



**VOLUNTEER  
HANDBOOK**

# **GIRLS INC. of CHATTANOOGA**

**Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold.**

**girls  
inc.**

**2020**



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## **ABOUT GIRLS INC. OF CHATTANOOGA**

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### **About the Volunteer Handbook**

This handbook contains everything you need to know about the Girls Inc. of Chattanooga volunteer experience! It is required reading for all our volunteers and is intended to ensure that you and the Girls Inc. participants have a great experience. It will guide you through signing up, as well as our rules and procedures. Use the volunteer opportunity descriptions to determine what type of position best suits your interests and availability.

### **Mission**

Girls Inc. of Chattanooga inspires and equips all girls to be strong, smart, and bold leaders in their families, their community and society. We provide research-based programming and life-changing support that helps girls overcome gender, economic, and social barriers so they may see college as attainable, resist peer pressure and explore non-traditional career fields.

### **History**

Girls Inc. of Chattanooga was founded in 1961 to create a safe, pro-girl environment where girls can explore and celebrate their strengths, develop self-confidence and plan for their future. Celebrating our 60th year of service in 2021, our programming and support continues to help girls in the community overcome barriers in pursuit of their academic and personal goals.

### **Population Served**

Girls Inc. of Chattanooga provides programming to all girls, ages 6-18, with a focus on those girls who need us most. On average, we support 750 girls with semester-long programs and school break camps. Each year, we make intentional efforts to serve more girls in more areas. Many of those girls return repeatedly to participate in multiple programs, semester after semester.

### **Why Volunteer?**

Whether volunteering in the classroom, or aiding operations, Girls Inc. volunteers are essential to making a difference in girls' lives. Program volunteers serve as positive role models for girls - by listening, guiding and encouraging girls. Operational volunteers donate their time to the organization and governance, so that we can continue to deliver high-quality programming. Corporate and group volunteer opportunities can be tailored to meet the skills and interests of your organization and can range from painting classrooms to providing one-on-one reading support.

## 1. GETTING STARTED

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### 1. Complete Online Volunteer Application

Complete our online application, at <http://www.girlsincofchatt.org/volunteer/>. The application also includes our volunteer confidentiality agreement. By submitting the application, you accept the volunteer terms of confidentiality.

### 2. Read Volunteer Handbook

Please review the Volunteer Handbook. Volunteers are required to be familiar with the Handbook, it is your resource for everything you need, from choosing a relevant position, to knowing the rules and procedures.

### 3. Volunteer Orientation

Sign up for Volunteer Orientation. At this Girls Inc. 101 session, you will be introduced to Girls Inc.'s mission, values and structure. Our Volunteer Manager, Summer Elliott, will discuss our programming, rules and procedures for volunteers. Orientation sessions are hosted throughout the school semester. Visit <http://girlsincofchatt.org/event> to check the schedule for upcoming orientations. Please be sure to complete your Volunteer Application prior to registering for orientation.

### 4. Participate in Background Check

Program volunteers are required to participate in a background check before interacting with Girls Inc. participants. Within one week of attending Volunteer Orientation, you will receive an invitation to complete a background check through [Verified Volunteers](#). This request will be sent to the e-mail you provided on the Volunteer Application.

Follow the instructions provided by the Verified Volunteers system. Because Girls Inc. of Chattanooga strives to provide low-cost programming to all girls, volunteers have the option to pay the fee of \$13 to complete the background check, although this is not required.

### 5. Sign-up for Your Volunteer Shift

After Girls Inc. receives the results of your background check, the Volunteer Manager will e-mail you about the outcome and introduce you to your volunteer supervisor. Together you will schedule your shifts for the current program semester.

### 6. Arrive Promptly to Volunteer for Your Shift

Please arrive at your scheduled time and report to the Program Coordinator to sign in. At the end of your volunteer shift, please take a moment to log your volunteer hours at <https://www.girlsincofchatt.org/volunteer-hours/>

## 2. VALUES & GOALS

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All Girls Inc. programming should satisfy the six essential elements of the Girls Inc.

