



This edition of *Realignment News* includes our first two “Comments From Our Colleagues” that have been submitted by council CEOs. The Q&A provides answers to many of the questions you have asked regarding council assets and council financing. We have also extended the length of this week’s Q&A to catch up on some of the questions we did not address in earlier editions.

The next edition of *Realignment News* will provide a summary of the criteria input that has been submitted by various state/regional groups and by individual councils. This information will provide direction to the GSUSA demographer team as they build their draft map of council jurisdictions.

Please note that GSUSA will be closed on Monday, January 16 in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. The next edition of *Realignment News* will be distributed on Tuesday, January 17.

In the last issue of *Realignment News*, we understand that some of you took issue with our statement that training would be available for CEOs from small councils. We apologize. We were, in fact, responding to a request from several CEOs from smaller councils who have many excellent skills, but have asked specifically that additional training be provided to enhance their career development.

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**ITEMS OF INTEREST** ➤

**Comments From Our Colleagues**

**Lee Morriss-Mueller, Executive Director/CEO  
Girl Scout Council of the Mid-South**

As you know, Girl Scout Council of the Mid-South was formerly the Tenn-Ark-Miss Girl Scout Council, and we have jurisdiction in all three states. We have participated in the statewide realignment discussions in Arkansas and Tennessee, as well as with our two border councils in Mississippi.

At each of the meetings we have advanced the concept of forming one regional council, incorporating all or some of the jurisdictions of the councils that are headquartered within a 90–100-mile drive from Memphis. This configuration meets the criteria presented by GSUSA and results in a well-balanced mixture of geographic and economic diversity. We have gained some support and interest, and have become acquainted with the competing interests; i.e., Girl Scouts of Crowley’s Ridge Council may need to stay with

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the other Arkansas councils to add their strength and diversity to that council, rather than become part of a Memphis regional council.

The conversations have been illuminating and we certainly appreciate the need for outside counsel – as we are each seeing it from our own perspectives.

We support the direction being taken, as articulated in the Core Business Strategy, and are dreaming of the day we are part of a high-capacity Girl Scout council that successfully and consistently delivers the Girl Scout experience.

In true Girl Scout form, we will do our best to be friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, responsible, and respectful. We will use resources wisely to make the world a better place and to be sisters to every Girl Scout.

While we would be interested in being an early adopter, at least some of our very likely partners are not, so we will wait and see.

**Betsy Keefer, CEO  
Penn Laurel Girl Scout Council**

Pennsylvania is a commonwealth with a major city on each side, lots of cows and rural area in the middle, many mountains, lots of cultural differences and 13 Girl Scout councils. As the Presidents and CEOs of these 13 councils came together, we were all determined to do what was best for the future of Girl Scouting in our state. We started by discussing criteria that we wanted to use as our lens for looking at our geography. Next we decided to take a “clean sweep” look at the state, totally disregarding current council boundaries, and divided the state into 5 regions. This ended meeting one.

At meeting two we continued discussion about the regions identified at meeting one. There was also much discussion about a number of other scenarios including the idea of PA being all one council. Finally, we divided ourselves into two groups. Presidents and CEOs from the same council were in the same group and each group had councils from all parts of the state. The groups spent about an hour developing our ideal PA council map based on the criteria we had identified previously, then presented and defended it to the whole group.

One group developed a map with five councils and the other developed a map with three. The general consensus of the group was that we favored the three council map because it better met our criteria; however, we will send both maps to GSUSA. Then we discussed the option of asking to become an early adopter council. After about 30 seconds of discussion we were unanimous that we really wanted to be part of that group. We are all anxious to move forward and have this process of jurisdictional change begin.

I am personally very excited about these decisions and very proud of myself, my President, and my CEO colleagues. We looked well beyond our own council’s quirks and culture, and our own personal needs, to recommend what we feel will be best for the

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long-term future of our organization. We learned that a group of knowledgeable, skilled, and professional women can be brave and strong and, with minimum ado, make the really tough decisions.



**1. We have a trust that specifically designates girls in a particular community as beneficiaries. What will happen to that trust if we consolidate with other jurisdictions? Answer:** Trust documents that specify use, whether by community – program – property – or other designation, must be honored by any new jurisdiction. It is not uncommon for subgroups within large council jurisdictions to be designated as specific beneficiaries of a trust, grant, or other form of designated gift.

**2. The largest funder in our jurisdiction who provided the lead gift to build our new office thinks that GSUSA is going to take over all of our assets as a result of this effort. Is that true? Answer:** No. When council jurisdictions consolidate, assets consolidate with their jurisdictions.

In the very rare case when a council must close its doors before a new or existing council is identified to serve the jurisdiction, it is the responsibility of GSUSA to hold the assets in trust. When the decisions are made about serving the jurisdiction in question, GSUSA will return the assets in full.

