



Girl Scouts®

Minnesota and Wisconsin
River Valleys

Delegate/Alternate Delegate Independent Study

“The ultimate responsibility for the Girl Scout Movement rests with its members. We govern by an efficient and effective democratic process that demonstrates our leadership in a fast-changing world.”

Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA
Basic Blue Book of Documents 2006
Updated: 11/1/07

Notes:

Congratulations! Your peers in Girl Scouting think highly of you and elected you to represent their Delegate Region as delegate/alternate delegate. They chose you to facilitate the constructive exchange of ideas and viewpoints in your Delegate Region, to vote on their behalf on the future leadership of Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys (River Valleys) and to participate in Community Networks meetings. They are also relying on you to keep them informed of major decisions affecting the governance of our organization.

Thank you for accepting this position. We hope you will feel great satisfaction in using your skills to represent volunteers and influence decisions benefiting all of the girls in River Valleys' jurisdiction. After all, all decisions are based on the girls we serve.

Introduction

This independent-study is designed to prepare you for your role in the River Valleys' organization. Enclosed for your review and reference are the following materials:

- Delegate/alternate delegate position description
- Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys Bylaws
- River Valleys Jurisdiction Map
- Basic Blue Book of Documents, 2006
- Girl Scout Terminology
- Delegate/alternate delegates Check-off List
- Independent Study Quiz (to be returned to River Valleys' headquarters)
- Independent Self Study Evaluation (to be returned to River Valleys' headquarters)

Several of these documents may be familiar to you from other training opportunities; as you review them again, please focus on *governance-related aspects* since in your role as a delegate/alternate delegate your function is primarily related to governance (as a policy influencing volunteer).

Instructions

Ideally, you should set aside one hour to complete this training. Begin by reviewing this information:

- River Valleys Bylaws – Articles II and III establishes the definition of Members, and the procedure to elect the Board of Directors, of which you will be an integral part. Article VIII highlights Delegates/Advisors responsibility in the election of National Council Delegates/Alternates. Article XI details your role in the event there is an amendment to the Bylaws that changes or alters the rights of the members.
- Governance and Operations – the role of the board of directors, key staff members and delegates/alternate delegates.
- Policy-Influencing Process

Expect to use the delegate/alternate delegates Check-off List during your term. To ensure River Valleys operates legally, we must have the required number of delegates/alternate delegates attend the annual meeting and this list details what is required when.

Please return the independent study quiz to the appropriate staff person. This will ensure your appointment is documented in time for the annual meeting. An evaluation is also enclosed. We hope you will take the time to provide feedback which will improve future training materials.

What is Governance? What is Operations?

What is the democratic process in Girl Scouting?

Girl Scouting holds the basic belief that in the Girl Scout Movement, girls and adults can influence decisions and activities in matters of governance and operations, and have access to those responsible for decision-making.

Why should a delegate/alternate delegate be concerned with whether something is governance or operations?

To benefit all of the girls in River Valleys' jurisdiction and to make the most of the delegates/alternate delegates' volunteer skills and experience it is important to understand which role they are playing when, and to speak and make judgments according to that role. Simply put, policy-influencing volunteers rely on their experiences as operations volunteers. To be most effective however, they must consider their role and be aware of what role they are playing in each setting.

Policy Influencing Volunteers

Delegates/alternate delegates have three areas of responsibilities:

- A. Electing the:
 - Board of directors
 - Board Development Committee members
 - National council delegates

- B. Influencing policy:
 - Delegates/alternate delegates participate in Community Networks meetings
 - Facilitate the constructive exchange of ideas and viewpoints in their Delegate Region to ensure our volunteers' feedback is informed and appropriate
 - Attend delegate/alternate delegate Forums to articulate the views of volunteers while respecting the democratic process is effective and efficient

- C. Demonstrating leadership:
 - Support decisions made at delegate/alternate delegate Forums and report information back to the Delegate Region constructively and positively
 - Mentor girl delegates, ensuring that they understand and have an opportunity to carry out their role
 - Promote and support the Family Partnership Campaign and River Valleys' product sales program activities.

