

**Background and Commitment:** Since our founding in 1912, Girl Scouts has been committed to serving all girls. At Girl Scouts, we seek to instill in girls the fundamental values of respect for all, inclusivity, equity, and the belief that injustice anywhere is a slight to justice everywhere. Racism goes against the values of Girl Scouts, and although we have acted to counter racism throughout our history, we know that we have enormous work ahead of us to build a truly, anti-racist organization. Making the world a better place is the highest principle of Girl Scouts, and as the premier organization dedicated to developing and modeling true leadership for girls, now is the time for us to measure up to that principle for all the communities we serve.

At Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, our path has been rocky at times. Although the Girl Scout Movement has always been one that stood for inclusivity, it is not lost on us that this is not the experience of every Girl Scout. There have been hard stops, difficult starts, and frustrating hurdles to overcome. Despite some challenges, a great deal of effort has gone into ensuring that diversity training for staff, volunteers, and board members has been a priority. We have worked with a number of local and national diversity consultants and have provided training throughout the past 30 years.

While these efforts have been well-intentioned, we continue to see our staff profile, especially those in leadership roles, to be primarily white. In addition, we know that our girls of color are most often served through short-term, staff-led program activities, rather than in longer-term Girl Scout troops, led by volunteers. Girls of color are often not progressing through the organization and very few of them go on to earn highest awards or continue in Girl Scouting throughout their high school years. We are prioritizing these issues and will engage in challenging discussions, centering voices we have not listened to in the past, acting with integrity, and learning from our missteps. We pledge to never stop working to create a just and equitable world that girls, and all of us, deserve.

**Committee Charges:** The Anti-racism Advisory Committee was launched in summer, 2020 to provide guidance to the board and CEO in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion and to strengthen our commitment to identify and address systemic racism within Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. We recognize that this is far from easy or fast work, but we are Girl Scouts and we believe in sisterhood, justice, and fairness, so we are in this for the long-term. We take action when we see a need and we live by our Girl Scout Law, which demands we seek racial equity for everyone.

The focus will be on staff and board first, with the overall aim to provide support for volunteers and girls. Our goal will be to establish anti-racism, equity, and inclusion as foundational to all efforts carried out by Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. We teach girls to lead by example, and to that end, we are committed to doing the difficult work to become an anti-racist organization.

**Committee Members:** Initial committee members are Patrice Borders, Maria White, Sheri Bogardus, Theresa Hirschauer, Melissa Cutcher, and Pam Viscione. Additional committee members may be added, and we will consider non-board members as we go forward.

**Committee Objectives:** While girls are our overall focus and the elimination of systemic racism in the ways that girls are recruited and served is of utmost importance, we acknowledge that we must first look at the ways in which our board, staff, and volunteers are approaching their work within Girl Scouting. Initially, the committee will focus on the following objectives:

1. Provide guidance to the CEO and board as action plans are developed to engage all stakeholders in the work of anti-racism. This will include support for our council's commitment to the dismantling of systemic racism and our focus on how to improve our racial climate across the entire organization. This may include committee guidance as systems and processes are evaluated.
2. Be available for consultation to the board and CEO about issues of race, ethnicity, culture, and social justice and raise issues relevant to the total council concerning the relationship of race and our actions.
3. Provide expert guidance on our goal of increasing education and training on anti-racism. Assist in identifying training opportunities and resources for staff and volunteers.
4. Advise, as requested, on resources needed to create a more diversified workforce and a focus on recruiting, retaining and developing diverse volunteers and girl members. We are committed to strengthening recruitment and hiring practices that help us reflect the communities we serve. And we will ultimately provide additional resources, training and supports to ensure that our Girl Scout volunteers, our champions of girls, are equipped to serve all girls equitably while cultivating belonging.
5. Support the council's efforts to increase partnerships with diverse community organizations and assist in reaching out to potential community leaders to support our anti-racism efforts.

Our goal is that all girls' (especially girls who are part of underrepresented racial and ethnic) voices will be heard. These are the voices that racism frequently suppress and silence. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio must provide all girls a place where they have the resources and supports they need to raise their voices and change their corner of the world. This committee will serve to guide the CEO and board in this important work.

**Resources:**

- *Girl Scouts Stands Against Racism and Pledges to Work for a Just Society for All*, Girl Scouts of the USA, May 2020
- *An Open Letter from Kathy Hopinkah Hannan*, GS Blog, May 2020
- *Racism and Hate Have No Place Here*, Roni Luckenbill, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, May 2020