**3. Our council boundaries made sense 40 years ago, but don't make sense now. Because of how our area has developed, it may be best for us to divide our jurisdiction into several pieces and join the existing jurisdictions of several neighboring councils. If we do that, how will our assets be divided? Answer:** Multiple factors come into play when jurisdictions change and assets are divided. As mentioned earlier, designations made by donors that are binding on an asset would be honored. For physical assets, location of the assets may or may not be a determinant. In general, one might expect that offices would transfer based on location, while camps might not. As a general guide, it is probably most fair to estimate the transfer of assets and liabilities proportionate to the transfer of girl membership. Decisions about asset distribution will be made at the council level. GSUSA will be available to provide advice and consultation throughout the decision-making process.

**4. What happens when a lawsuit is pending at the council level? Does that carry forward with the council into its new jurisdiction? Answer:** Yes. Lawsuits are considered liabilities and would be carried forward, along with all other liabilities, to the new jurisdiction.

**5. We reached an agreement about our new jurisdiction in record time. When can we start raising money for our new council? Answer:** There are many steps involved in the process of forming a new council. The process will be as lean as possible – but it will take time to implement. One of the critical steps in realignment is endorsement of the new boundaries by the national board. Following national board action, several

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additional steps will need to be taken at the local level before you can begin to raise money in the name of a new council.

That said, GSUSA is currently seeking funds to support realignment at both the national and local level. This might be a good time to focus some local energy on raising money to support the costs that will be incurred in forming a new council. At your next state/regional meeting, consider brainstorming resources that you might tap to support realignment costs without diverting the funds that are currently supporting critical delivery of service functions.

**6. When will you have a specific implementation timeline developed that we can follow? Answer:** A recommended step-by-step process will be presented at the Board Chair/CEO Work Session in Orlando. The step-by-step guide will include estimated timeframes for implementation and initial thoughts about how councils will phase into realignment over the next several years. In the interim, please refer to the dates that were included in the first issue of *Realignment News*.

**7. There has been turnover in National Staff; will GSUSA be able to support this ambitious effort? Answer:** Yes, Girl Scouts of the USA is just completing a staff reorganization which includes the establishment of a Realignment Team to support the nationwide implementation of this project. The team leader, Sol Magay, has a background in organizational development and has served on the national staff for more than 12 years, most recently as the Senior Manager of the Low Density Markets. Sol's team will be supported by a select group of national volunteers, former CEOs, current CEOs, and other board-level volunteers with extensive experience in organizational development, change management, and mergers. Further support will be provided by subject matter experts in Human Resources, Training, Communications, Technology, and Fund Development. We look forward to introducing the realignment team at the Orlando Work Session.

As the realignment unfolds, each council group will be assigned a specific team of individuals who, under Sol's direction, will work with a council group until the process is complete.

**8. What is our primary goal here: do we want to (1) serve the most number of girls or (2) spread our resources across our state to serve all girls? Answer:** The goal of realignment is to "raise all boats" by building a nation of high-capacity councils. It is our vision that these high-capacity councils will, over time, develop the talents and resources to deliver exceptional Girl Scout program and opportunities to all girls in all states, regardless of the size of their community.

**9. Why are Council Performance Assessments being done if all councils will be part of realignment? And what would be the "term" of a charter that is issued at this time? Answer:** The Council Performance Assessment is a great readiness tool for councils preparing to realign. Completing this recently simplified process\* will give everyone a clear view of both the strengths and challenges that a council brings to the

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table. In this time of transition, your council may be granted a charter of up to four years, knowing that your jurisdiction may change during that charter period.

**10. What are the benefits of being an early adopter? Answer:** The primary advantage is that you are first to start – and first to complete the realignment process. For those who are highly engaged in various realignment discussions, this may be attractive. To be an early adopter, all councils need to agree with the proposed plan, the plan needs to be submitted to GSUSA by February 7, and the map that is submitted needs to be closely aligned with the map prepared by the GSUSA demographer team.

**11. Will GSUSA consider relocation of our national headquarters as part of realignment? Answer:** Moving national headquarters is not being considered at this time. Our primary focus needs to be support to councils for realignment and further development of the other important aspects of our Core Business Strategy.

**12. As the realignment maps are being drawn, will the data that is being used be shared completely? Answer:** Yes. The GSUSA demographer team will be in Orlando to introduce their initial map and the rationale for the map they present. When the final map is developed, the complete rationale will be shared with both the national board and councils.

**13. Will the GSUSA demographers' map be shared before we come to the Chair/CEO Work Session in Orlando? Answer:** No. The demographers were very clear that they do not want their work shared without full interpretation of the data and rationale they used in developing their map. They also remind us regularly that their map is a first draft – and only part of the continuing dialogue on drawing new boundaries.

**14. Are there examples of mergers in Girl Scouting that have been successful? Answer:** Absolutely. There are success stories throughout the country – some that combined more rural jurisdictions and some that focused organization around a large metropolitan area. In all cases, the key to success has been strong and effective leaders at the Board and Staff level who are able to translate the “potential” into enhanced programs for girls – and expanded services for volunteers.

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