

2025 SSBOS **NETWORK REPORT**

**girls
inc.**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through direct service and advocacy, Girls Inc. equips girls with the knowledge and skills to effect positive changes in their lives and to become leaders who will change the world. Each year, our Strong, Smart, and Bold Outcomes Survey (SSBOS) asks participants ages 9-18 about their experiences within and outside Girls Inc. to learn how we can continually adapt our strategic support to better address their needs and aspirations. A total of 6,315 out of 66,313 eligible participants completed the survey in 2025, a highly representative sample. This report provides a summary of the survey results, demonstrating that Girls Inc. participants are:

- **Strong**
 - **73%** were physically active three or more days in the past week.
 - **70%** participated on a sports team in the past year.
- **Smart**
 - Over **90%** are confident they will graduate from both high school and college.
 - **83%** of teens know what education or training they need for the career they want to pursue.
- **Bold**
 - **93%** believe they have a good future ahead of them.
 - **Over 90%** said girls like them can be leaders.

Looking toward 2026, we hope to hear from more participants each year as the Girls Inc. Network continues to expand. As the SSBOS approaches its 10th anniversary, we are also engaging the Girls Inc. Network in conversation about what it means for a girl to be **Strong, Smart, and Bold** in today's world—girls' experiences are constantly changing in our fast-paced world, and understanding their strengths and struggles allows us to adapt along with them.

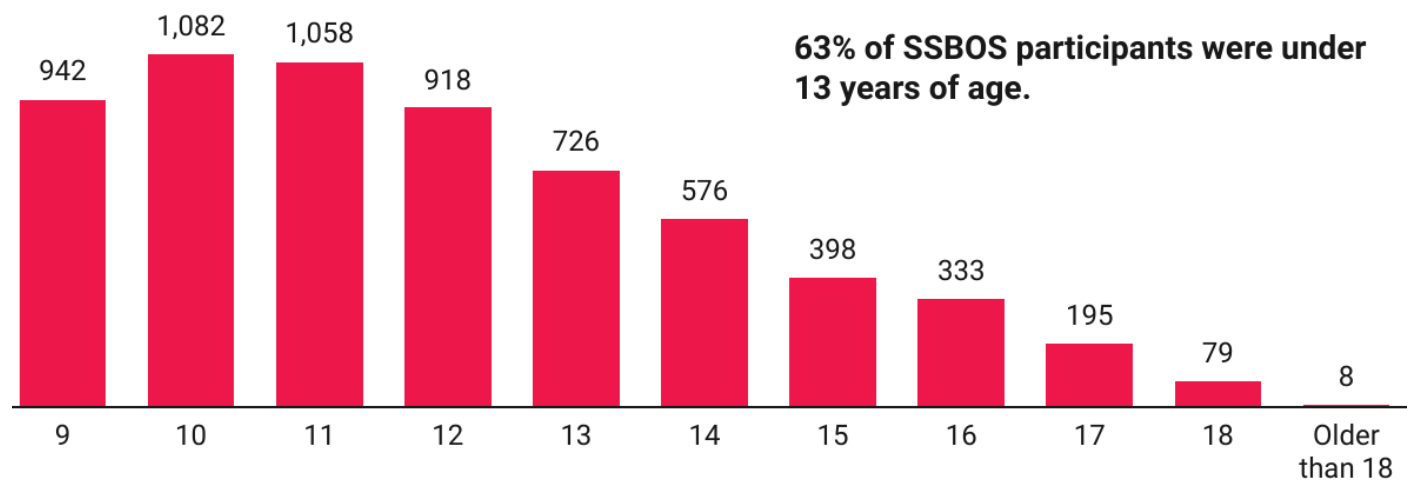
“An important thing I've learned at Girls Inc. is the power of using my voice with confidence. Whether it's speaking up for myself, sharing ideas, or advocating for others, I've learned that my voice matters. Girls Inc. encourages us to be strong, smart, and bold and that means believing in ourselves and supporting each other.”

Girls Inc. Experience

Girls Inc. participants also note a positive Girls Inc. Experience where 94% of respondents said they learn how to make a difference in the world while at Girls Inc. Additionally, 96% have adults at Girls Inc. who they respect.

INTRODUCTION

Girls Inc. is a network of local organizations that work with schools and in communities to inspire all girls to be **Strong, Smart, and Bold**. Our comprehensive approach to whole girl development helps girls navigate the experiences they encounter every day. The Girls Inc. Network spans the United States and Canada, with 75 Affiliates serving approximately 120,000 participants at 1,694 sites in 2024. Each year, our Strong, Smart, and Bold Outcomes Survey (SSBOS) asks participants ages 9-18 about their experiences within and outside Girls Inc. to understand how we can address their evolving needs and support Affiliate staff who work with them every day. A total of **64 Affiliates** administered our annual survey in 2025, yielding responses from **6,315 Girls Inc. participants** out of **66,313 eligible participants**.¹ This report provides an overview of the Girls Inc. Experience and our annual participant survey, before focusing on the insights participants shared with us this year.