Experience:

### 1. Mentoring Relationships

Trusting, mentoring relationship with trained staff and volunteers are essential in helping young people attain skills that lead to success, especially for girls growing up in low-income communities. Girls Inc. volunteer mentors are expected to uphold an environment in which girls feel that adults can help them, respect them and listen to them.

### 2. Pro-girl, Girls-only Environment

A pro-girl, girls-only environment is one that is physically, socially and emotionally safe, and presents the consistent message that girls can succeed. Girls Inc. staff and volunteers convey the message that girls can make a difference in the world and be leaders.

### 3. Intentional Programming

Holistic, compensatory and intentional programming exposes girls to a variety of experiences and options they might otherwise not have had access to. Girls Inc. programs are delivered in an organized setting where girls get a chance to create and build things. Volunteer mentors are expected to help ensure this organized and stimulating environment is maintained.

### 4. Interactive Activities

Interactive activities develop and promote girls' critical thinking skills. Activities at Girls Inc. are designed to put girls in charge of their learning, allow them to constantly try new activities and reflect upon their learnings.

### 5. Research Based Curricula

Girls Inc. is committed to providing girls with relevant, field-tested, and research-based curricula. Girls Inc. program leaders utilize both informal and formal program quality assessment methods, including the facilitation of feedback from girls, families, staff and volunteers.

### 6. Sustained Exposure

Young people with regular, sustained exposure to development programs exhibit better civic engagement, social competencies and academic performance, among other things. Volunteer mentors are encouraged to create mentoring relationships with girls that will encourage them to stay in programming.

## 3. PROGRAMS

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People from all vocational backgrounds are encouraged to volunteer as Girls Inc. mentors – there is something for everyone! The guide below is intended to help volunteers understand the different programs, and where their individual skill sets could be most useful.

### Elementary Programs

During Elementary Programs, Girls receive structured homework help and academic enrichment to support formal education; engage in community service, public speaking, art, and physical fitness; and develop life skills like critical thinking and conflict resolution, along with confidence, and character building.

- **The Bookworm Club** The Girls Inc. Literacy Initiative strives to improve the literacy skills of girls in 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade by promoting a love of reading and providing fun and engaging programming that supports the school-based instruction that girls receive. Girls build developmentally appropriate reading skills so that they are equipped to succeed in school and participate more effectively in the Girls Inc. Experience.
- **Club LIT(eracy)** A locally developed afterschool literacy program for girls in 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades. Club LIT is designed to keep girls engaged in reading through individual and peer group literacy activities in comprehension and fluency, strengthen their communication skills; both verbal and written and provide an environment that promotes a love for reading. This book club setting will allow girls to explore life and reading as they navigate through life experiences.
- **Discovery Girl** A locally designed program for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade girls. This program will equip girls to strengthen their character through conflict resolution, building healthy relationships, goal setting and developing resiliency for the stages ahead.
- **Tech-Know Girl Club** A locally designed afterschool STEM program for 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>. Through the use of research, hands-on exploration, and teamwork, girls look at science, technology, engineering, and math in a way that is relevant and engaging. Tech-Know Girl empowers girls to enjoy subject matter they might not typically have time to enjoy in a traditional classroom setting and consider career paths they might not otherwise have considered.
- **Traditional After-School** The traditional program for 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade girls uses Girls Inc. national curriculum to ensure our participants learn essential life skills such as healthy sexuality, economic independence, leadership, advocacy and healthy living. This is the longest running of our after-school programs inspiring girls year after year to be strong, smart and bold.

## Middle School Programs

During Middle School Programs, girls develop workplace readiness skills and explore career and college opportunities; learn skills needed to navigate social media, body image, bullying and stereotyping; explore the STEM field through fun, project-based learning.

