

GUIDE TO GOVERNANCE

Governance Basics

What is Governance?

- Governance is accomplished through a democratic process and structured as outlined in the Council bylaws.
- Girl Scouts of West Central Florida (GSWCF) uses a democratic process to make policy decisions.
- The election of Board Officers, Board Members At-Large, Board Development Committee Members and National Delegates is made by delegates.

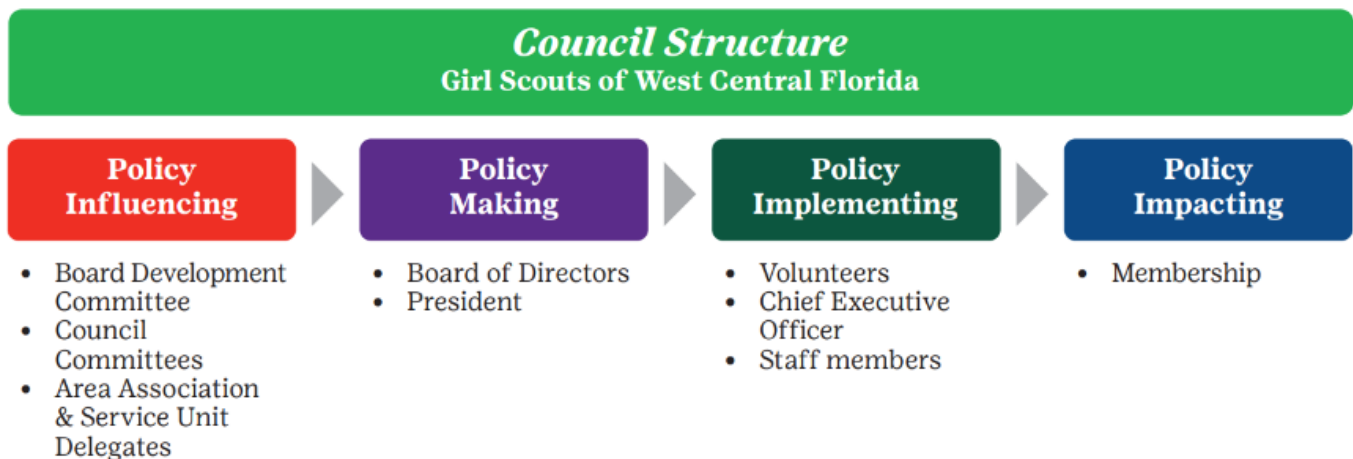
Governance vs. Operations

Governance – Governance examines the “big picture” to set policies which support the overall vision for Girl Scouts. This involves strategic planning and money management.

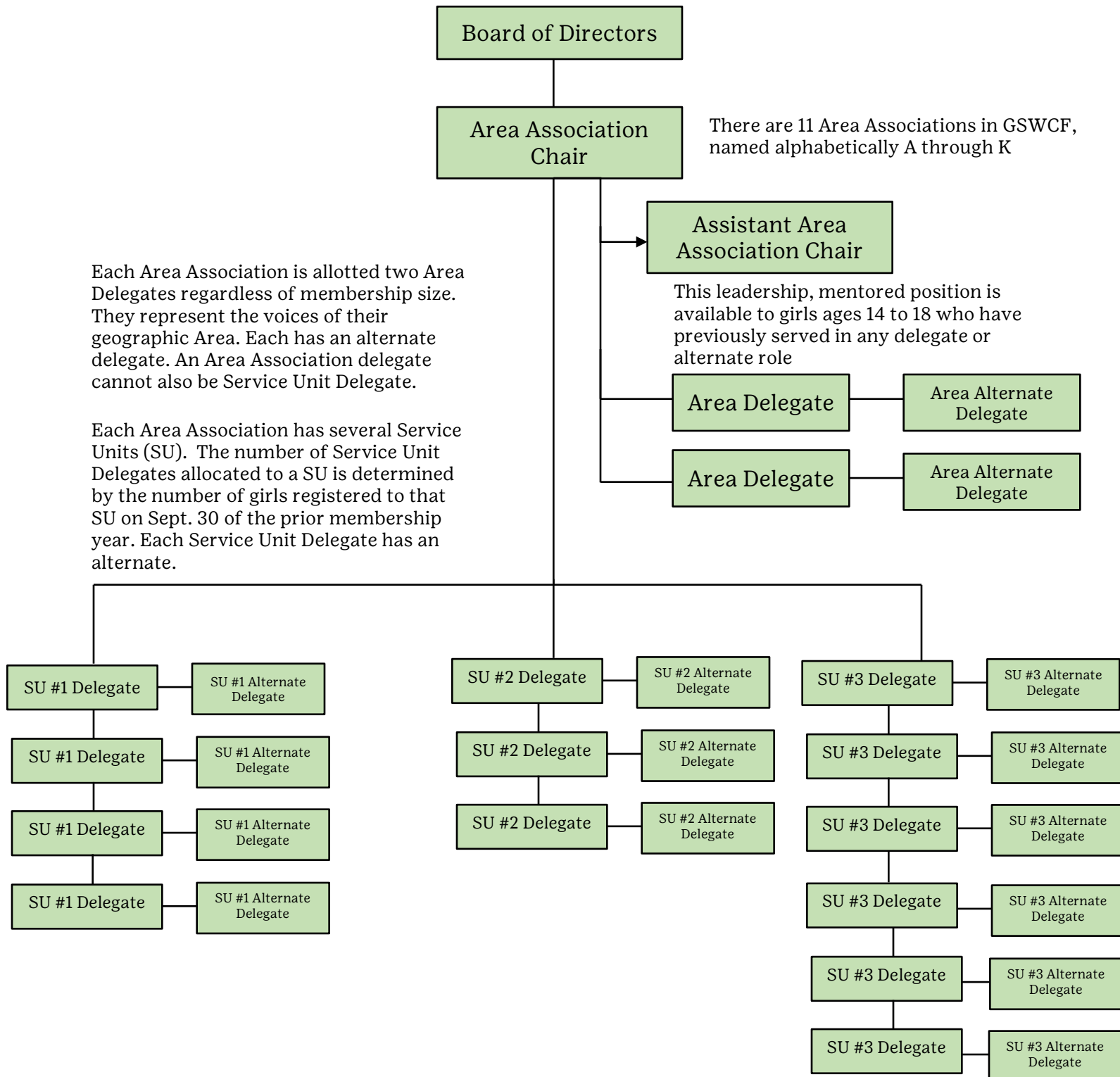
Operations – Volunteers and staff members perform the day-to-day functions of the Girl Scouts movement to include direct mission delivery. This includes implementing the policies and vision established through the governance process, and setting the budget for troops, communities, and the Council.