What is the Girls Inc. Experience?

The **Girls Inc. Experience** is the who, how, and what a girl experiences within the Girls Inc. community. It is built on three core components proven to help girls succeed: **People** (trained staff and volunteers who build lasting, mentoring relationships), **Environment** (pro-girl, physically and emotionally supportive spaces, where there is sisterhood and girls are encouraged to take risks, learn from experiences, and be themselves), and **Programming** (research-informed, intentional, hands-on, and age appropriate). The combination of mentoring relationships, inclusive and supportive environments, and relevant and responsive programming prepares girls to grow up healthy, educated, and independent. [Appendix A](#) presents the Girls Inc. Affiliate Model that guides Affiliate operations, with the Girls Inc. Experience as its core.

¹ Eligible participants are defined as girls served by Girls Inc. Affiliates who are between the ages of 9-18. The sample of 6,315 respondents out of 66,313 eligible participants achieved a strong level of precision at a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of +/- 1.2 percentage points. Thus, the results presented in this report are highly representative of girls ages 9-18 who take part in Girls Inc. Affiliate activities. However, the results do not reflect the experiences and opinions of participants below the age of 9.

INTRODUCTION

What is the Strong, Smart & Bold Outcomes Survey (SSBOS)?

The SSBOS is a standardized tool designed to assess various aspects of the Girls Inc. Experience and gain insight into the current lives of Girls Inc. participants. The survey was originally developed and piloted during a three-year partnership with Child Trends, a leading research organization in the youth development sector committed to conducting high-quality data and research on the well-being of children and youth. Many of the questions included in the survey were adapted from other existing tools, such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and the Youth Experiences Survey. In 2017, Girls Inc. partnered with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct a two-year impact study that included many of the SSBOS questions. AIR found that Girls Inc. participants responded more positively than non-participants in 23 of the 27 included SSBOS metrics, providing further confidence that the questions were appropriate and effective for understanding key aspects of Girls Inc. Experience. Several questions—drawn from existing tools where available—have since been added to the original survey to reflect expanded programming. An overview of sources for the current SSBOS questions is provided in [Appendix B](#). For a complete list of metrics by source, please contact Research@GirlsInc.org.

The SSBOS is administered by Affiliates to a subset of their participants each year through an online survey platform. Two versions of the survey are available in English and Spanish: youth (ages 9-12) and teen (ages 13-18), with the teen version containing additional questions about college preparedness and other topics not appropriate for younger participants. Although Girls Inc. serves participants younger than 9, they do not participate in the SSBOS based on pilot testing that revealed they had difficulty completing the survey. Girls Inc. participants passively consent to the survey and are also given the choice to actively assent. Data from participants who did not actively assent or who indicated that they were not truthful in their responses (the final question on the survey) are not included in the final results. All responses are anonymous, meaning participants cannot be tracked by name or any other unique identifier.

How should I use this report?

The SSBOS is a valuable tool for understanding the current state of Girls Inc. participants and their experiences both within and outside Girls Inc. Within the Girls Inc. Network, the results are used to inform programming and identify areas in which participants or Affiliates may need additional support. Beyond the Girls Inc. Network, the results can be used to shed light on key issues affecting girls and encourage meaningful change to help ensure that all girls have a chance to grow up **Strong, Smart, and Bold**. When using the results to guide quality improvement and inform strategic planning, it is important to keep in mind the following aspects of the SSBOS:

- The SSBOS is an annual cross-sectional study, also known as a point-in-time survey, which means that a different group of Girls Inc. participants takes the survey each year as they matriculate in or out of Girls Inc. Therefore, results on most metrics remain steady year-over-year; any exceptions are noted within the report.
- Girls Inc. participants are invited to complete the SSBOS regardless of the intensity or duration of engagement with Girls Inc., and there is currently no unique participant identifier on the SSBOS that would allow assessment of change over time within the same group of respondents year-to-year.

INTRODUCTION

Thus, the results cannot reveal whether participants who are engaged longer or more intensively in Girls Inc. have different results from those with less engagement. Affiliates with programming focused in specific areas may be able to make a clearer connection between participant engagement and their SSBOS results.


- The number of participant responses varies across questions since respondents are allowed to skip questions they do not wish to answer. Teen-only questions with fewer responses are noted within the report. As a general rule, questions with lower numbers of responses should be used cautiously for decision-making. Unless otherwise mentioned within the report, results for youth and teen respondents were similar.
- Many of the questions are drawn from other tools existing at the time when the SSBOS was developed. In many cases, the response options were modified to be age-appropriate, limiting opportunities for direct comparison with external datasets—comparison to results from source tools are provided within the report where appropriate.
- The SSBOS respondents are broadly similar to the overall population served by Girls Inc. Notable differences that should be considered when interpreting and applying the results are discussed in the Respondent Demographics section.
- Several of the graphs created for this SSBOS Report has pulled rounded numbers causing a ± 1 percent errors that would have been correct had we reported the unrounded number.

