

National Council Delegate Criteria & FAQs

GSUSA'S 57th National Convention

July 20-25, 2026

Washington D.C

Overview

Every three years, members from each council in Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) gather to conduct the business of the National Board of Directors. Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey is electing 11 National Council Delegates for the 2025-2028 term. This includes attending the National Convention in Washington, D.C. in July 2026 to represent GSHNJ at the National Council Session and attend adjacent festivities.

Apply to become a National Council Delegate by January 17, 2025:

Apply Now 

Commitment

Nominees must be willing to commit to:

- Participating as a National Council Delegate for the entire three-year period of 2025-2028.
- Attending all National Council meetings, whether virtual or in-person, and reporting National Council actions to Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey members.
- Attending the National Council Session July 20-25, 2026, and travel days July 19 and 26, 2026.
- Attending all GSHNJ Annual Meetings and Special Meetings of the Council as a voting member of the council.
- Attending all local orientation and preparation meetings prior to National Convention.
- Participating in all GSUSA preparatory webinars, learning sessions, and pre-reads
- The time commitment: approximately 3 hours per month from February 2025 - June 2025 and then 10 hours per month leading up to the National Council Session
- Studying the National Council Meeting agenda.
- Understanding Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey's stance on actions to be taken by the National Council.
- Obtaining a broad view of opinions and voices of members throughout the council.
- Knowing and understanding parliamentary procedures.

Eligibility Requirements

- A citizen of the United States of America.
- A registered member of Girl Scouts of the USA and active in Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey for the entire 3-year term.
- 14 years of age or older by April 5, 2025.
- Able to represent the points of view of various ethnic, racial, educational, civic, religious, and socioeconomic groups.
- Willing to prepare thoroughly on the issues and business that will come before the National Council.
- Confident public speaker, able to contribute in small and very large group settings.

Selection Criteria

All National Council Delegates are evaluated based on their ability to meet these criteria, which are:

Strategic Thinking	Future focused: Demonstrates ability to consider long-term goals and objectives that advance the Girl Scout movement as a whole
Communication	Expresses ideas and facts clearly
Experience	Has participated in council meetings; effectively represents different points of view
Knowledge of local and national Girl Scouting	Has knowledge of Girl Scouts both at the local level and the wider movement
Decision-making	Able to analyze decisions from a council and national perspective, and to weigh options and consider ramifications.
Adaptability	Demonstrates flexibility when new information is brought forward (comes to the session informed, but not instructed)
Team Building	Promotes partnerships and is committed to the team approach; will support decisions made by the National Council

FAQs

What is the timeline for the National Council Delegate selection process?

December 20, 2024	National Council Delegate application opens
January 17, 2025	National Council Delegate application closes
Late January, 2025	Selected candidates interview with GSHNJ's Board Development Committee
February 7, 2025	Delegation slate finalized
February 10, 2025	Delegation slate notified
April 5, 2025	Delegates and alternates elected at 17th Annual Meeting

Where can I find more information about becoming a delegate?

Contact Leslie-ann Lukoma at llukoma@gshnj.org.

When is the application open to apply?

You can submit applications from **December 20, 2024, through January 17, 2025.**

Where and when will the next NCS & Convention take place?

The 57th National Council Session (NCS) and Convention will take place from July 20-25, 2026 in Washington DC.

How many delegates are selected?

Delegate selection is based on a formula provided by GSUSA and is a function of our total youth membership number. GSHNJ's delegation will include 11 Delegates and 11 Alternates for the 2025-2028 term. Two delegate positions are automatically filled by the CEO and the Board Chair; the rest of the positions are elected youth and adult members. GSHNJ strives to balance the number of adult and youth Delegates and Alternates. The total National Council delegation includes over 800 individuals from all of the 111 regional councils plus USAGSO and GSUSA's National Board of Directors and National Board Development Committee.

What is the difference between a Delegate and an Alternate?

Alternates are elected to step into a Delegate role should a Delegate no longer be able to serve. At GSHNJ, alternates are expected to participate fully, just as a Delegate would. Only Delegates may cast votes at Annual Meetings or National Council Sessions. Historically, all Alternates have attended National Convention as part of GSHNJ's delegation, but it is not guaranteed in 2026.