GSWCF Governance Structure

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida’s governing body is its Board of Directors, the Board Development Committee, Chairs of each Area Association, and Delegates elected by Area Associations and Service Units.

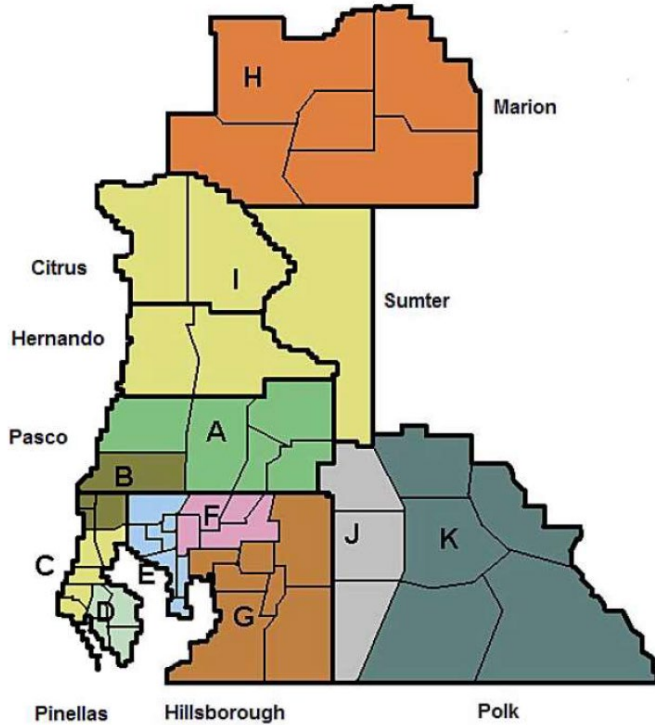


GSWCF Area Association Structure



*Members can hold only one voting governance position. Someone who is already holding one voting position cannot be elected or appointed to another. For example, you cannot serve as an Area Delegate *and* Service Unit Delegate.

- Area Association Chairs are the volunteers responsible for managing the governance of each area association. There are 11 areas, A-K. Area Chairs shall be appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the respective Area Association.



- Delegates elected by Area Associations and Service Units shall serve as voting Members.
- Terms are two years, but delegates and alternates may be elected to one-year terms in the event there is a need to balance the rotation to avoid replacing them all the same year. Delegates and alternates may also serve consecutive terms. **There are currently no term limits.** The bylaws of GSWCF establish the duties and terms for Area Delegates and Service Unit delegates and alternates. You can view the bylaws on our website at gswcf.org/delegates.



of west central florida

GOVERNANCE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLES:

- Area Chair
- Area Chair Assistant (14-18 years old)
- Area Delegates
- Service Unit Delegates
- Alternates

SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES OF ROLES:

Voting

- Election of delegates and alternate delegates.
- Election of officers, members of the Board of Directors, Board Development Committee members, delegates and alternates to the National Council.
- Approve revisions to the Council Bylaws.
- Take all other action requiring membership vote, within the responsibilities of the Council.

Strategic Guidance

Each of GSWCF's service units elect governance volunteers to represent their membership. This democratic process is an integral part of Girl Scouting. As the primary communication link between our girl and adult members and our Board, these delegates have the opportunity to influence decisions that benefit the girls we serve and to share input on the Council's strategic direction.