2025 SSBOS RESULTS

A total of 64 Affiliates administered our annual survey in 2025, yielding responses from **6,315 Girls Inc. participants**.

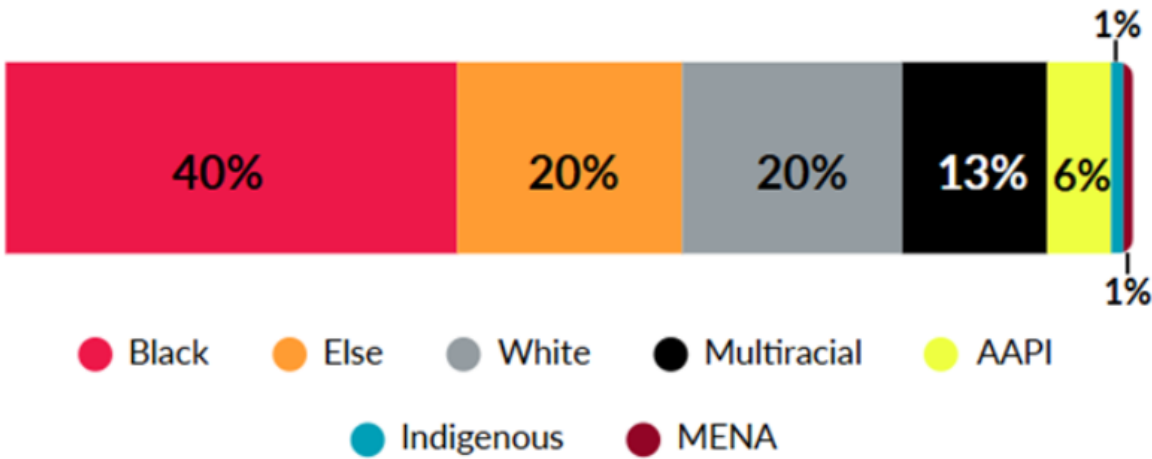
Respondent Demographics

The 2025 SSBOS respondents are broadly similar to the overall population ages 9-18 served by Girls Inc. in 2024, with a few differences that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, teens comprise 29% of participants served in 2024 but 37% of 2025 SSBOS respondents. Second, SSBOS respondents appear more likely to identify as BIPOC (80% vs. 74% in the full Girls Inc. population) or Hispanic, Latina, or Latin American (40% vs. 32%). This may partly be the result of offering SSBOS respondents an “other” race option for which the majority of respondents wrote in “Hispanic, Latina, or Latin American.” Another demographic characteristic to note is that many of those who took the survey were newer to Girls Inc.—40% of respondents had been engaged in Girls Inc. for less than one year, whereas 33% had been engaged for more than two years.



Girls Inc. race/ethnicity categories align with the US Census and are thus not appropriate for Canadian Affiliates that align with the Canadian Census. We noted this for participants in the survey and reminded them they are welcome to skip the race and ethnicity portion.

SSBOS Self-Reported Racial Breakdown

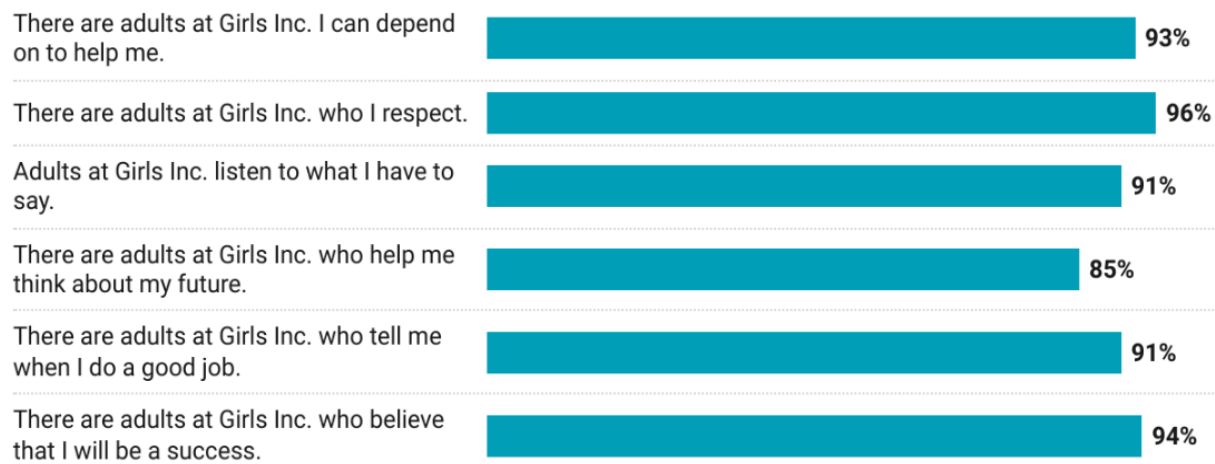


THE GIRLS INC. EXPERIENCE

Questions designed to assess key aspects of the Girls Inc. Experience (GIE) revealed that Affiliates continue to create a safe, pro-girl environment staffed with caring adults and meaningful programming.