- **Girls Take Charge** A locally developed program for middle school teens. Girls will have the opportunity to learn about leadership, character development, practice healthy relationships, develop goal setting skills, receive job exposure, and ultimately grow in a better understanding of who they are.
- **Girl E3** An entrepreneurship project-based program encouraging middle school participants to think outside the box. Girl E3 promotes economic mobility by targeting and teaching the skills needed to succeed. Girls will learn the importance of budgeting, investing, saving and the tools needed to foster financial independence.
- **Exploratory Girl** A project-based afterschool program for middle school girls designed to inspire and increase girls' interest in STEAM. Girls will explore a variety of scientific specializations to enrich their current learning and accelerate their future career goals. Through Exploratory Girl, girls will develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills, advance innovation, and expand leadership skills.

## High School Programs

During high school programs, girls develop the strong foundation necessary for success in high school, college and future careers; focus on healthy relationships and behaviors that affect teenager (both girls and boys); learn from positive role models, mentors and women who have changed history.

- **SHE: She Can, She Will** Teens learn about women who have made an impact throughout history and in their communities. Teens are the selection committee for the annual UnBought & UnBossed Awards. They will select an honored woman from community to be their mentor, many of the mentor/mentee relationships continue beyond the program.
- **IMPACT** A peer-to-peer education program that focuses on healthy relationships and behaviors that affect teenagers (both girls and boys).
- **Road to College and Career Success** Helps girls develop the strong foundation necessary for success in high school and college.

## 4. VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

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Please note that all opportunities listed below will be uncompensated.

### Program Volunteers

Program volunteers, in contrast to Operational volunteers, engage directly with girl participants in a classroom setting. They can fill a variety of roles such as Volunteer Mentors, Program Interns and various one-time opportunities.

#### 1. Volunteer Mentors

Volunteer mentors are an integral part of Girls Inc. programming, and serve as important positive role models in a girls-only environment. Volunteer mentors attend a minimum of 8 sessions per school year, each session lasting around 1.5 to 2 hours. During the sessions, volunteer mentors will assist the Program Coordinator in delivering Girls Inc. programming, and work directly with girl participants. Volunteer mentors do not maintain contact with the girls outside of the afterschool program.

##### Key responsibilities include:

- Serve as adult mentor
- Engage in educational activities with girl participants
- Provide support and guidance to help girls identify their own strengths and resources
- Build a trusting relationship with girls by sharing experience and giving advice
- Assist with coordinating and troubleshooting in a classroom setting
- Contribute specific professional skillsets to activities i.e. coding expertise, job and college counseling
- Provide occasional tutoring and homework help

##### Requirements:

- Punctual and reliable attendance
- Attend Volunteer Orientation
- Read and sign Volunteer Agreement
- Must be at least 15 years old
- Verified Volunteers background check (if 18+ years of age)

#### 2. Program Interns

Program Intern is an unpaid position designed for students, at the undergraduate or graduate level, who want to gain experience and academic credit in the field of education and/or social work. After receiving comprehensive training and shadowing the Program Coordinator, the Program Intern will be allowed to independently lead afterschool programming. Program Interns



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are expected to commit for **30-40 hours per semester** and **weekly in-person/telephone meeting with Program Coordinator.**

## **Key responsibilities include:**

- Serve as a positive role model for girls and create a pro-girl environment where all girls are welcome
- Mentor girls to make their own positive choices
- Lead fun, hands-on lesson plans and activities that deliver on the Girls Inc. experience
- Work in partnership with principals, counselors, sight contacts and other individuals who are essential to sustaining an outreach program model
- Seek opportunities to learn from the Program Coordinator and deepen your knowledge of the Girls Inc. program model
- Fully participate in program training and shadowing to onboard and learn about the Girls Inc. experience and ideals
- Commit to lead two program classes within a semester
- Meet weekly with the Program Coordinator in person or via conference call at the discretion of the Program Coordinator to report on successes, barriers and critical issues

## **Requirements:**

- Ability to commit to 30 hours minimum per semester
- Enrollment in undergraduate or graduate degree program in relevant field and required to complete internship for academic credit
- Independent means of transportation to and from sites
- Previous experience working or volunteering with children ages 6-18
- Verified Volunteers Background Check

## **3. UnBought & UnBossed Mentors**

UnBought and UnBossed Mentors are women who have been nominated by community members for their career or community achievements. Each woman is selected as a mentor by a participant in the SHE: She Can, She Will program. UnBought and UnBossed Mentors are announced in early December and are expected to work with their "mentee" until the UnBought and UnBossed Awards (mid-April). At this community luncheon, each girl will present their honoree. Many mentors maintain relationships and communication with their "mentee" well beyond the program. UnBought and Un Bossed Mentors become part of an elite group of more than 150 women who have been honored in the past.

