



## BECOMING A GIRL SCOUT VOLUNTEER

To safeguard the health, safety, and general well-being of the members we serve, and prior to having any contact with youth including access to their personal information or managing Girl Scout funds, each prospective GSSNE volunteer is required to become adult member of Girl Scouts USA (“GSUSA”) and complete a thorough criminal background check (“CBC”) process as outlined below. Some volunteer positions may require screening beyond what is outlined below, including but not limited to, reference checks.

Prospective Massachusetts volunteers are required to submit to a Massachusetts’ Criminal Offender Record Information (“CORI”) check in accordance with Massachusetts state law Chapter 6 Section 167 (G.L. c. 6 §167).

Volunteer candidates whose records indicate a history of child abuse, violent crime, or sexual crimes will be denied a position. At the discretion of GSSNE, volunteer candidates may be denied a position due to financial irresponsibility, drug and alcohol related offenses, or other serious offenses or history that is not conducive with the organization’s mission, values or the safety and well-being of its members. Volunteers will be required to submit to and complete the online national background screening process through STERLING Volunteers (an online national screening partner) once every three years. Approved volunteers are required to immediately report any arrest or conviction to the Senior Risk & Compliance Manager. Volunteers will be provided with a complete copy of their criminal background check results upon request.

- **Become a member of GSSNE (the cost is \$25.00 for adults)**  
To register visit GSSNE.org, click “Volunteer with Us: Get Started”, then click “Sign Me Up”, follow the steps.
- **Authorize and pass a criminal background check (CBC) – there is no cost to the volunteer**  
The CBC applies to ALL volunteers. Once your volunteer registration is complete, you will receive an email from our partner STERLING Volunteers containing a link to the national background screen application. Once processed, your GSSNE membership record will be updated.
- **CORI Screening (for Massachusetts volunteers or volunteers working with Massachusetts children)**  
In addition to the CBC through STERLING, Massachusetts requires a CORI check for Massachusetts volunteers and non-Massachusetts volunteers working with Massachusetts children. The form can be found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.
- All volunteers, regardless of position, will be re-screened on a three-year rotating schedule for a CBC (and CORI for Massachusetts volunteers or volunteers working with Massachusetts children.).

### Criminal Background Screening Policy

Where Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks and CBCs through STERLING Volunteers are part of a general background check for employment, volunteer work, or licensing purposes, the following practices and procedures will generally be followed:

- I. CORI checks will only be conducted as authorized by the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). All applicants will be notified that a CORI check will be conducted and will complete a CORI form. If requested, the applicant will be provided with a copy of the Criminal Background Check Policy.
- II. An online CBC will be completed during the onboarding phase through STERLING Volunteers. All prospective volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Criminal Background Check Policy.
  - III. An informed review of a criminal record requires adequate training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to review or access CORI in the decision-making process will be thoroughly familiar with the educational and relevant training materials made available by CJIS.
  - IV. Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant. Rather, determinations of suitability based on CORI checks and the CBC through STERLING Volunteers will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulations.
  - V. If a criminal record is received from CJIS or STERLING Volunteers, the authorized individual will closely compare the record provided by CJIS with the information on the CORI Form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant to ensure the record belongs to the applicant.
  - VI. If GSSNE is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of the CORI check, the applicant will be notified within 5 days in writing. The applicant shall be provided with a copy of the criminal record and Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England’s Criminal Background Check Policy, advised of the part(s) of the record that make the individual unsuitable for the position, and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the criminal record.

- VII. Applicants challenging the accuracy of the CORI or the national background check record shall be provided a copy of CJIS's Information Concerning the Process in Correcting a Criminal Record. If the CORI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the applicant, Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England will decide based on a comparison of the CORI record and documents provided by the applicant. Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England may contact CJIS and request a detailed search consistent with CJIS policy.
- VIII. If Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England reasonably believes the record belongs to the applicant and is accurate, based on the information as provided in section IV of this policy, then the determination of suitability for the position will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. Relevance of the crime to the position sought
  - b. The nature of the work to be performed
  - c. Time since the conviction
  - d. Age of the candidate at the time of the offense
  - e. Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense
  - f. The number of offenses
  - g. Whether the applicant has pending charges
  - h. Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof
  - i. Any information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the hiring authority
- IX. Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England will notify the applicant of the decision and the basis of the decision in a timely manner.