At River Valleys, Forums are held on major issues are for the purpose of giving guidance to the board of directors. This feedback will assist the board of directors in making the most appropriate policy decisions. Active and informed participation in discussions is a primary role of the delegate/alternate delegate as a policy influencer. With the exception of the adoption of the agenda, elections, and amending the bylaws, there are few items that require voting by delegate/alternate delegates at the annual meeting.

Governance Volunteers

The board of directors is elected by the delegates/alternate delegates who are elected by volunteers in their Delegate Region. The board of directors has the ultimate authority and fulfills its responsibility for furthering the Girl Scout mission by: hiring the chief executive officer (C.E.O.), providing over-sight of Girl Scout programming within its jurisdiction and financial stewardship, and strategic, leadership direction for River Valleys.

It is also responsible to GSUSA for compliance with charter requirements, the Minnesota state government for adhering to state corporate law, and the federal government in matters relating to legislation affecting nonprofit organizations.

Delegates/alternate delegates are policy-influencing volunteers and report to the board of directors. Forums to provide input and discussion are implemented by River Valleys' staff and lead by a member of the board of directors.

Operations Staff and Volunteers

The C.E.O. as a paid staff member is accountable to the board of directors for developing and implementing a system and processes to carry out the strategic direction set by the Board; providing leadership and direction to staff and operational volunteers in carrying out the day-to-day operations of River Valleys and for supporting the board of directors in carrying out its governance responsibilities. The C.E.O. is responsible for hiring and the work of River Valleys' paid staff.

Community Networks volunteers are people are sought out by the C.E.O. to assist the staff by initiating and participating in two-way conversations within communities on behalf of River Valleys as well as building and maintaining relationships with individuals.

Operations Volunteers carry out assignments focused on the operations of River Valleys. They are elected by their service unit and appointed by staff and are ultimately accountable to the chief executive officer. Some examples of an operations volunteer include: troop leader, service unit manager, organizer/recruiter, council trainer.

Operations Task Forces are created to work on specific projects that are operational. For example: Financial Assistance Task Force; Cookie Task Force; Family Partnership Advisory Committee; and Outdoor Program and Properties Task Force. Volunteers make up the majority of the members in any task force and play a crucial role.

Examples of the difference between Governance and Operations

Governance – Policy

Approve policy communicating training policies for volunteers.

Approve strategic and annual business plans and budgets.

Approve operational policies including: Personnel, Development policies.

Oversee financial condition by approving annual budgets and monitoring financial statements

Create task forces to address strategic issues. For example: Properties

Approve board awarded recognitions

Hires and evaluates C.E.O.

Governance–Policy Influencing

(Delegates/alternate delegates)

Elect board members, national council delegates, and the Board Development Committee

Operations

C.E.O. hires and supervises staff

Volunteers and staff design training curriculum and conduct training sessions

Volunteers and staff partner on Family Partnership Campaign

Determine the process and application for Financial Assistance.

Determine the need for task forces and supervise their work. For example: cookies

Review applications for volunteer recognition awards and approve appropriate applications

Forums

Every year the board of directors drafts questions on topics on which they would like direct feedback from volunteers except during years of a National Council Session, when the questions used are from the national board of directors.

Questions will be sent to delegates/alternate delegates prior to forums that will enable delegates/alternate delegates to discuss questions, provide River Valleys' information gather feedback from volunteers in Delegate Regions. (Refer to Policy-Influencing Process for more information on how this process works.)

At Forums, delegates/alternate delegates from across River Valleys discuss questions the board of directors has sent to the Delegate Regions. In River Valleys, Forums precede the annual meeting and are presided over by members of the board of directors. All responses are recorded and collated into a document.

The board of directors uses volunteers' feedback to plan the priorities for upcoming program years or it may create an operational task force charged with sifting through feedback and gathering more information before making recommendations in a final report for the board of directors. The board of directors would make a final decision.

When creating the task force, the board of directors will allot River Valleys' resources and include a list of expectations including a timeline.

Council Networks

To assist the C.E.O. and River Valleys staff in gathering community information and building and maintaining relationships with individuals, Council Networks will be created in each of the five service centers in River Valleys.

