

Action Guide on Hurricane Harvey Relief for Girl Scout Council Leaders

Introduction

In response to recent severe weather in the central southern states, Girl Scouts has created this guide to inform council leaders of opportunities to provide disaster relief for Girl Scout councils specifically impacted by Hurricane Harvey. The guide also highlights general disaster relief recommendations and fundraising policies that inform these efforts and serves as a future council reference.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is split into three sections. Each includes links to online resources and reference information related to Girl Scouts' response to Hurricane Harvey disaster recovery efforts.

Section 1: READ THIS FIRST outlines important policies and guidelines in place to inform Girl Scout disaster relief efforts related to Hurricane Harvey.

Section 2: Supporting Councils Impacted by Hurricane Harvey provides links to affected councils' websites and suggestions for mobilizing efforts that Girl Scouts can take part in to support impacted councils.

Section 3: Girl Scout Disaster-Relief Resources highlights policy resources and reference tools that councils can use during any Girl Scout disaster preparedness or relief activities, both now and in the future.

Section 1: READ THIS FIRST

Council leaders play a key role in guiding local council Hurricane Harvey relief efforts to ensure the following:

1. Girl Scouts adhere to established policies and safety standards in all disaster relief activities.
2. Disaster relief efforts result in the most good being done, while minimizing the possibility of negative consequences for a council.

NOTE: As of September 6, 2017, through the 2018 membership year, the fundraising restrictions have been lifted by the GSUSA Board of Directors to enable Girl Scouts to raise money for the four councils directly impacted by Hurricane Harvey. Those who choose to fundraise must do so with the sole intention of providing membership scholarships to affected girls. Such scholarships are typically defined as dues, uniforms, credentials (e.g., insignia worn on uniforms), and Girl Scout materials.

The following table provides a quick summary of do's and don'ts for Girl Scout councils mobilizing to provide disaster relief.

Girl Scout Disaster Relief At-a-Glance	
Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus relief efforts specifically on the needs of Girl Scouts and impacted Girl Scout councils.• Honor GSUSA's and local councils' policies (know when any policy exceptions are made).• Give impacted councils time and space to assess damages and communicate their needs.• Ensure all support is based on known council needs and/or specific requests from councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fundraise for organizations other than Girl Scouts (when identifying as Girl Scouts).• Assume what a council or its girls need—find out the best way to help by asking.• Collect or send supplies or donations that may pose logistical (e.g., storage) or other burdens on an impacted council or its community.• Pursue relief efforts to the detriment of your own council's continued health and sustainability.

Section 2: Supporting Councils Impacted by Hurricane Harvey

Councils affected by Hurricane Harvey continue to ask for more time to assess the hurricane's impact and determine their immediate needs. GSUSA has reached out to them and will update Movement leadership as more detailed information becomes available. In the meantime, council leaders are encouraged to visit the following council websites for the most updated information on ways to aid impacted councils.

Girl Scout councils affected by Hurricane Harvey:

- [Girl Scouts of San Jacinto](#) (Houston HQ)
- [Girl Scouts of Central Texas](#) (Austin HQ)
- [Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas](#) (Harlington/Corpus Christi HQ)
- [Girl Scouts of Louisiana-Pines to Gulf](#) (Lafayette HQ)

Financial Support

Council members can make financial donations at www.girlscouts.org/hurricaneharvey or by texting HurricaneHarvey to 41444. All money will be allocated to council scholarship funds at the affected councils listed above to assist girls with 2018 dues and replacement uniforms, credentials, and materials. Donations through GSUSA can also be designated for any individual council.

Troop-to-Troop Support

Troops can allocate part of their own funds to an impacted council's scholarship fund or to support a remote sister troop doing a service project.

Examples:

- Write notes of encouragement and become pen pals with girls while they and their families struggle to recover.
- If a troop in an impacted area is helping a local animal shelter replace damaged supplies, another troop could organize a fundraising event and use the proceeds to purchase and send animal food and blankets to the sister troop's project.
- The Girl Scout fall product sale is another way girls can raise money for sister troops. If a troop chooses to donate its product sale earnings to a sister troop in need, it should let potential customers know that their purchases help with council recovery efforts.

Direct Work with Relief Projects

If girls are able to safely travel to an affected area and permitted to do so, consider a trip to help with on-site relief activities.

Examples:

- Visit an evacuation shelter to provide activities to the girls staying there. This can serve as welcome emotional support for girls and their families.
- Contact a well-established relief organization working in the impacted area to explore appropriate participation opportunities for girls (e.g., [United Way](#), [American Humane](#), [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#), etc.).

<p>Reminder: Girl Scouts are not allowed, when identifying themselves as Girl Scouts (such as wearing a uniform, sash or vest, official pins, and so on), to solicit money on behalf of another organization. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose, as long as they're not wearing anything that officially identifies them as Girl Scouts (<i>Volunteer Essentials 2017/2018</i>, page 85).</p>

Section 3: Girl Scout Disaster-Relief Resources

The following policies and guidelines may be helpful to council leadership when managing disaster relief efforts.

- See the “Fundraising” section on page 22 of the [2017 Blue Book of Basic Documents](#) for detailed policy information related to fundraising activities.
- Review specific guidelines for girl participation in money-earning activities—see “[Money-Earning Basics](#)” from Chapter 5 of [Volunteer Essentials 2017/2018](#).
- Ensure girl safety during on-site relief activities by referring to the “Girl Scout Safety Guidelines” on pages 6–7 of [Safety Activity Checkpoints 2017](#) and “Chapter 4: Safety-Wise” in [Volunteer Essentials 2017/2018](#).
- Encourage girls to explore disaster preparedness and related Take Action projects by using the following materials:
 - [What Can a Girl Scout Do When Disaster Strikes?](#)
 - [What Girl Scout Leadership Looks Like in Times of Disaster](#)

Appendix: Summary of Tools and Resources Referenced in This Guide

Tool/Resource	Description	Audience/Purpose
What Can a Girl Scout Do When Disaster Strikes?	Outlines three categories of effort—immediate response, disaster preparedness, and longer-term Take Action projects	Girl Scouts of all ages and their parents
What Girl Scout Leadership Looks Like in Times of Disaster	Outlines three categories of effort—immediate response, disaster preparedness, and longer-term Take Action projects—while providing additional tips and examples for leading such learning efforts	Girl Scout volunteers and adult family members
“Fundraising” section in 2017 Blue Book of Basic Documents	Page 22, the subsections for “Ownership of Assets” and “Solicitation of Contributions,” describe these policies	Girl Scout council executives and other management staff
“Girl Scout Safety Guidelines” from Safety Activity Checkpoints 2017	Pages 6–7 provide general safety guidelines for all Girl Scout activities	Girl Scout program staff and volunteers
“Chapter 4: Safety-Wise” in Volunteer Essentials 2017/2018	Pages 59–75 outline detailed recommendations for safety considerations for a variety of activities	Girl Scout program staff and volunteers
“ Money-Earning Basics ” in Volunteer Essentials 2017/2018	Describes policies and recommended practices for girl participation in money-earning activities	Girl Scout program staff and volunteers