## **Key responsibilities include:**

- Serve as a positive role model for your mentee
- Build a lasting, trusting relationship and create a safe space for your mentee to take risks and push themselves
- Support, guide, and encourage your mentee to set, strive for, and achieve worthy goals for themselves
- Listen, and provide guidance and insight to mentee

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## Requirements:

- Ability to commit to 40 hours minimum between December and April
- Nomination and selection as UnBought & UnBossed Honoree
- Verified Volunteers Background Check

## 4. Guest Speaker

One-time volunteers, specifically professionals from the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, are invited as guest speakers. Here, they may talk about the company they work for and their specific role. More importantly, they answer questions from the girls and provide them with valuable professional insight into fields that have to date been non-traditional for women.

## Operational Volunteers

Operational volunteers are involved in running to organizational side of Girls Inc. of Chattanooga. These include the Board of Directors, Committee Members, and ad-hoc volunteers.

### 1. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is our governing body and is responsible for the financial and organizational governance of Girls Inc. of Chattanooga. Our board members are often experienced professional men and women with extensive personal, professional and non-profit networks. The Board is comprised of Executive Members (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Governance and Secretary) and Committee Leads on the following committees:

- Advancement
- Finance
- Governance

#### Key responsibilities include:

- Support the organization's mission and purpose
- Provide financial, legal and ethical oversight
- Ensure effective organizational planning
- Determine, monitor and strengthen the organization's programs and services
- Boost the organization's public standing and reputation

#### Requirements:

- Ability to commit 8-12 hours per month for meetings and activities
- Participation in monthly board meetings in person or via telephone
- Commitment to donate to the organization-dues are \$1,000 per fiscal year
- Fill out a Board Application

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## **2. Committee Members**

Committee members are dedicated members of the Girls Inc. community who have professional expertise in a certain area and want to devote their skills to a specific committee or committees. Committees include: Finance, Advancement and UnBought and UnBossed committees.

### **Key responsibilities include:**

- Effectively collaborating with committee leadership on projects
- Attending once-monthly meetings or conference calls

### **Requirements:**

- Ability to commit 6-8 hours per month to the committee

## **3. Office Volunteers**

Office volunteers are volunteers who assist in the administrative operations of the organization. Responsibilities can be tailored to the volunteer's skills and interests. Responsibilities may include data entry, copy editing, social media and other administrative tasks as assigned.

## **4. Event Volunteers**

Girls Inc. of Chattanooga holds several community events throughout the year, from our Annual UnBought and UnBossed Awards to smaller "friendraisers" and donor appreciation events. There are day-of volunteer opportunities for:

- Event set up
- Registration tables
- Ushers

Those interested in a more long-term commitment to events are welcome to apply to join the Advancement committee or UnBought and UnBossed committee.

## **Corporate and Community Volunteers**

Corporate and community groups can participate in one-time or ongoing volunteer opportunities. We work with businesses, church groups, sororities, athletic teams and more to develop specific volunteer programs for each organization. For more information on developing a volunteer program for your group, contact Cindy Rix at [crix@girlsincofchatt.org](mailto:crix@girlsincofchatt.org)

## 5. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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### Time Commitment and Attendance

At Girls Inc., we build trusting relationships with participants through punctuality and consistency. Therefore, program volunteers are expected to:

- Attend a minimum of 8 sessions per academic year
- Arrive in a timely fashion
- Cancel attendance at least one day in advance of the session
- Read all communications by email or text

### Confidentiality

Girls Inc. is committed to keeping staff, volunteer and participant information confidential. Therefore, we ask volunteers to NOT share any of the following under any circumstances:

- Names
- Phone numbers, e-mail addresses, addresses
- Sign-up forms
- All other confidential personal information
- Curriculum material (this is protected by copyright)

Volunteers are permitted to take photos of girls during the session after verifying with the Program Coordinator that the girls in question have a signed photo release form. These photos may NOT be shared on any public platform.

