



Girls Incorporated of Holyoke
P.O. Box 6812 ♦ 6 Open Square Way
Holyoke, MA 01040
(413) 533-0796

Volunteer Policies & Procedures

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Girls Incorporated of Holyoke. The following information describes the process for becoming a volunteer at Girls Inc. and explains the policies and procedures that will insure a successful collaboration. Community volunteers, work study students, undergraduate and graduate interns may apply for volunteer placements at Girls Inc.

Application Process

- Read all Volunteer Opportunity Descriptions and decide which one to apply for
- Complete the **Volunteer Application** form, these can be found on-line at www.girlsincholyoke.org , or at our 6 Open Square Way location
 - Complete Applications will include:
 - Girls Inc. **Volunteer Application**
 - A current **resume**
 - A **cover letter** describing your interest in the specific volunteer opportunity
 - Names and contact information for 3 **references**
- Applications should be completed and emailed to: volunteer@girlsincholyoke.org or mailed to: Girls Inc. Holyoke/ PO Box 6812/Holyoke MA 01041 ATTN: Volunteer Committee
- *Please do not call to inquire about volunteer positions or the status of your application*
- Applications will be reviewed by our volunteer management team
 - All applicants will be contacted within 2 weeks of their initial application
 - If the volunteer management team is interested in pursuing your application you will be asked to schedule an interview and attend a tour or volunteer training

Goals of Our Volunteer Program

- Increase ability to provide thriving programs with low adult to youth ratios
- Increase administrative capacity
- Provide volunteers with training and supervision necessary to gain knowledge and experience in youth development, after-school programming, non-profit administration and education

Placement Requirements

- Completed Application
- Interview
- Clear CORI and DCF Background Check
- Training & Supervision



GIRLS INCORPORATED OF HOLYOKE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR DENY ANY APPLICANT FOR VOLUNTEER PLACEMENTS AT ANY TIME DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS.

Placement Options

All placements offered by Girls Incorporated are either long or short-term and are housed in one of three departments: Administration, After School & Summer Program or Youth Development Programs.

Long-term

These are projects that require a commitment of 4 months or longer. For long-term volunteer positions a Memo of Understanding (MOU) will be written. It will provide a full description of the project to be completed, the length of the project and a timeline for the project. This will be signed by the Girls Inc. supervisor and the volunteer.

Short-term

These are projects that can be completed in a few days and will not extend beyond one week. If, during the course of a short-term project, it is clear that the project can grow, it may be turned into a long-term project and an MOU will be completed.

Administration – Opportunities in this department will support the work of our management team, the Executive Director and the Director of Development & Public Relations

After School & Summer Program – Volunteers will assist in the day-to-day functions of our programs serving girls ages 5 – 13.

Youth Development Programs – Volunteers will support programs serving middle and high school girls.

Placement Schedule

Most volunteer placement opportunities will be filled in September (to coincide with the start of school), February (to capture spring semester) and May (for summer program positions). Please refer to individual opportunities for further information regarding dates of placement.

Supervision & Training

Our goal is to help volunteers learn about the field of youth development and to develop or increase their professional skills in this field. All volunteers who have successfully completed the application process (including an interview and a completed background check) are required to attend a group orientation or a formal orientation with the project supervisor. On-going supervision and training will be scheduled with the project supervisor.

Volunteer Exit & Closure Process

Girls Incorporated of Holyoke reserves the right to terminate a volunteer contract at anytime if the program needs are not being met.

Exit interviews are available to all volunteers at the end of their service commitment. Exit interviews are voluntary and available upon request. Any volunteer interested in an exit interview should speak with their Girls Inc. supervisor.

A volunteer who is absent from their agreed upon hours for 3 or more days will be considered withdrawn from the placement. Staff will attempt to contact the volunteer to formally close the volunteer service.

What is Girls Inc.?

Girls Inc. is a National program with over 80 program sites in the USA and Canada. Girls Incorporated of Holyoke is one of 8 Girls Inc. affiliates in Massachusetts. Our are specially designed to “**inspire all girls to be strong, smart and boldsm**”. This means that our programs have been proven to support the positive development of girls. Each program has been chosen because girls want to succeed. The social barriers they face as young women can be broken with additional learning in leadership development, academic success, diversity education, financial literacy, media literacy, substance abuse prevention and teen pregnancy prevention.

Mission

Girls Incorporated of Holyoke inspires all girls to be strong, smart and bold by providing them the opportunity to develop and achieve their full potential.

Vision for Girls

At Girls Incorporated of Holyoke, our vision for girls is one of an equitable society. We advocate for and provide an environment in which:

- Girls value education as a means to achieve economic independence
- Girls explore career choices that are not limited by their gender
- Girls respect and care for themselves in mind, body, and spirit
- Girls think critically about their economic, social and political environment and actively work for positive change as leaders in the community
- Girls explore their creativity and self-expression in a setting that is supportive and non-threatening
- Girls embrace all types of diversity within and outside of their community



Child Development 101

Note that this is a basic outline and that every girl is different and has her own development pace.