Procedural

- Attend Area Association meetings twice per year (October 2026 & February 2027)
- Attend Annual Meeting (April 2027) and any special meetings.
- Nominate or call for nominations for area association delegates and alternates.
- Comply with the Council bylaws when performing governance-related duties.
- Encourage all members 14 years of age and older to attend the Area Association meetings and the Annual Meeting.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Is a registered Girl Scout, age 14 or older.
- Subscribes to the principles of the Girl Scout movement.
- Has the ability to communicate effectively with members of the council.

BENEFITS:

- Help girls become confident leaders who discover, connect and take action in their community.
- Gain knowledge about governance and policy-making decisions
- Opportunity to sharpen facilitation and communication skills
- Opportunity to influence decisions which benefit all girls in GSWCF Council's jurisdiction and shape the future of the Council.

POSITION TERMS & DESCRIPTIONS

TITLE: **Area Association Chair**

OBJECTIVE: Influence policy by giving general lines of direction for Girl Scouting within the council's jurisdiction.

TERM: The area association chair shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years, or until a successor is appointed, and shall serve for no more than three (3) consecutive terms. A vacancy in the position of Area Association chair shall be filled by the Board for the unexpired term.

PURPOSE: There shall be a chair for each Area Association who shall be appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the respective Area Association. Area Chairs are the communication link between their area and the Board of Directors.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Participate in guiding the plan and agenda for the Area Association meetings and Annual Meeting.
- Area chairs may be asked to provide input to the Board on issues of policy and direction and to communicate board decisions with the Areas they represent.
- Monitor service unit delegate rosters and encourage filling vacancies.
- Convening, if necessary, all Service Unit and Area Association delegates to inform them about the issues to be considered.
- Facilitate area delegate/alternate election at Area meetings and pinning ceremony.
- Engage Assistant Area Chair in leadership experience.

TITLE: **Assistant Area Association Chair**

OBJECTIVE: Provide girl members with opportunities to enhance their governance skills. Open to members in grades 9 through 12, who have served as a Service Unit delegate or alternate, or an Area Association delegate or alternate.

TERM: May be appointed for a term of one year and may serve for no more than three consecutive terms.

PURPOSE: There may be an Assistant Area Chair in each Area Association, who shall be appointed by the Area Association Chair upon approval of the Vice President of Governance. Are administrative in nature and, unless eligible, do not include Voting Member rights. The Assistant Area Chair will be responsible for assisting the Area Association Chair in administering the business of the Area Association.

POSITION TERMS & DESCRIPTIONS

TITLE:	Area/Service Unit Delegates and Alternates
OBJECTIVE:	Influence policy by giving general lines of direction for Girl Scouting within the council's jurisdiction.
TERM:	All Area Association and Service Unit delegates and alternates shall serve for a term of two years or until their successors are elected. May serve unlimited consecutive terms.
PURPOSE:	Area/Service Unit delegates and alternates serve as the voting members of the Council

Election Procedures

- **Who will be elected?**

Each Area Association and Service Unit shall elect delegates and alternates.

- Each Area Association shall be entitled to two delegates and two alternate delegates no matter their size.
- Each Service Unit shall be entitled to at least one delegate and one alternate. The number of additional Service Unit delegates and alternate delegates is based on the number of girl members in the Service Unit as of September 30 of the preceding year. Each Service Unit will receive 1 additional delegate per 75 Girl members. Your delegate roster shows how many positions your service unit has. Your allocation may have changed since last year because the number of positions depends on each service unit's girl membership.

Delegates/alternates whose terms expired at the annual meeting are still listed on your roster for reference. If they are going to serve another term, **they must be reelected.**

- **How to facilitate elections?**

Conduct your service unit's elections as soon as possible, so your new delegates/alternates can receive the notices for the area association meeting in the fall.

Tips:

- Confirm interested members have read the position description and can commit to attending two area association meetings and the annual meeting.
- Fill delegate positions before you elect any alternate delegates.
- Ideally, elect delegates/alternates on a schedule that enables you to carry half over to the next year. Elect to one-year terms as needed to achieve and maintain that balance.
- Girl Scouting is a girl-led leadership experience. **Service units are encouraged to foster active participation in governance by girls age 14 and above.**

Important Dates

- **September 15, 2026** – Submit updated rosters
- **October 20/21, 2026** – Fall Area Association Meeting
- **December 31, 2026** – Deadline to submit any roster changes
- **February 9/10, 2027** – Spring Area Association Meeting
- **April 24, 2027** – Annual Meeting

Submitting your Delegate/Alternate Roster

Send roster updates to alangley@gswcf.org as soon as possible after election. **Changes cannot be made after December 31, 2026.**

1. Remove anyone who is not going to serve.
2. Add newly-elected delegates/alternates. For each delegate or alternate on your roster provide:
 - Girl/Adult
 - Full name
 - Email address
 - Cell phone number
 - Term expiration (one year or two year)
3. **Verify that everyone on the roster is a registered member.**
4. **Submit your updated rosters by September 15, 2026, so they receive notice of the area association meeting.**