

Site Guidelines

Spring 2025 Season

Thank you for your interest in partnering with Girls on the Run Upstate NY to empower girls in our community. This document provides an overview of Girls on the Run of Upstate NY and the responsibilities of program sites.

Girls on the Run is once again prepared to deliver its evidence-based, life skills curriculum to girls of all abilities during spring 2025 using the fluid programming model. This model is in-person with the ability to go virtual; ensuring that participants will continue to experience the social, emotional and physical outcomes of the program. Each model also allows councils to adjust to the local school and community landscape.

Please review the following information before submitting a Program Site Application.

If you are a new site, the Program Director will contact you to discuss the next steps once your application has been submitted.

If you are a returning site or have partnered with us before, please review this document and make note of any policy changes before completing a site application.

Please contact the Council Director with any questions or concerns at 315-403-0183 or benedicte.doran@girlsontherun.org.

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Important Season Dates:

Program Registration opens to the public: TBD
Program Registration ends: TBD
Program Begins: TBD
Program Ends: TBD
5K Celebration: TBD

About Girls on the Run of Upstate NY

Girls on the Run is a physical activity-based positive youth development program designed to nurture girls' social, psychological, and physical competencies to successfully navigate life experiences. Our program instills self-esteem and leadership development through health education, life skills development, mentoring relationships, non-competitive physical activity – all of which are accomplished through an active collaboration with girls and their parents, schools, volunteers, staff, and the community. We offer two programs: Girls on the Run for 3rd-5th grade girls, and Heart & Sole, for 6th-8th grade girls.

Girls on the Run programs are delivered in schools, parks, and community centers and meet twice a week for 8 weeks. Each 75-90 minute session is led by specially trained volunteer coaches and includes lessons dealing with issues such as body image, negative self-talk, self-awareness, resisting peer pressure, gratitude, gossip, nutrition, making healthy decisions and contributing to the community. Running is woven into our program to inspire an appreciation of fitness and to build habits that lead to a lifetime of health. At the end of each 8 week session, the girls participate in a celebratory Girls on the Run 5k event. This year, Girls On The Run will host a Virtual 5K.

Girls on the Run Upstate NY is one of over 200 councils of Girls on the Run International throughout North America that served more than 200,000 girls in 2025. Our council served over 425 girls in the 2025 Spring season.

Girls on the Run Curriculum

Our volunteer coaches facilitate a well-researched and copyrighted curriculum written by a diverse team of youth development specialists. The curriculum is divided into three parts to encompass the following concepts:

Part 1: Identity... Self-Care, Self-Awareness, Knowing Self!

Part 2: Connectedness... Selecting Healthy Relationships and Keeping Them Healthy

Part 3: Empowerment... Celebrating and Sharing our Strengths

Each lesson focuses on a specific topic and follows a five-part format that provides consistency and structure for the girls' experience.

1. **Getting on Board:** Each lesson begins with an activity and brief group discussion that focuses the girls on the day's topic.
2. **Warm Up:** A short interactive running game that incorporates the lesson topic for that day followed by stretching and a group discussion.
3. **Workout:** A running activity related to the topic of the day. Workouts grow longer over the course of the program as the girls build stamina.
4. **Cool Down:** A stretching period and group discussion.
5. **Positive Words:** Coaches recognize positive individual and group behaviors.

Program Season

GOTR Upstate NY operates Spring and Fall seasons each year. The 8-week Fall season usually begins in September and ends in November. To host a team at your site in the Fall, planning should take place in the summer. The 10-week Spring season begins in March and ends in June.

Program Site Responsibilities

While Girls on the Run of Upstate NY provides almost everything needed to run the program, our host site is required to provide the following:

- ☐ A Site Liaison (please reference Program Site Liaison Responsibilities listed below)
- ☐ Provide 2-3 volunteer coaches (please reference coach requirements listed below)
- ☐ A meeting location: An indoor or undercover space where coaches can meet the girls right after school, have snack, and leave their backpacks.
- ☐ A safe outdoor location for running and activities, ensuring the safety and appropriate social distancing required by the State. This does not have to be a quarter-mile track. A field or open playground space works. The area should be separate from other kids and programs. A safe space available in case of inclement weather. This area must be private—a gym, lunchroom, or covered area—and available for GOTR and not in conflict with other programs.
- ☐ Access to a restroom.
- ☐ Secure storage area for supplies bin, snacks, and water bottles (if needed).
- ☐ An active marketing plan to successfully recruit participants at program site.