Ages 4 – 8

- very active and have gained control over their bodies
- moving towards self direction and control
- become more selective in choosing friends
- large muscle control superior to fine motor coordination
- begin to become sensitive to others feelings
- go through phases of self reflection and seriousness with more thinking than talking
- eager to please, like to help, enjoy responsibility and want to do well
- want to know what things are for and what to do with them

Ages 9 – 11

- quarrels become less frequent
- sensitive to criticism and ridicule
- as they approach puberty, increased interest and concern about sex
- excellent fine and gross motor skills
- peer group experienced as powerful and a source of behavior standards
- exercise own autonomy
- need understanding, but also firmness
- emotions tend to be extreme, highs and lows

Ages 12 – 14

- very concerned about their physical appearance (being too fat, too thin, too tall etc.)
- defy adult authority
- greatly concerned with what others think of them
- moods change dramatically
- certain amount of awkwardness exists; probably due to sudden growth and self consciousness
- may exhibit *acting-out* behavior against adult rules

Ages 15 – 18

- periods of storm and stress emotionally
- peer group very powerful, reaches it's height of influence
- independence very important
- a better understanding of them self

General Responsibilities & Boundaries with Girls

A volunteer is responsible for:

- being yourself
- being honest
- being understanding and patient
- being reliable and responsible
- providing support
- being a facilitator of simple life experiences
- showing respect
- being open and flexible
- HAVING FUN!
- accepting the girls for who they are
- allowing them to express their thoughts and feelings
- helping them to evaluate alternatives and make their own decisions
- showing sincerity and commitment
- helping girls to feel like they are a part of the organization by attending agency events/activities
- speaking with your Program Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns

A volunteer is not responsible for:

- sharing or teaching personal values (ex: reproductive rights, feeling about sexual orientation, politics)
- solving girls' life problems
- solving her family's problems
- babysitting
- spying on girls for parents/guardians, agencies or anyone else
- giving final authority on what is right or wrong
- being a social worker

Volunteers and interns should not contact Girls Inc. members after program hours or share personal contact information with them. **At no time should girls be given personal phone numbers, on-line social networking contact information (such as MySpace or Facebook).** This policy protects both the Girls Inc. member and the volunteer.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer you may be privy to confidential information about our members and/or their families. The sharing of information concerning a member should occur only with a Program Coordinator. Under no circumstances should this information be discussed with anyone except persons fully authorized by staff. You should never discuss our members in public. Doing so is a violation of the agency's policy on confidentiality and of our members' privacy.

Use discretion when talking about one of our members:

- in training/development sessions, use her first name only
- do not reveal identifying information about her family

Confidentiality is waived only when there are specific situations that warrant it:

- Indications that a member is at risk of harming herself, harming someone else or of being harmed. In these situations immediately contact your Program Director
- Any 'secret' about child abuse or behavior that poses a risk to a girl or another person. A volunteer is bound to report such a disclosure; therefore you cannot keep this a secret. *Do not make promises that you cannot keep!*

Mandated Reporting (51a)

All Girls Inc. staff and volunteers are considered mandated reporters. If a girl shares that she has experienced a situation that puts her safety at risk, it is the volunteers responsibility to immediately report this to a staff member or the director.

Behavior Management

Girls Inc. staff members and volunteers support girls in learning about behavior management and positive conflict resolution. We encourage and support girls to learn to manage their own behavior and to resolve their own conflicts in a peaceful manner.

Volunteers are expected to support a safe environment for girls. If a conflict or behavior becomes an issue, volunteers should seek out the nearest staff to support the situation. Volunteers should also be prepared to convey to staff in detail any situation that occurs in group. This will help staff with follow-up at a later date.

The following language appears in the Girls Inc. membership handbook, volunteers should be familiar with these expectations and guidelines:

If girls are experiencing a conflict, are angry, or feel harassed they should speak to a staff member immediately. Staff are always available to help girls figure out how to resolve a conflict. Staff can help girls mediate a problem or discuss how to move past a conflict.

Consequences

When a Girls Inc. staff member needs to intervene in a conflict or behavior issue, we ensure that our consequences match the behavior.

1st offense: incident is discussed with girl

2nd offense: meeting scheduled with girl

3rd offense: girl is suspended and possibly terminated from programs. A meeting or phone conference is scheduled with girl and her parent(s) /guardian(s)

Behaviors that will result in immediate suspension:

Arriving under the influence of a controlled substance

Possessing a controlled substance or weapon

Verbal harassment (name-calling, verbal threats, etc.)