Mentoring Relationships

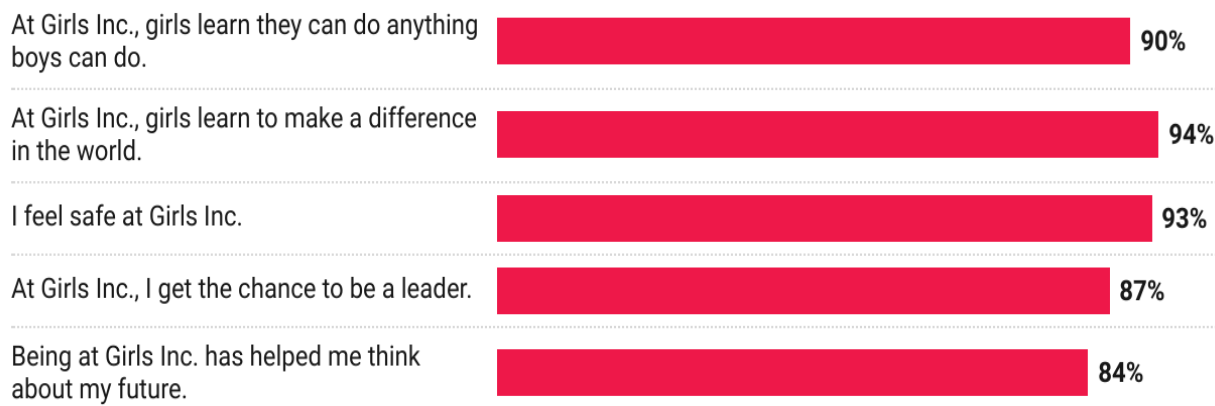
Mentoring Relationships are a foundational element to the (GIE). At Girls Inc., girls overwhelmingly agree that the adults at Girls Inc. are dependable (93%), respected (96%), and listen to what they have to say (91%).



Pro-Girls Environment

Girls Inc. believes a Pro-Girls Environment is a critical component to creating a supportive environment. Girls at Girls Inc. feel safe (93%) and are taught that they can do anything a boy can do (90%).

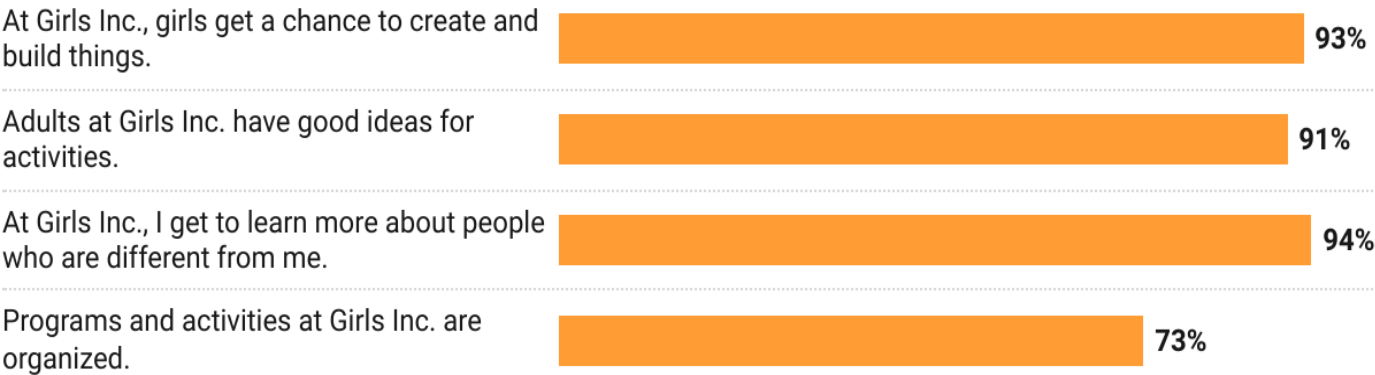
“The most important thing Girls Inc. has taught me is **the power of community**, specifically a female-only safe space which has been nothing but **understanding and uplifting.**”



THE GIRLS INC. EXPERIENCE

Intentional Programming

Affiliates work hard year after year to create intentional programming, and responding girls can tell, with 93% agreeing they get a chance to create and build things, while 91% think adults at Girls Inc. have good ideas for activities. Respondents were less likely to agree that programs were organized (73%), highlighting a potential growth area for those implementing programs.



Interactive Activities

Interactive activities continue to be a strength, with respondents agreeing that they can try new things (94%), and can work together on projects (95%).



“[At Girls Inc.] I got to participate in new activities and experiences.”

