

FAQ

What is Girls Incorporated of Monroe County?

Girls Incorporated of Monroe County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has served the Monroe County community since 1975. We are an affiliate of the national youth organization Girls Incorporated®, a research, education and direct advocacy organization that inspires all girls to be Strong, Smart, and Boldsm.

Girls Incorporated of Monroe County provides vital after-school and summer enrichment, educational programs, and organized sports leagues to girls to help them develop the values and skills they need to become confident, productive and responsible adults. Our programs and activities are offered at our main center and gymnasium in Bloomington, Indiana.

Why are you unique?

Unlike other youth organizations, Girls Incorporated has a dual focus. We work to help girls become strong, smart, and bold so that they can tackle the challenges they face. At the same time, we work to change the world to make it a more equitable place for girls. We prepare girls to be the leaders of the twenty-first century, and we're determined to make the twenty-first century a time when girls can lead.

Girls Incorporated of Monroe County takes a holistic approach to a girl's life. Our programs focus on educational enrichment. Members benefit from one-on-one tutoring and homework assistance. Girls also participate in health and fitness classes and work to develop a healthy body image. Programs are designed to empower girls to set and achieve goals and make plans for their futures that will enable them to become responsible, self-sufficient women.

Girls Inc. programming:

- Is comprehensive, including modules that develop across four age groups, building on learning from one area to another, rather than organized in short-term activities related to a variety of topics.
- Is intentionally focused on gender equity, inspiring girls to be strong, smart & boldsm, and key issues like pregnancy prevention, rather than general youth development and "safer" topics.
- Is based on high quality, longitudinal, national evaluation research, rather than only local evaluation of program quality.
- Includes role modeling and mentoring as key components where older girls connect with younger girls, as well as age-appropriate activities.
- Provides opportunities for girls to work with a number of adults with a variety of skills, rather than limiting the adults involved to the same one or two people over time.
- Reaches many girls who would otherwise be left out of enrichment programs.

Girls Incorporated also has the only research center dedicated to girls. Our National Resource Center, located in Indianapolis, is the nation's most extensive clearinghouse on girls' issues. Our research staff conducts research on girls and evaluates our programs to make sure they are effective.

Why a girl-focused organization?

Too often, girls are denied opportunities because of their gender. Girls get subtle, often unintentional messages that they are weaker, softer, and not as bright as boys are. We give them opportunities that they might not get elsewhere because of their gender. At Girls Incorporated, girls are the leaders, the decision-makers, and the risk-takers. We help them build the skills they need to become successful adults.

The all-girl option allows girls to plunge into activities without worrying about whether they "belong" or not – or whether they are more or less skilled than boys. Gender-specific programming lets girls focus on their real interests, at their own pace, free from distractions and comparisons.

Girls Inc. believes that the needs of girls are well served in a girls-only environment. Girls grow up in an inequitable society that puts them in boxes by age, gender, race, culture, national origin, home language, sexuality, ability and disability, immigrant status, body size and shape, family composition and income and more—factors that often lead to discrimination and under-expectation.

The strategy of Girls Inc. programming is to provide gender-specific and age appropriate curricula specifically designed for the ways girls learn. Programs are delivered in a safe, affirming girls-only environment that fosters empowerment.

Girls Inc is not fixing girls; to the contrary, Girls Inc. is providing the opportunities girls deserve but are often denied or pushed out of in other contexts.

Girls Inc. girls flourish and develop into the confident, compassionate, community-minded and empowered young women which we expect them to be, and which our community urgently needs them to be. See the [Why Girls Only handout](#) for more information.

Why is Girls Inc. needed?

Imagine our community where all of our girls are safe, healthy, thriving, and ready to realize their full potential as productive and contributing citizens...

Much has changed over the years, but growing up to be a healthy female continues to be a daunting task. The mission of Girls Inc., to “inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and boldsm”, assists girls to triumph over challenging and complex issues they face, including economic disparity, racism, negative body image, abuse, depression, and increasing violence. How to create healthy, smart, and engaged girls is not a mystery and the costs of ignoring these issues by denying healthy development to some or all girls is enormous.