How old does a member need to be to apply?

Members must be 14 or older by April 5, 2025, to apply to be a delegate.

If a Girl Scout is 18 during the 3-year term, can they still apply?

Yes, Girl Scouts that are 18 and/or graduating high school in 2025-2028 can apply as a National Council Delegates; their membership will change from “youth” to “adult” as they age.

Does a Girl Scout need to have earned the Gold Award to apply?

No, the Gold Award, while always an asset, is not a requirement for National Council Delegates. We focus on leadership experience, team/group work, comfortability with public speaking, participation in difficult conversations, and other similar qualities and/or experiences.

What does it cost to attend if I’m a delegate?

GSHNJ covers all costs associated with service as a National Council Delegate.

Why did GSUSA decide to have Convention in July?

We have heard from our members that July is a better time to hold the National Council Session as it reduces the need for youth delegates and attendees to miss school. By offering this event in July, when most of the country is on summer break, we hope to be able to provide an opportunity for more Girl Scouts to attend, participate, and witness the democratic process.

The 2023 Girl Scout Convention was already held on the East Coast. Why did you choose Washington, DC, for 2026?

2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the USA. Across the country, celebrations are being planned to make it the largest, most inclusive commemoration in history.

What better place to hold our convention than Washington, DC? As the capital of our nation, Washington, DC, is the symbolic and literal representation of people who live in every corner of the United States. Similarly, National Council Session is where delegates representing every corner of the Girl Scout Movement come together to discuss, debate, and make Girl Scout history.

Terminology

We wanted to present some common terms we use throughout this process as some may be new to you and/or we use acronyms when presenting or discussing in emails. There's no quiz – we promise! However, we'd like everyone to be knowledgeable about how everything is connected and what these terms mean as they are important if you become a delegate.

Convention

GSUSA hosts a convention every three years in different parts of the country where all Girl Scout members can attend and be with their Girl Scout sisters to celebrate, attend workshops, and experience the gathering of over 10,000 attendees. This takes place the same week as National Council Session, but is technically a separate event and lasts about 2-3 days. Phenom! was the THEME of the convention in 2023, but often you'll hear us and GSUSA say just "Phenom!" when we do, we are speaking about the convention itself.

Governance

A system that provides a framework for managing organizations. It identifies who can make decisions and who has the authority to act on behalf of the organization. For Girl Scouts, that is our GSUSA Board and National Council. We use this system to create and vote on proposals that can create change to our Girl Scout Constitution & Policies.

National Council

The membership of the National Council consists of:

1. Delegates elected by Girl Scout Councils
2. Delegates from USA Girl Scouts Overseas
3. Members of the National Board of Directors
4. Members of the National Board Development Committee

National Council Session (NCS)

We often use the acronym NCS to describe the National Council Session, where members of the National Council gather every three years to elect a National Board of Directors and National Board Development Committee. We also amend the Girl Scout Constitution, establish requirements for credentials, act on proposals and overall influence the strategic direction of the Movement by providing guidance to the National Board. In so many words, you have the ability to use your voice to determine the future of Girl Scouts as a movement. This process takes place over three days of business meetings – we recommend lots of snacks and water!

National Delegate

A member of a local Girl Scout council, for us that's Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey, who represents their members as part of the National Council. A delegate holds their role for a term of three years that aligns with a specific National Council Session & Convention.

Parliamentary Procedure

The accepted rules, ethics, and customs governing meetings of an assembly or organization. This allows orderly deliberation. Specifically, regarding voting on proposals, but as a guiding set of rules on how we run the National Council Session. GSHNJ provides additional training on this and we practice what it may be like during the National Council Session. GSUSA offers modules and live webinars for delegates in preparation for NCS.

Proposal

Another word for a main motion. What does that mean? It's a fancy term for a suggestion made to a group. For Girl Scouts this is specific to our governance, Girl Scout Constitution and policies all found in our Basic Blue Book of Documents. Councils and the National Board can submit proposals to be reviewed and adopted for the National Council Session. Delegates voted on seven proposals at the 2023 NCS.

Triennium

This means a three-year period. GSUSA hosts NCS and Convention every triennium (every three years).