### Boundaries

It is important that volunteers maintain professional boundaries in order to ensure a trusting relationship.

- We ask that volunteers do not allow girls to use their cell phones.
- Except for UnBought and UnBossed mentors, volunteers are not permitted to exchange phone numbers and social media information with girls, and are not permitted to communicate by text, calls or social media before, during or after the program.
- Volunteers are expected to discuss only age-appropriate topics with the girls: follow the lead of the curriculum. If in doubt, ask.
- Maintain physical boundaries with participants. Do not have girls sit on your lap, do not pick up the girls or carry them on your back. Avoid excessive hugging or holding hands.
- Volunteers are not permitted to spend personal time with participants outside of structured programs and events, except for UnBought and UnBossed mentors.
- Volunteer mentors are expected to assist the Program Coordinator as directed. The Program Coordinator maintains the authority to direct volunteers' actions.

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- If at any time a volunteer feels uncomfortable—hears or sees information that makes them uneasy—they should speak to program staff immediately.

## Mandatory Reporting

- Our Program Coordinators and Program Interns are mandatory reporters and have been trained as such. If a volunteer suspects child abuse, he/she must report the suspicion to the Program Coordinator immediately.
- The main types of abuse are physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Warning signs include seeming excessively withdrawn or anxious, extreme behavior (extremely compliant, demanding, passive aggressive), frequent and unexplained injuries, and more. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect.htm>
- If a child confides in you, it is best to remain calm and not show shock or disgust and then report the incident immediately. Do not attempt to make any promises or say that you won't tell anyone. Please report to a site supervisor immediately!

## Program Site Policies

- Volunteers are expected to arrange their own transportation to the program sites.
- If you are unable to attend your scheduled volunteering session, you must cancel your shift, *at the latest*, one day before.
- Please bring a driver's license/other valid photo identification to the site.
- **Personal belongings:** Volunteer mentors are asked not to bring personal belongings to the school site. Girls Inc. of Chattanooga will not be held responsible for any belongings lost or stolen during the volunteering session.
- **Drugs and Alcohol:** illegal drugs, alcohol and smoking are strictly prohibited in and around volunteering sites.
- Volunteers are not allowed to bring food items to the session.
- To maintain full attention and focus on the girls, volunteers are asked not to use their phones to call or text at any time during the session.
- **Injuries:** Girls Inc. of Chattanooga is not responsible for any injuries occurring on-site. If an injury occurs, you must immediately notify the Program Coordinator.

## Social Media Policy

In compliance with confidentiality guidelines, we ask volunteer mentors to adhere by the following rules:

- If you want to take a picture of a girl participants, please ask the Program Coordinator whether she has a signed photo release form beforehand.
- Please do not post any photos to your personal social media pages, and do not share them with individuals outside of Girls In. of Chattanooga
- Please do not share any personal information about the girls, or about other volunteers, on your personal social media pages and/or chats. This includes names, addresses, emails, phone numbers, etc.
- Please do not identify the locations the school sites nor geo-tag your location in real time as this is a safety hazard

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of Chattanooga

## Contact

For questions about volunteering,  
please contact:

### **Summer Elliott**

Volunteer Manager/Program  
Coordinator

*Girls Inc. of Chattanooga*

[selliott@girlsincofchatt.org](mailto:selliott@girlsincofchatt.org)

For questions about corporate or  
group volunteer projects, please  
contact:

### **Cindy Rix**

Chief Development Officer

*Girls Inc. of Chattanooga*

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