

**LINK**



# Link Handbook



**Girl  
Guides**

## What is Link?

The Link program empowers women age 18-30<sup>1</sup> with vital tools and networking opportunities to become confident leaders and advocates. Link members could be joining a Guiding branch for the first time, or they could have completed some or all of the branches for girls. This program assists each member with her transition to adulthood by offering guidance with professional development and community relations, as well as a connection to mentors within the Guiding sisterhood.

This is a flexible program designed for young women, by young women, to accommodate both academic and career schedules. While some members may wish to pursue additional roles, as Guiders, Commissioners, or committee members, others may decide to limit their participation to Link. Link members can be important role models for girls as they understand and are managing some of the same issues that youth are facing today.

## About Link

The need for a group serving young women was recognized by Girl Guides of Canada in 1964; the designation became official in 1966. The group was originally called “Trefoil,” the name was changed to “Link” in 1977. There have been a variety of initiatives focused on young women since its formation. In 2016, a [Link program](#) and Link units were officially created.

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<sup>1</sup> Link membership starts at the age of majority in a participants' home province.



## Link activities

Link units can choose activities that match the unique needs of its members and their communities. These can be one-off events or longer-term commitments. The choice is yours.

### Link program

This program provides units with the opportunity to connect, further develop their skills and earn crests. The program contains many activities, on which a Link unit can work together. The four program themes were designed by young women – they include:

- Personal and Professional Development
- Outdoors and Adventure
- Health and Wellbeing
- Active Citizenship

To learn more about the Link program, including the program themes, topics and activities, check out the [Link Program](#) book.

### Additional activities

#### Socials

There are lots of fun, easy and inexpensive activities that your Link unit can plan and enjoy while building stronger friendships.

- **Host a dinner.** Make it a fun cook-together event or choose a theme. You could even divide into groups and see who can win a cooking contest using the same ingredients.
- **Organize a photo scavenger hunt.** Depending on your community, it could be a neighbourhood event in a big city or a car rally for a rural area. You could also make it a virtual event by sending one member out to take and post pictures and asking the membership to guess her location(s). Reveal the winners at your next Link event.
- **Meet up for coffee.** Keep it simple – just get together to catch up and share experiences. Shake it up by trying offbeat locations.



## Community Service

Link offers the opportunity to choose service commitments that fit the busy and variable schedules of its members.

- **Cookie selling.** See if you still have the magic to sell a case of cookies. Get creative. Try local athletic or community events. Have fun with individual and group goals.
- **Plan an activity for a Guide, Pathfinder or Ranger unit** and serve as a mentor for the new generation of girls. Afterwards, gather the Link members together for an hour over coffee to laugh about the experience.
- **Build a fundraising or collection component into other Link activities.** For example, collect food bank donations as part of a fun bake-off contest.
- **Choose your own** community service project that offers volunteer or planning experience to your members. Make sure your idea is flexible, so that it meets varying abilities and availabilities.

## Adventure

Girl Guides provides the opportunity to take on new challenges, develop new skills and explore nature.

- **Go for a hike.** Plan a day trip to enjoy a nature walk with great company.
- **Plan a camp.** As adults, you can choose your camp experience – rugged wilderness adventure or a fully serviced campground.
- **Plan a trip.** Reach out to other Link units in your province or across Canada to arrange a visit. You could also organize an exchange. Extend your “chain of Links” to new cities and provinces.

## Exploration

You might not be able to earn a new badge, but you can still have fun with your Link unit by trying something new.

- **Get crafty.** Do you remember those weird craft things you did as a girl? Now you can recreate that fun by hosting a sewing or painting party. And this time, you don't have to take your creation home to get critiqued by your parents.
- **Get in the game.** Many communities have escape rooms, game centres and even axe-throwing ranges. And don't forget bowling and curling! Have fun researching new activities to try as a unit.
- **Get cultural.** Go to concerts or plays as a unit. You can also plan a visit to a gallery or museum. Conferences or lectures can be great opportunities to discuss diverse perspectives too. Add time afterwards to share your experience.
- **Get adventurous.** Learn about new foods, wines or other hobbies as a group. Attend a presentation by a thought-provoking speaker or a political event. Host a professional development seminar.



## Mentoring or bridging with girl branches

Positive role models are very important. Your Link unit can inspire and empower a new generation of girls.

- **Speak at a Pathfinder or Ranger conference.** Host a session based on the experiences of Link members about key issues impacting women. Some examples are: barriers to advancement, sexual harassment, balancing career and personal life, and finding leadership opportunities.
- **Organize a volunteer event.** You can teach girls about social issues in Canada or around the world. Some examples include: inspiring girls to pursue STEM careers, making clean birthing kits, as well as supporting menstrual care and education in developing countries.
- **Build the link to Link.** Hold an event for members who have finished Rangers to welcome them into a new adventure in Guiding. Assist your provincial office with their program for Bridging members, if they have one. Bridging members are girls who have completed Rangers but have not yet reached the age of majority in their province.