Site Liaison Responsibilities

The Site Liaison's role is to serve as a link between coaches, participants, parents and GOTRUNY. Ideally this is someone with ties to the site (a teacher, school administrator, nurse, counselor, PE or other staff) who may serve in a dual capacity as a coach. GOTRUNY communicates primarily via email, so it is necessary for Site Liaisons to have an open email account that they check regularly. New Site Liaisons go through coach training and must fill out a Volunteer Application including a background check. Liaisons are responsible for the following:

- ☐ Recruit at least two coaches for the site. (please reference coach requirements listed below)
- ☐ Secure bi-weekly practice space for GOTR: outdoor location, inclement weather locations, meeting location, kit storage location, and access to restrooms.
- ☐ Help with registration. Registration is online and we will work with sites to ensure participants can all access the registration properly.
- ☐ Meet with coaches one time prior to the start of the season to discuss practice and storage space.
- ☐ Communicate regularly with coaches regarding program and facility; provide support if behavioral issues arise.
- ☐ Identify language barriers and notify GOTRUNY when assistance is needed.
- ☐ Have email and check regularly.

Girls on the Run of Upstate NY Responsibilities

GOTRUNY supports program sites by providing the services listed below. The Program Director is responsible for coordinating these services.

- ☐ Liability Insurance - A certificate of insurance listing the site as additionally insured on its policy.
- ☐ Required Coach Training – Comprehensive online and in-person training prior to season start. Sex offender background checks on all coaches and volunteers every two years.
- ☐ Management of participant recruitment & registration – flyers, online registration, smartphone app.
- ☐ All lessons, supplies, and materials.
- ☐ Program T-shirts for participants and coaches.
- ☐ Financial assistance for participants in need – GOTR ensures that the program is accessible to all.
- ☐ 5K registration for participants and coaches.
- ☐ 5K celebration and 5K finisher medal.
- ☐ Screens Running Buddies assigned to a program location.

Group Size

The minimum for a team is 6 girls and the maximum is **15 girls**. The minimum is based upon both financial and curriculum considerations. Because much of our curriculum is related to team building and group dynamics, fewer than 6 girls may make it difficult to provide the experience we want to offer the girls.

Participant Registration

- Girls on the Run is open to ALL girls. We allow girls who are unaffiliated with a program site and girls of any fitness level to participate.
- Program sites are responsible for promoting GOTR to girls and parents and for distributing registration information.
- Registration is open for up to two months and closes two weeks after the season begins.
- Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. If more than 15 girls register for a team, a waitlist will be started. We will try to find more coaches to fill two teams at a site if there is interest.
- Registration is online. Paper forms will be available only if needed.

Program Fees and Scholarships

The program fee is \$185 per girl. Included in that fee are 16 lessons conducted by Girls on the Run certified coaches, coach training, all GOTR curriculum materials, coach bags, an official Girls on the Run program shirt and water bottle, end of season 5K celebration and 5K registration fee*. The fee covers operating overhead such as the GOTR licensing fee, insurance, financial assistance costs, printing, etc. Administrative assistance and support to coaches' site, girls and parents is also included.

Families can pay registration in installments, which can be set up during online registration.

We offer financial assistance through an online application. We do not ask for proof of income. We rely on the honesty and integrity of parent/guardians to choose their appropriate registration fee and contribute as much towards the full cost of the program as they are comfortable. We never turn away a girl for the inability to pay.

Volunteer Coaches

Volunteer Coaches facilitate the easy to follow, well researched curriculum at each program site. Coaches do not have to be runners; they need only have the desire to serve as a role model for the girls by showing positive behavior, interacting with them, and listening attentively. Volunteer coaches can be faculty, staff, parents or community members. It is mandatory for there to always be at least two volunteer coaches (a head coach and at least one assistant coach) at least one of whom is CPR/First Aid certified* (both written and in-person skills tested), on site at all time with Girls on the Run participants.

Qualifications:

- ☐ A strong commitment to girls' positive development.
- ☐ The capacity to work in partnership with co-coaches.

Experience working with youth is a plus, but not necessary. Coaches do not have to be runners. Any person who lives a healthy lifestyle and is committed to improving the lives of girls can volunteer as a coach.