Council Networks will be made up of community leaders, contributors, and River Valleys' volunteers and will provide an essential link between donors, communities, local governments, businesses and the C.E.O.

Delegates/alternate delegates will have a relationship with Council Networks and are expected to take part in Council Networks meetings held within their communities.

River Valleys Annual Meeting

The River Valleys annual meeting is held once a year and is devoted to:

- Reporting the previous years' Girl Scout program accomplishments
- Electing board members and Board Development Committee
- Discussing and approving audited financial statements and appointing auditors for the following year
- Awarding council approved council recognition awards
- When there is a National Council Session, national council delegates are elected

Electing Board Members

It will be determined if there are enough members present (which includes delegates /alternate delegates) to conduct the annual meeting.

River Valleys' board members and national council delegates are elected as a slate put forth by the River Valleys' Board Development Committee.

Following Roberts Rules of Order, a motion will be made by a River Valleys' member to approve the slate. The motion will be seconded by another member. Before calling the vote, there will be a call for discussion. After the discussion, delegates/alternate delegates will be asked for their vote.

River Valleys' officers are elected by the board of directors.

Policy Influencing Process

Delegates/alternate delegates have a responsibility to be informed prior to Delegate Region meetings, Community Networks meetings, and River Valleys' Annual Meeting. Responsibilities and their timelines are listed in the Check-off List and can be divided into three categories:

Prior to the annual meeting:

1. An information package will be mailed to each delegate/alternate delegate between 60 and 30 days in advance of the annual meeting. The package will include the date, time and location of the annual meeting as well as the proposed slate for election. It will also include an agenda which will list questions for feedback, or in the years of national council session, the slate of national council delegates.
2. Review the materials and become familiar with the issues to be presented at the Forum. Delegates/alternate delegates are responsible for gathering feedback from their region concerning the posed question.
3. If there is a question requiring feedback from the Delegate Region, contact the service unit manager to request time on the meeting agenda to present the issues for discussion. The service unit manager will need to know what the issues are so that together you can determine how much time is needed for discussion.
4. Discuss the question with volunteers. It may be helpful to have a second person recording feedback. A flip chart works best because it communicates transparency to all volunteers. Summarize orally what you have heard.
5. Remember to consult with volunteers not in attendance who may feel strongly about the question.
6. Consider all viewpoints, and synthesize information. Be ready and prepared to represent the views of your Delegate Region.

Arrival at the Forum/River Valleys Annual Meeting:

1. Casual business or business attire should be worn; uniforms are always appropriate.
2. Since there is a minimum number of delegates/alternate delegates required to conduct the annual meeting, check-in at the registration table. You will be given a name tag with your name and Delegate Region.
3. Punctuality is appreciated; the slate of the board of directors cannot be voted on without delegates/alternate delegates.

During the Forum (held if there is a question posed or important information needs to be communicated):

1. If there is a question posed to the delegates/alternate delegates, the board members responsible for the process will welcome delegates and explain the process being used to solicit feedback from delegates/alternate delegates.
2. Information will be recorded and used for future board discussions.
3. Delegates/alternate delegates will be thanked for ensuring that the democratic process as outlined in the Basic Blue Book of Documents has been fulfilled. .

During River Valleys Annual Meeting

1. Typically the annual meeting is held immediately following the Forum,. River Valleys' president will call the meeting to order and ask for a quorum report. Usually there will be an opening flag ceremony, recitation of the Girl Scout Promise, and introductions.
2. The meeting will consist of agenda items listed on page 7 as well as other agenda items deemed necessary. Delegates/alternate delegates will have an opportunity to vote for the slate of both the board members and the Board Development Committee. There may be the rare opportunity to vote on the River Valley Bylaws if there is a change in the rights of members (Article XI).
3. If it is a year of a National Council Session, delegates/alternate delegates will vote on the slate of national council delegates.

After the River Valleys Annual Meeting:

1. Additional forums could be called within the year by the board of directors. Questions and instructions would be included.
2. Community Networks meetings will be held throughout River Valleys' jurisdiction. Notices will be sent from the River Valley's headquarters with meeting and background information.

This completes the delegate/alternate delegate annual cycle.