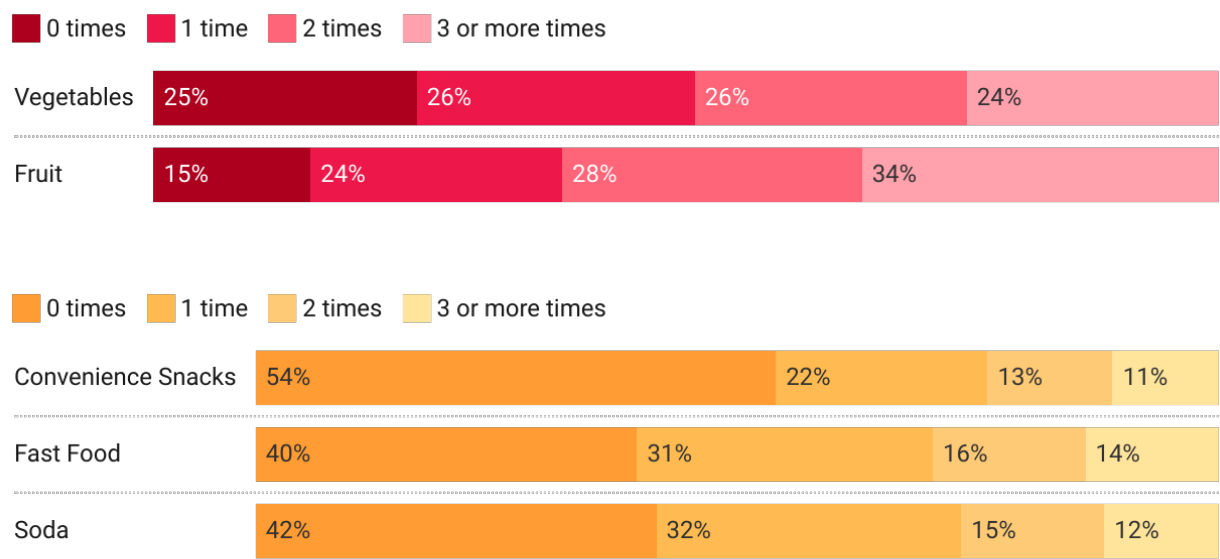
Within these supportive environments, girls can reap the benefits of the third core component of the Girls Inc. Experience: Programming. Our comprehensive approach to programming focuses on three Core Essential Service (CES) areas—Strong, Smart, and Bold—that address all aspects of a girl’s life. The remainder of this report presents 2025 results in these three areas before discussing the future of the SSBOS.

STRONG (Healthy Living)

Strong program activities and experiences provide girls with the knowledge, skills, and encouragement to develop and sustain a healthy lifestyle. In 2025, Girls Inc. participants took care of themselves through eating a healthy diet and staying physically active, but they continue to experience challenges around their mental health and body image.

HEALTHY DIET

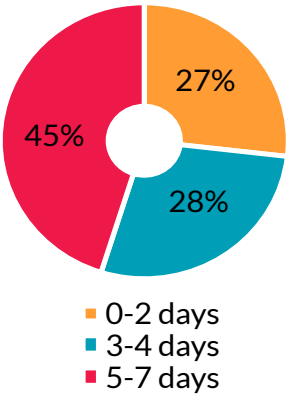
Across the network, 63% of participants reported eating breakfast on the day they took the survey, 85% reported eating at least one serving of fruit and 75% at least one vegetable in the last 24 hours. Conversely, about 70-76% of participants ate more calorie dense foods (e.g. snacks from the convenience store, fast food, and soda) only once or less in the same time frame.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Girls Inc. participants were generally active, with 73% being physically active for at least 60 minutes on 3 or more days in a week. A smaller percentage of participants were physically active for 5 or more days, with more youth (50%) than teens (37%) reporting this level of activity. The teen level of activity is in alignment with the [2024 YRBS Summary & Trends Report](#) results for [all female students grades 9-12](#) (36% of whom reported being active for 5 or more days). The majority of Girls Inc. participants also reported playing on a sports team in the past year—74% of youth and 63% of teens said they did so, much higher than reported by [all females grades 9-12](#) in the 2024 YRBS, in which only 48% of high school girls reported being on at least one sports team.

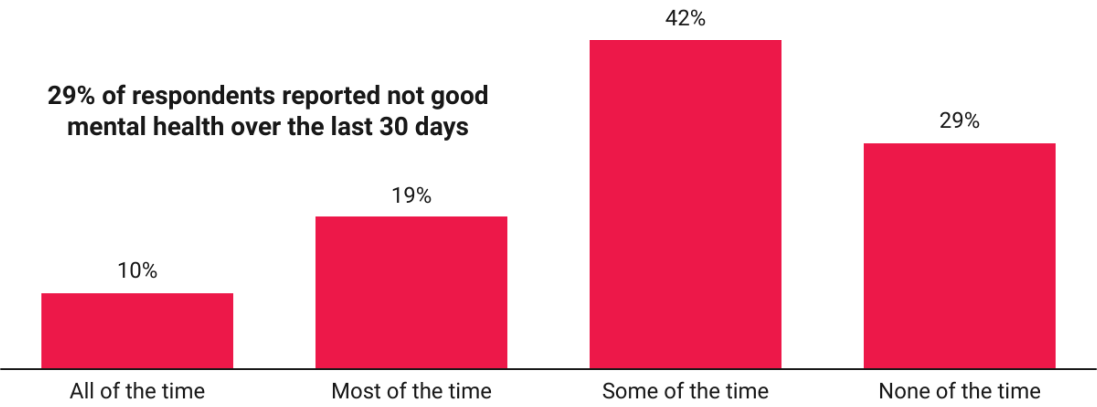
Days Participants Were Active at Least One Hour