Fighting

Theft

Deliberate destruction of property

Telephone and Cell phone Use

Girls Inc. phones are intended for business use only. Volunteers should limit the use of cell phones while serving their volunteer hours. All staff and volunteers should respect the same phone guidelines set forth for girls: cell phones should be turned off during program time.

Dress code

Volunteers should wear clean, neat clothes and footwear which are appropriate for the volunteer position. Our clothing sets a tone for the girls and community members who we interact with on a daily basis.

The following is the dress code for members of Girls Inc.:

All girls and staff are expected to wear appropriate and respectful clothing. Girls should arrive at program ready to fully participate in activities. What you are wearing shouldn't keep you from participating in an activity.

This means:

No flip flops or high heels

No see-through or revealing clothing (belly shirts, tube tops, exposed bras or short shorts)

No clothing with offensive language or symbols encouraging the use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco

No clothing associated with gangs

Volunteer Use of Computers

If a volunteer opportunity requires the use of a computer the volunteer will be given a password and user name. Computers are for Girls Inc. business use only. Girls Inc. reserves the right to monitor all inbound and outbound email, internet usage, voicemail and computer use, including all files stored on computers without prior notice. Volunteers should not download any materials or programs without prior approval from the department director. Volunteers should not load illegal or unapproved software onto any computers.

If volunteers are assigned to work with girls in a computer lab they need to be familiar with the computer guidelines that appear in the Girls Inc. membership handbook:

Computer Policy

The Girls Inc. computer lab is available to Girl Inc. programs for the purpose of research, media projects and technology workshops.

Unsupervised use of any computer is not permitted. *If a girl needs access to a computer, she must ask staff 2 days in advance and accommodations will be made.* Girls must tell staff their intentions for using the computer. Girls should only use staff computers with the permission of a staff member.

All girls must attend a computer training before using the computer lab and internet.

Computer Lab Rules

Girls should select a computer station and sign in to the log at that station.

Always ask staff if you have a question – staff will always be with girls in the lab to support girls with their use of computers. Staff will also make sure that girls are following these guidelines.

No food or drink is permitted in the computer lab.

Internet Rules and Safety

Girls Inc. is committed to internet safety. Internet usage is not a regular part of program time. All internet time is closely monitored by staff. To ensure internet safety, girls must follow these rules. *Failure to follow these guidelines could result in the loss of computer privileges or further action.*

NEVER give out personal information to someone you don't know. Don't give out your last name, address, phone number, the town where you live, the school you go to, your parents' names, your birthday, etc. Some *safe* sites will ask for this information. *If the site is approved by staff, you may give out this information.*

Chatting, "IMing" is not allowed unless it is part of a staff-run workshop. AIM, Yahoo Chat and any other chat programs are NOT allowed.

If you would get in trouble for saying it out loud, then you shouldn't be typing it either.

Tell staff if people you don't know e-mail your account or try to chat with you. *Don't talk to strangers.*

Stay on web pages that have been approved by staff and the group.

Think before you post. Anything you post (to a blog, in e-mail, or to a discussion board) not only can be seen by others but can easily be copied and stored. It's great to share; just make sure it's something you want people to see.

Do not download or install any programs without asking staff and receiving permission. Do not change computer settings.

If you are unsure whether something is allowed, ASK before doing it.

Vehicle use

Volunteers should not transport girls during or after program time in personal vehicles. If a volunteer opportunity requires the use of transportation, a program director will provide you with all necessary paperwork.

Attendance

Volunteers, in collaboration with the program director, should develop a schedule of dates that they are available for program support. Volunteers are expected to be on time and consistent with their schedules. If a volunteer can not be present on a certain date, they must notify their Girls Inc. supervisor.

Snow Day Policy

In the event that the Holyoke Public Schools are closed due to weather, all Girls Inc. programming will be cancelled with the exception of the After-School Program. This also applies to programming that we hold in other towns. For example, if the Holyoke Schools are closed but the Chicopee Schools are not, programming in Chicopee is still cancelled. Your supervisor will call you to inform you of our closing status.

Girls Inc. Curricula

The use of all Girls Inc. curricula is dependent on my status as a volunteer and may be used only in the manner as authorized by Girls Incorporated of Holyoke. All program materials are the sole property of Girls Inc. and may not be altered, sold, loaned reproduced or otherwise made available to any other person or group without prior written consent of Girls Incorporated.

Printed Materials, Brochures, Flyers and Letters

Volunteers should have all flyers, brochures and letters approved by the program director before they are used for outreach purposes. Girls Inc. has very formal branding guidelines regarding their mission, vision and logos. Volunteers can ask for a copy of these guidelines to guide development of printed materials.

Policy & Procedures Agreement

I, _____ have received and read the Volunteer Policy & Procedures manual and agree to follow the policies set forth in this document.
(print full name)

(Volunteer Signature)

(Date)