For hundreds of girls facing social and economic challenges, Girls Inc. provides the safe space, the encouragement and the programs they need in order to envision a brighter future and to see within themselves a person defined by more than their external circumstances. For these girls, being a Girls Inc. girl can be one of the most important opportunities they will ever receive.

What is the intent of Girls Inc. programs?

The intent of the program at Girls Inc. is to prepare girls to be productive citizens by building their capacity for responsible and confident adulthood, healthy choices and personal fulfillment.

Girls Inc curriculum programming assists girls in becoming economically literate, in exploring non-traditional career options, in retaining their early interest in science and math, in developing critical thinking, and developing healthy life skills. Programs also address developing leadership skills, preventing adolescent pregnancy, violence prevention, developing physical fitness, preventing substance abuse, and exploring arts, culture and heritage.

Girls who participate in programs such as Girls Inc. are less likely to become truant or drop out, to use drugs, become teen moms, or to enter the juvenile justice system. We work with the other affiliates of Girls Incorporated to disseminate our research and information gained through more than 50 years of experience working with girls to policymakers, fundraisers, and media. We also speak out on public policy matters on behalf of equitable opportunities for girls.

Who participates?

Girls Inc. programming is open to ALL girls. Girls who participate in our programs range in age from 6 to 18 and come from a variety of backgrounds, including Caucasian, African-American, Latina, Native American, and Asian, among others.

How much does it cost?

Membership in Girls Incorporated is on a self-determined sliding scale beginning at \$55 per year. It costs the agency nearly \$500 annually to send one girl through the after school program. There is an additional fee (\$45) to participate in sports. Full day programs and day camps are also available for additional fees when MCCSC is not in session. We have scholarships readily available and urge you to make this request if you want to participate in our programming.

What is a Girls Incorporated center like?

Our center is a place where girls learn that they can be whatever they want to be, where their strengths are valued, where they are treated with respect and honesty, and where they can assume new responsibilities and take risks. We also have a gym, a teen room, and a resource center.

Do you help girls build self-esteem?

Yes. At Girls Incorporated, girls are given opportunities to be leaders, to voice their concerns and get a quick response. They learn that they are important and valued, often for the first time.

Girls who participate in our programs feel good about themselves because they have learned new skills and accomplished new goals. Girls achieve in math and science, avoid early pregnancies and substance abuse, and try sports that are traditionally labeled “male.” And we see their pride in these accomplishments.

While much attention has been paid to the self-esteem of adolescent girls, we begin working with girls well before adolescence. We help them expand their horizons and their skills so that they can manage the challenges of adolescence successfully.

What kind of programs does Girls Inc. offer?

Girls Inc. programs focus on the strengths and needs, interests and opinions of girls as they are today and goes beyond dropping in, hanging out, pick-up sports, one-day arts projects and recreation.

Girls Inc. programs enhance self-esteem and teach girls to appreciate and respect themselves rather than relying on others for validation. They also support and encourage girls in developing a plan for the future, and to practice the skills that will help them realize their goals. Girls Inc. programs help girls learn how to make good decisions in a safe environment, and assists girls in understanding that they can impact their own lives in healthy ways.

Girls Inc. programs help girls find their voices and to be expressive and powerful in positive and productive ways, and provides girls with a sense of control in their lives. Our programs are carefully researched and designed to build important skills and prepare girls for the tough issues that they face. At the same time, they are fun; girls enjoy themselves as they build skills and knowledge. For more information on our programs, please see the [Programs page](#).

How is Girls Incorporated of Monroe County funded?

Girls Incorporated of Monroe County is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt agency (Federal ID # 54-0962978) and operates on a carefully managed budget. For more information on funding sources, please see our most recent [Annual Report](#).

For additional information about supporting Girls Incorporated of Monroe County with a tax-deductible charitable gift, please click here.

How can I get involved with Girls Inc.?

We are excited that you want to become involved with Girls Inc. Whether you are interested in enrolling in our membership, serving as a volunteer, or supporting our services, we are grateful for your generosity. For more information on how to get involved, please see the [Get Involved page](#).