## Membership

Link membership is open to women, age 18, or the age of majority in their province, to 30. They can be a current or past member of GGC, or they could be enrolling for the first time. New members can join by making the Guiding promise at an Admission Ceremony. The outline for this ceremony is included in Appendix A.

Members may be enrolled in multiple Link units if they live in multiple locations during the year. For example, a member goes to school in British Columbia but she's from Manitoba.

Link members pay the national membership fee. However, members who are also Unit Guiders, Administrative Community Leaders, trainers and specialty community members are exempt from this fee.

## Unit operations

Link units have the freedom to organize themselves based on the interests of their members. Each unit sets its own meeting schedule and determines how roles will be filled within the unit.

The usual meeting intervals are monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly. Regular attendance at meetings is not mandatory. While offering fun and engaging experiences, the Link program can simply represent a way for young women to maintain their connection to Guiding.



It is up to each unit to determine how it operates. This is a suggested structure for roles and responsibilities – each of these positions should be accountable for a certain area within the unit, but the delegate should also work collaboratively with the rest of the unit.

## Contact Guider

- Oversees the overall schedule and outline of unit activities.
- Represents her unit internally, when a member has a question about the way that it's run; and externally, when other units in Guiding that want to get in touch.
- Coordinates with the Provincial Link Liaison and area representatives about the unit's activities.

## Secretary

- Documents meetings and shares them with the unit's members.
- Keeps track of work done as a unit within the Link program.
- Communicates upcoming meetings to unit members.

## Events Coordinator or Events Team

- Determines appropriate social events and programming activities for the unit based on the interests of the group.
- Sets up activities by booking venues and managing logistical details.

## Volunteer Activity Liaison or Volunteer Activity Team

- Determines appropriate volunteer activities based on the interests of the group.
- Sets up volunteer activities by booking venues and managing logistical details.
- Stays in contact with local organizations who require volunteers.

## Communications Coordinator

- Manages social media accounts for the unit.
- Creates promotional materials for events.
- Promotes the unit through communications within the Guiding community.
- Works with other volunteers in Guiding to identify internal opportunities for Link members.



## 4 Tips for operating a successful unit

1. Select a regular meeting frequency for the unit (once a month, once every two weeks, etc.) at the beginning of the year. The Contact Guider is responsible for gathering members to produce the activities according to this frequency.
2. As a group, brainstorm activities and have members volunteer to organize specific events.
3. Build a rough schedule for events and activities. Use a scheduling tool, like a [Doodle Poll](#), to determine members' availability for specific events. Recognize that there will never be a date that works for everyone, so select something that works best for most of the unit. Doing something is better than waiting to have an event with the full unit.
4. Use a Facebook group to assist with communication between members but send important updates by email.

## Recruitment of new Link members

Link members can be recruited from both inside and outside of Guiding. To join a Link unit a woman must first register as a member of GGC. Please reach out to your Provincial Link Liaison with any questions about this process.

Some ideas for recruitment include:

- **Reach out.** Former Rangers, girl members and new comers to the area may not know about Link and what it has to offer.
- **Host a bring-a-friend event.** Make it a fun opportunity to meet and mingle. Provide information on your Link unit and the opportunities that come with membership.
- **Go public.** Host a booth on a university campus, at volunteer fairs or other public events. Sell cookies as an ice breaker.

## Starting a new unit

If you are interested in starting a Link unit, contact your Provincial Link Liaison via your [provincial office](#); new units are registered through a provincial office. You will need a minimum of three participants, one of whom is the designate Contact Guider, and a name for your new unit. This information will be sent to the iMIS Coordinator and entered into the national membership database.



## Appendix

### A: Admission or enrolment ceremony

Joining a Link unit should carry significance as members build skills, find purpose and seek mentorship in their new communities. New members usually commit their dedication to the group during an admission or enrolment ceremony. Those who were previously girl members would participate in an admission ceremony, and those who are new to Guiding should be enrolled into Link. Here is an example of the exchange that can happen during an admission or enrolment ceremony.

**Contact Guider:** Members of Link are sisters in friendship, mentorship and service. We recognize that this network exists in our community and across the country. Are you familiar with the Guiding Law and the seven ways in which we are challenged to live our daily lives?

**New member:** Yes, I believe I understand the meaning of the Guiding Law.

**Contact Guider:** Are you ready to make and uphold the Guiding Promise?

**New member:** Yes. I promise to do by best, to be true to myself, my beliefs and Canada. I will take action for a better world and respect the Guiding Law.

**Contact Guider:** I trust you to keep your Promise and try to help others wherever you are. We welcome you into the [insert name of your unit] and trust you to make the Promise and Law a part of your life.

*Contact Guider pins unit pin. Both women shake hands while making the Guiding sign.*