Head Coach

The Head Coach works with her team of coaches to facilitate the Girls on the Run curriculum to a group of 6-15 program participants. She works closely with the Council Staff and serves as the primary point of contact for parents/guardians of the girls on her team. Throughout the season, the head coach will serve as a role model, exhibiting a healthy lifestyle and positive attitude. Most importantly, the Head Coach will have fun with the girls and encourage positive behaviors.

Responsibilities:

- ☐ Prepare and deliver/supervise 2025 Girls on the Run lessons in a manner consistent with GOTR philosophy and curricula.
- ☐ Serve as a role model for the girls by being on time, listening attentively, having a positive demeanor and outlook, and leading a healthy lifestyle.
- ☐ Manage team and coach schedules and communications.
- ☐ Take attendance, orchestrate dismissal and have a cancellation plan in place.
- ☐ Encourage all participants and participate in games and workouts as needed.
- ☐ Mediate disputes amongst girls in an immediate and respectful manner (see Coaches Guide).
- ☐ Interact with parents/guardians of program participants.
- ☐ Plan and coordinate a community service project per the curriculum.
- ☐ Attend end of the season 5K run and encourage the girls and parent participation/guardian.
- ☐ Return all coaching materials as received in a timely manner postseason.
- ☐ Be yourself ... and have fun!

Time Commitment:

- ☐ Complete a 1-hour online pre-season and 30-minute mid-season training session (all new and returning coaches)
- ☐ Prepare for delivery of lessons (typically 15-30 minutes to read through and plan)
- ☐ Attend and lead or supervise two 75-90 minute lessons, 2x a week for 8 weeks (plan to arrive 15 minutes prior to start of the lesson to set up anything needed and take attendance, and remain until all girls are picked up or delivered to aftercare)
- ☐ Attend a *First Aid and CPR certification course including both written and in person skills testing if not already certified, and submit certificate to GOTR.
- ☐ Submit to a criminal background check in accordance with GOTR policy. GOTR will provide a link on the Coach Application confirmation sheet.
- ☐ Attend and/or participate in the end of season 5K event

****New Coach training is 6-8 hours and is required to be completed prior to the start of the season.***

Returning Coach training 1.5-2 hours.

Requirements:

- ☐ Must be female and over the age of 21
- ☐ Must be CPR and First Aid certified, both written and skills tested *
- ☐ Must complete a Volunteer Application and non-compete form
- ☐ Must submit to a criminal background check
- ☐ Must complete a full coach training

****CPR and First Aid:** A minimum of one coach per team must have CPR and First Aid certification on file by the first session of any given season and be present at every practice. The CPR training course curriculum must be equivalent to The American Red Cross, American Heart Association and National Safety Council. CPR certification may be obtained through an online training course; however, it must include an in-person skills test and receipt of a course completion card.

Assistant Coach

The Assistant Coach assists the Head Coach in all aspects of program delivery at a Girls on the Run program site.

Responsibilities:

- ☐ Assist Head Coach in the preparation and delivery of Girls on the Run lessons in a manner consistent with GOTR philosophy and curricula
- ☐ Serve as a role model for the girls by being on time, listening attentively, having a positive demeanor and outlook, and leading a healthy lifestyle
- ☐ Encourage all participants and participate in games and workouts as needed
- ☐ Assist in setting up/breaking down games and lessons

- ☐ Assist Head Coach in planning and coordinating a community service project
- ☐ Attend end of the season 5k run and encourage the girls and parent/guardian participation * Be yourself ... and have fun!

Time Commitment:

- ☐ Complete a 1-hour online pre-season and 30 minute mid-season training session (all new and returning coaches)
- ☐ Prepare for delivery of lessons (typically 15-30 minutes to read through and plan)
Attend at least one (preferably two) 75-90 minute lesson per week for 8 weeks
- ☐ Attend a First Aid and CPR certification course including both written and in-person skills testing if necessary.
- ☐ Required in order to sub for the Head Coach
- ☐ Submit to a criminal background check in accordance with GOTR policy. GOTR will provide a link on the Coach Application confirmation sheet.
- ☐ Attend and/or participate in the end of season 5k event

****Coach training is 6-8 hours and is required to be completed prior to the start of the season.***

Returning Coach training 1.5-2 hours.