STRONG (Healthy Living)

MENTAL HEALTH STATUS & SUPPORT

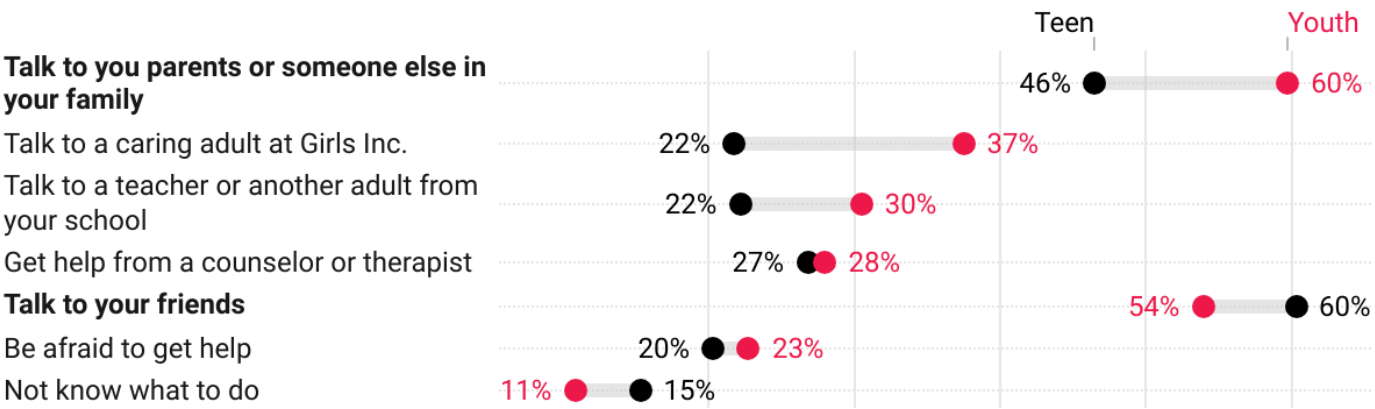
As emphasized in the 2024 YRBS report, “nearly all indicators of poor mental health and suicidal thoughts and behaviors worsened from 2013 to 2023” for youth, and “female and LGBTQ+ students were more likely than their peers to experience poor mental health.” Girls Inc. participants have not been immune to this national trend. Over a quarter (29%) of survey respondents reported that their mental health was not good most or all of the time in the last 30 days. However, the YRBS result for this measure among teens was higher (39%) versus Girls Inc. teens (29%).



“I learned about **self-care, and mental health**, and how it's important to take time to tend to yourself in a way that is healthy for you.”

“[I learned about] women’s rights and how to take care of **your mental health and body image as a girl.**”

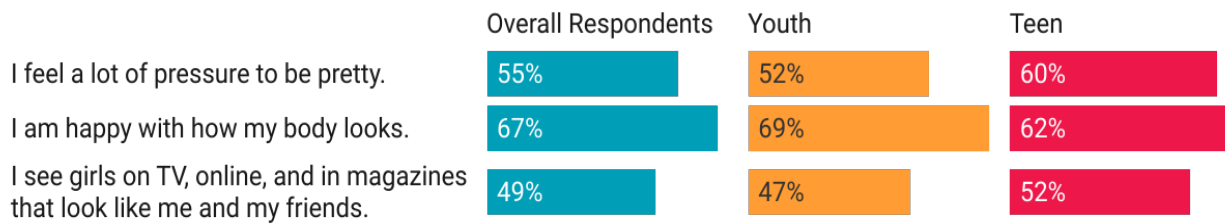
Consistent with previous years, Girls Inc. participants indicated that they are most likely to talk to family or friends when are feeling very sad, stressed, or depressed.



STRONG (Healthy Living)

BODY IMAGE

Overall, teens are struggling with body image at a slightly higher rate than youth, reporting more pressure to be pretty (60%) and feeling less satisfied with their bodies (62%).



“The most important thing I've learned from Girls Inc. that will truly be with me for the rest of my life is **how to feel confident in myself and love me for me.**”

