challenges
  - Cookie/fall product:
    1. Decline in troop participation
    2. Limited booth options: communities lost the ability to select booths
    3. Some areas lack accessibility to product or managers
    4. Inconsistent product knowledge and training

### 6. Resources & Tools

- Challenges
  - Not enough visibility on what resources are available
  - Missing printed materials, signage, startup resources
  - Need for pre-printed boards, visual aids for org structure
  - Lack of access to materials or promotional kits to host events/tables

### 7. Structural & Strategic Needs

- Challenges
  - Roles and processes aren't clear, which makes recruitment harder
  - Engagement coordinator role seen as overly complicated
  - Some communities feel isolated or unsupported
  - No community liaison, which weakens the bridge between council and volunteers

## **What Motivates Volunteers to Continue with Girl Scouts:**

1. The Girls Themselves

- Watching girls grow, learn, and lead is the primary motivator.
- Seeing girls gain confidence, bond, develop friendships, and work toward awards (like the Gold Award) is deeply fulfilling.
- The sense of being a positive role model and part of a girl's lifelong journey is powerful.
- 2. Community and Connection
  - Relationships with other volunteers, leaders, and families create a strong sense of belonging.
  - Community groups and adult events help maintain motivation through shared experiences and mutual support.
  - Sisterhood, female friendships, and leadership bonding are especially meaningful.
- 3. Personal Impact and Legacy
  - Many volunteers have long history with Girl Scouts and feel deeply invested.
  - The organization provides a place of joy, purpose, and emotional support.
  - Volunteers value instilling values and creating a legacy for girls.
- 4. Excitement Through Activities
  - Big events, hands-on learning, travel, and leadership opportunities excite both girls and volunteers.
  - Aha moments and new experiences keep the program dynamic and engaging.

**"Do you feel your contributions are recognized? What kind of recognition is most meaningful to you?"**

- General Sentiment: Mixed
  - About 50% feel recognized, mostly at the community level.
  - Recognition from girls and parents is often the most meaningful.
  - Many feel that council-level recognition is lacking or inconsistent.
  - Volunteers want more visibility, appreciation, and support across all levels.
- What Recognition Looks Like & What Volunteers Value Most
  - Verbal appreciation: A sincere "thank you" from staff, leaders, or parents.
  - Social media shoutouts (e.g., Facebook posts).
  - Personal touches: Getting names right, handwritten thank-you notes, birthday cards.
  - Public recognition: Awards banquets, spotlighting community leaders, live-streamed ceremonies.
  - Leader-specific perks: Shop discounts, pins, patches, shirts, or small tokens ("bling").
  - Opportunities to connect: Events like "Volunteer Nights," lunch-and-learns, bingo nights.
  - Recognition of girls' successes (especially Bronze, Silver, Gold Awards) also reflects well on their leaders.

**5. "Do you feel connected to other volunteers and leaders in your area? What could strengthen that network?"**

- Overall Connection: Mixed
  - Some volunteers feel very connected, especially those active in community roles (e.g., cookie chairs, community team).
  - Others feel isolated or disconnected due to leadership turnover, lack of engagement, or poor communication.
  - Post-COVID, engagement has dropped, and many leaders are too busy to attend regular meetings or events.
  - Micromanagement, favoritism, and gatekeeping by long-time leaders are causing disconnects in some communities.

- What Helps Volunteers Feel Connected:
  - Regular community meetings (virtual + in-person hybrid works best)
  - Being involved in leadership roles or as community event organizers
  - Frequent communication (email, Facebook, chat groups)
  - Shared events and social time, both adult-only and all-ages
  - Recognition and support from council and neighboring communities
  - Common mission: when it's clear everyone is here "for the girls"
- Ways to Strengthen the Volunteer Network:
  - Improve Communication
  - Facilitate More Social & Networking Events
  - Adult-only gatherings (e.g., potlucks, yoga, bunko, bingo)
  - Combine events for multiple purposes (e.g., training + social)
  - Create space for informal bonding and idea-sharing
  - Offer fun leader meetups at restaurants or community spots
- Encourage Collaboration Between Communities
  - Council should lead cross-community introductions and emails
  - Regional events or socials with neighboring service units
  - Recognize collaboration efforts publicly to encourage more
- Make Participation Easier
  - Respect volunteers' time: make meetings efficient and relevant
  - Provide clear expectations and starter tools (e.g., "experience boxes" for new leaders or community leads)
- Rebuild and Reinvest in Community
  - Help rebuild communities with high turnover
  - Council should show up more at local meetings and events
  - Bring back incentives (e.g., cookie booth photo contests)

## 6. "What's something we are doing well that you'd like to see more of?"

- Communication & Responsiveness (Major Highlight)
  - Communication has improved significantly – keep it going!
  - Customer care (especially Ellen) praised for fast, helpful responses
  - Ticket system and email replies are working well
  - Leaders appreciate feeling heard, with openness to feedback and willingness to change
  - More transparency in council operations is noted and appreciated
- Events & Programming
  - More events on the calendar is a huge win
  - Summer series, Super Saturday, adult-only camping, community events
  - Council events are inclusive, fun, and now cover all ages
  - Leaders want to continue the momentum and see more:
    - Overnight events
    - Outdoor activities like archery days, sleepovers, and family camping
    - Themed events (mental health, diversity, history, STEM)
- Volunteer Support & Community Building
  - Leaders are seeing:
  - Stronger staff support (names like Ellen, Jen, Missy, Maria called out)
  - Rebuilding of community liaison roles
  - Events that foster leader camaraderie and bonding (e.g., adult camping)
  - Appreciation for community-level autonomy and partnership with council
- Training & Tools
  - Virtual trainings praised – increase access and flexibility
    - Appreciation for:
      - Experience boxes for Daisies and Brownies
      - Badge programs and leadership role clarity
      - Programs like "White Lab Coats," mental health badges, etc.

- Camps & Properties
  - Summer camps were a big highlight – bring back next year.
  - Properties like MKW and Riverpoint are loved and valued
  - Leaders like the property upkeep, diverse locations, and staff presence
- Cookie Program
  - Noted improvements:
    - Cookie drop logistics praised (including drive-throughs)
- Council Shop & Branding
  - Citrus shop staff received praise (Missy, Maria)
  - Merchandise updates and Diva branding well-received
  - Requests for longer shop hours (including Fridays/Saturdays)