Requirements

- ☐ May be female or male and must be over the age of 18
- ☐ Must complete a Volunteer Application and non-compete form
- ☐ Must submit to a criminal background check
- ☐ Must complete a full coach training

Substitute Coach

All substitute coaches must comply per above including having had a valid background check through the Girls on the Run Upstate NY within the past 24 months and attended a Coaches Training. If a substitute is acting as Head Coach, the substitute must be CPR/First Aid certified (*both written and in person skills tested*).

5K Safety: Running Buddies

A running buddy is an individual designated to run/walk alongside and/or supervise a participant on or off the course for the duration of the 5K event. Running Buddies are often a girl's parent, friend, neighbor, aunt, uncle, sibling, or other trusted adult age 16 or older.

Girls on the Run® International mandates that in any public race (not a part of the official Girls on the Run 5k Series) all program participants must be accompanied by a Running Buddy per below. Public races are not within the Girls on the Run 5k guidelines and therefore the risk of incident for each participant is significantly higher than that of a Girls on the Run sanctioned event. For girls running in an official Girls on the Run 5K event, running buddies are strongly recommended and must adhere to the guidelines below.

Our council is committed to keeping our participants safe and have the following policy in place:

- * Legal guardians and parents of participants may be Running Buddies *or may assign running buddies for their participant*. Legal guardians or parents acting as a Running Buddy or legal guardian/parent *assigned* Running Buddies are not required to conduct a background check for either public or Girls on the Run 5k events, but they must be 16 years of age or older.
- * If a *representative of Girls on the Run (Council Director, Staff, Coach)* supplies a GOTR participant with a Running Buddy, a background check must be conducted on the Running Buddy. Running Buddies must also comply with all other volunteer requirements set forth by the council, including filling out a Volunteer Application.
- * Girls on the Run of Upstate NY will provide any necessary background checks.
- * Running Buddies self-register for the 5k. Participant 5k registration fee is included in their GOTR program registration fee.

Program Responsibilities “At A Glance”

	SITE LIAISON	COACHES	GOTRUNY STAFF
Practice Facilities	Arrange for safe indoor and outdoor practice locations, including obtaining permission from school/rec center Arrange for restroom access during practice Troubleshoot problems (e.g., locked doors during inclement weather)	Communicate with parents and participants about where to meet and pickup Practice in designated locations and enforce facility rules	Provide certificate of insurance to sites as needed Submit any additional partnership forms as needed (for Community Ed., afterschool programs, etc.)
Recruitment	Take the lead in publicizing GOTR to school and community members according to season calendar Distribute provided recruitment materials Seek out and schedule recruitment opportunities (open house, speaking to classes, etc.)	Work with site liaison to attend recruitment opportunities (open houses, speaking to classes, etc.) Collect any paper registration forms and submit to GOTR in a timely fashion	Provide recruitment/registration materials (posters, postcards, paper registration forms if needed) Provide updated rosters to coaches and site liaison via attendance app
Throughout Season	Answer coach questions about the site as needed Communicate with GOTR about any challenges or changes	Take the lead on parent communication Arrive early for each scheduled practice with a healthy snack Deliver curriculum as trained and intended	Provide training, curriculum, materials, activity sheets, parent communication templates, Conduct site visits and offer additional support as needed
Practice 5k	Attend to assist coaches as needed and to see the program in action	Plan course, water stops, festivities with co-coaches Communicate with girls, parents and Running Buddies so they are excited and prepared for a great experience	Provide updated Running Buddy info Place community Running Buddies as needed Provide tips on best practices Provide materials (t-shirts, necklaces, chalk, etc.) at mid-season meeting
Community Support	Partner with coaches to identify local opportunities to celebrate the girls (e.g., feature community impact project in school newsletter, mention girls in morning announcements the Friday before the 5k, invite principal and/or school mascot to attend practice 5k and/or end-of-season 5k)	Partner with site liaison to identify local opportunities to celebrate the girls	Provide additional ideas and support as needed Official press spokesperson for any additional coverage
Celebration 5k <i>TBD 2021</i>	Promote 5k event at site. Post flyers, distribute materials as allowed at site.	Oversee the team and have fun!	Provide a safe and fun 5k celebration
Season Wrap-Up	Submit site renewal info in a timely fashion	Return materials	Seek feedback from parents and coaches Collect materials Provide site renewal info