



Black Lives Matter and Social Justice FAQs

Our vision statement: We invest in our community through Girl Scouts. Our community represents every race, ethnicity, income level, sexual orientation, ability, and religion; reflects a spectrum of gender identity; and connects across geographic locations. By focusing our attention on community members who are furthest from racial, economic, and social justice, Girl Scouts can be an instrument of change, promoting equitable outcomes for all. We wholly commit to taking action to grow as an anti-racist and anti-oppressive organization so that, through Girl Scouts, our members are affirmed as they strive to make our community and world better.

How is GSWW participating with and/or supporting the Black Lives Matter movement?

We affirm that Black lives matter and we are engaging in anti-racist efforts. We respect and support the ways in which the Black Lives Matter movement seeks to break down systemic racism. Systemic racism is embedded in every organization, and we're working to dismantle those practices at Girl Scouts of Western Washington. We're continuing to learn, develop and grow throughout this journey, which we see as the only path forward.

What programming/badge work is being offered to teach my Girl Scout about social justice and racial equity?

We're partnering with Erin Jones, a Girl Scout Board member and an education consultant specializing in equity and culturally responsive practices, who is delivering a series of age-appropriate online learning sessions. Girl Scouts and their families are learning about microaggressions, what it means to engage in civil discourse, and to differentiate between action, activism, and advocacy. Our Girl Experience team is in the process of creating programming for a new Girl Scout Values patch that will be available for Girl Scouts at all program levels to earn later this year and will be focused on racial injustice. Our Global Action Team, which is a group of Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts, focused their work this year on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as it relates to education, economics, healthcare, LGBTQ+, race, and religion. You can learn about the focus for the 2021 Global Action Team and other Global Initiatives [here](#).

How do we know that GSWW isn't just another "company that cares" on the bandwagon of trying to look culturally competent, but is really making a serious effort to stand up against racial injustice?

For many years, we've been investing in continuing education for our staff and leadership on issues of cultural competency, structural racism, white privilege, and other topics related to equity. We have a Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) department helping us amplify our efforts, and focus on action and growth, both as individuals and as a collective unit. Each month, we have several staff workshops on topics related to racial justice, white privilege, and disability justice, and our staff have formed affinity groups for People of Color, LGBTQ+, and White Accountability. We aim to be a welcoming organization that values diversity, made up of staff and board members who are reflective of the communities we intend to serve.

Most recently, we've asked each of our departments to answer questions about how their

teams' work is addressing the needs of Black and brown girls, families, volunteers, donors and employees, and if it's not, how can it? Most importantly, we're listening to what we hear from our Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community members to better understand what we should be doing and how we should be doing it. One example is that—if we're able to have in-person camp next summer—we'll have a session specifically for Black Girl Scouts and their families. We're exploring partnerships with other community organizations whose work is exclusively focused on DEI, and seeing how we can use their good work as a model, while also supporting the work these organizations are doing to create an equitable, sustainable community focused on racial justice and advocacy.

We continue to strive, in action and in principle, to change the perception and reality that Girl Scouts is "for white girls." In addition to the programmatic opportunities and operational efforts mentioned above, we're providing online resources specifically to volunteers and parents on how to talk to their kids about race and racial injustice, adding Anti-Oppression in Action trainings for volunteers, Board and employees, and utilizing DEI best practices for HR policies and actions. We're expanding the DEI section of our website to include information and resources ranging from how to be allies and advocates for the Black community, to disability justice, LGBTQ+ rights and topics that allow us to continue working toward our commitment to ensure we are an inclusive and welcoming environment. Our aim is that every young person from a BIPOC community sees a place for themselves in Girl Scouts. The work we've done, and pledge to continue doing, stems from our vision, which our council adopted nearly ten years ago and hasn't changed: that all girls—girls of every race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, religion, income level, and geography—are able to reach their potential to make the world a better place.

We have also added the Girl Scouts USA [pledge against racism](#) to our website, and commit to doing our utmost to help create this long-overdue change in our communities. We recognize that this is far from easy or fast work, but we are in it for the long haul.

What is Girl Scouts doing to ensure Black girls and their families feel safe and included in their programming?

We recognize the history of Girl Scouting and acknowledge that in practice, Girl Scouts has been "for white girls." We're actively striving to change by training our volunteers and staff—with an emphasis on our white majority—on key concepts related to racism and social justice, to build understanding about systemic inequities. The goal is to ensure that they have the skills to create inclusive and equitable spaces so members from our BIPOC communities feel welcomed and valued at GSWW.

In addition to training, we're reviewing our recruitment and placement procedures to identify and address racial biases—unintended or not—occurring during the troop placement process. We are actively identifying Black-owned businesses and non-profits to explore program partnerships to help expand our reach to communities of color. Lastly, we acknowledge that our camp program has cultural barriers for Black families; our goal for FY21 camp programming is to expand our staff diversity efforts. We value and understand the importance of having a diverse workforce, but we want to specifically call attention for the need to recruit and retain more BIPOC camp counselors.

Our People & Culture Team has made strides in recruiting employees of color and continues to improve our application review and interview processes to reduce implicit bias, HR practices, and representation of people of color at all levels of the organization.

BLM Mural/CHAZ – why did we post about that on social media, when it was in an autonomous, unpoliced zone?

Girl Scouts of Western Washington is engaging in anti-racism efforts and we feel it is our responsibility to elevate conversations about race and racism, especially for the benefit of our Girl Scout community. That is the purpose behind our #BlackLivesMatter posts.

How is Girl Scouts managing potential partnerships with law enforcement agencies or supporting girls and volunteers who come from families of law enforcement?

We respect the variety of career paths of the families that comprise our membership, including those in law enforcement. We partner with a variety of organizations and individuals who share our mission of helping to build Girl Scouts of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. We support advocacy that inspires others to think about the choices they make and helps educate about the ways in which we can each use our voice to make a difference. The heart of our what we do is teaching Girl Scouts to use their voices to stand up for what they care about. We hope they're inspired by a variety of individuals who use their influence to change policies that marginalize or silence those whose voices haven't been heard.