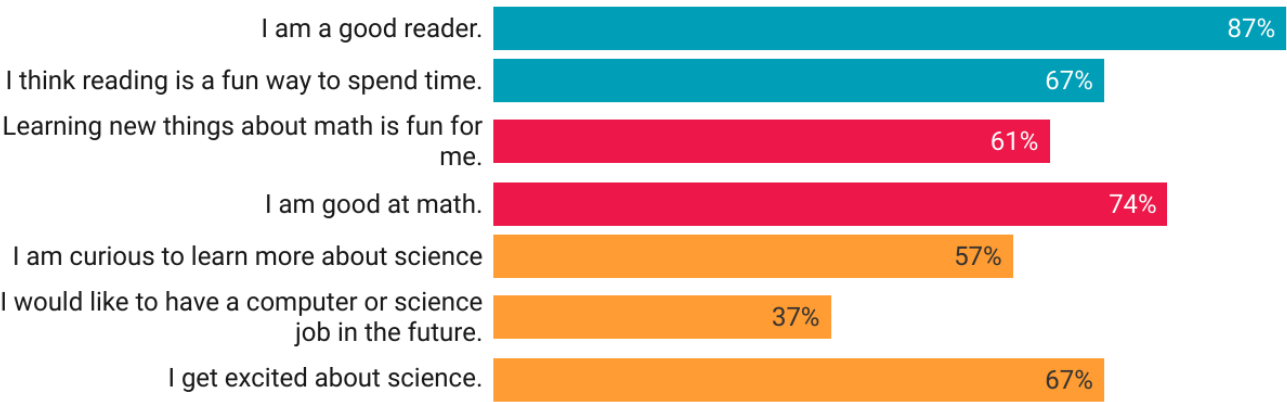
“[At Girls Inc. I’ve learned] to be the girl that I want to be and **to love myself and all parts of me.**”

SMART (Academic Enrichment/Support)

Smart program activities and experiences focus on academic enrichment and support that expand on school-based learning engagement. In 2025, Girls Inc. participants reported high engagement and performance in school, as well as few disciplinary actions. While teens were confident they would graduate from high school and college, some noted not understanding how to apply for college and financial aid.

READING INTEREST, MATH ATTITUDES & STEM CAREER INTEREST

As observed nationally in other representative studies of youth in the US such as the collaboration between [Gallup and Walton Family Foundation Voices of Gen Z survey](#), there remains a persistent lack of interest in a STEM career by Gen Z girls, with less than 35% reporting interest across a number of STEM fields. Girls Inc. participants report marginally higher interest in a career in computers or science at 37% in comparison. **Less than 50%** of Gen Z middle and high school students say their school provides hands-on STEM experiences, which makes the interactive STEM activities offered by Girls Inc. especially valuable to encourage participants' interest in STEM. SSBOS results show that overall confidence and enjoyment for both STEM and literacy activities among Girls Inc. participants is high.



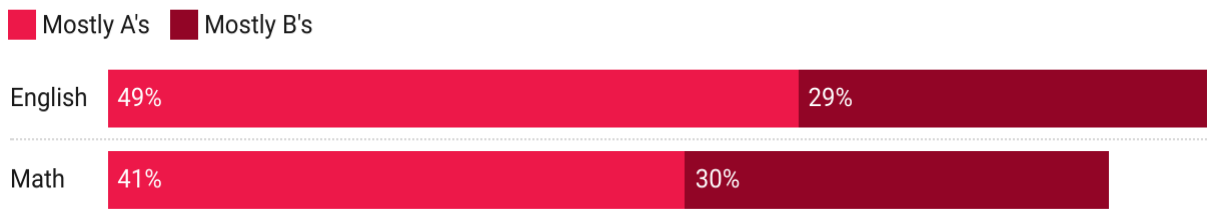
“I learned that there is a place for **women in STEM.**”

“I've learned **the importance of STEM** and how it can be incorporated into **many diverse careers.**”

SMART (Academic Enrichment/Support)

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Girls Inc. participants reported performing well in school, with 78% of girls across the network receiving mostly A's or B's in English, and 71% in Math classes.



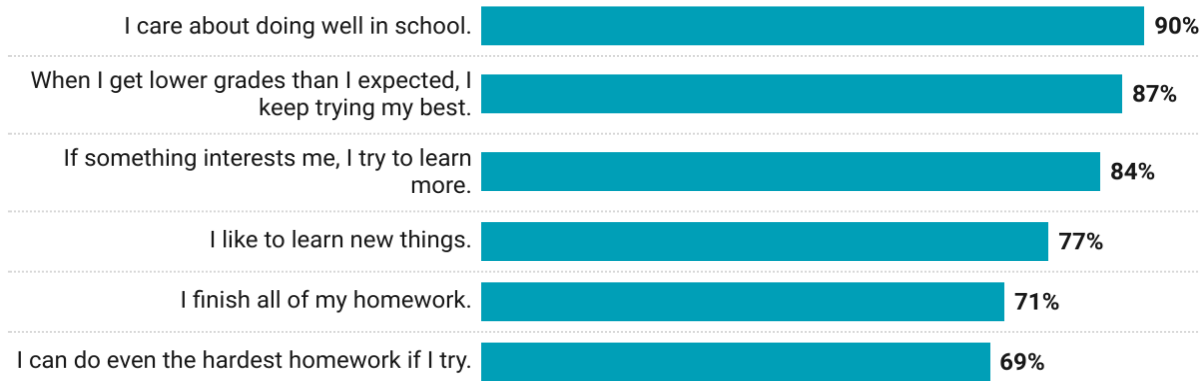
EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Girls Inc. participants are highly motivated to complete school, with 96% of respondents knowing they will graduate from high school, and 91% from college.



SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

A majority of both youth and teen respondents indicated that they care about doing well in school and exhibit behaviors like persistence and curiosity that are conducive to learning.

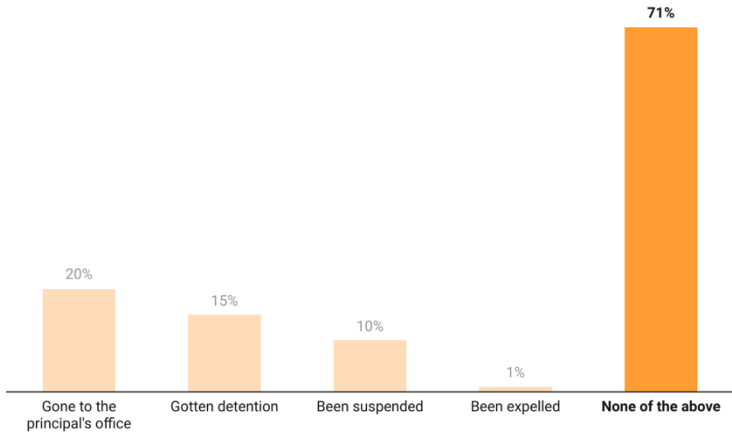


“Girls Inc. has taught me to **speak up, ask questions, and believe in my abilities**, even when I'm out of my comfort zone. That lesson has made a big difference—not just in school, but in **how I see my future.**”

SMART (Academic Enrichment/Support)

TRUANCY & SCHOOL DISCIPLINE (teen-only)

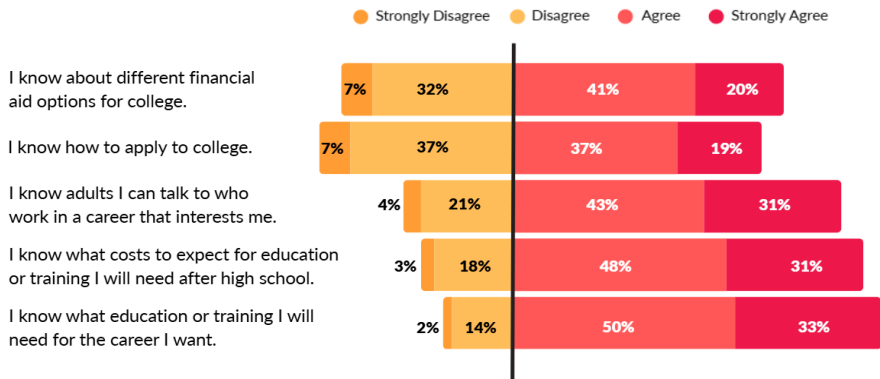
Over the most recent school year, 71% of teen respondents reported receiving no disciplinary action while at school, an indication of positive behavior. Of those that did receive some disciplinary action, the majority visited the principal’s office.



POST-SECONDARY READINESS (teen-only)

Girls Inc. teens are generally knowledgeable about post-secondary education and the preparation needed. Most notably, 83% either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they know the education or training needed for the career they wish to pursue. A lower majority understood the general college (56%) and financial aid application processes (61%).

“[Girls Inc. helped me] to prepare for the future, whether that be for college or a career.”



CRITICAL THINKING & COMMUNICATION (teen-only)

Teens reported a high degree of critical thinking, with 80% believing that they can express their views in front of others, and 89% saying they like to come up with new ways to solve problems.



BOLD (Life Skills Instruction)

Bold program activities and experiences build learnings, skills and behaviors that enable Girls Inc. participants to function independently and live a productive and fulfilling life. In 2025, Girls Inc. participants are highly resilient, diligent, and persistent; open to diverse perspectives; and willing to stand up for themselves and others. Despite struggling with bullying behaviors and a sense of personal agency, they remained hopeful about their futures and confident that they could be leaders. Teens have a strong sense of financial and social responsibility and feel confident that they can make a difference in their community—many are also doing so, with about 75% volunteering in their communities at least once a month.

RESILIENCE

Girls Inc. participants continue to be highly resilient, with over three-quarters reporting that they do their best even when things get tough.

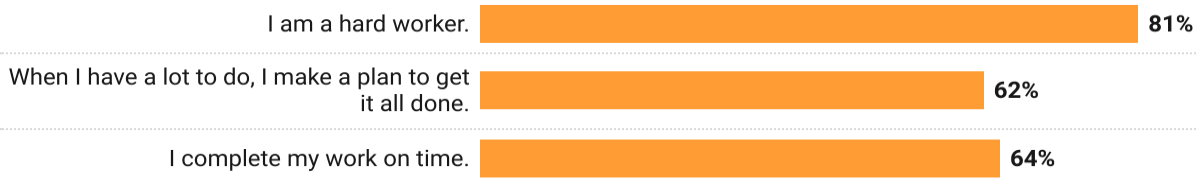


80% of respondents do their best even when things get tough.

“[Girls Inc. taught me] that **women are strong**. Don't give up even when it's hard.”

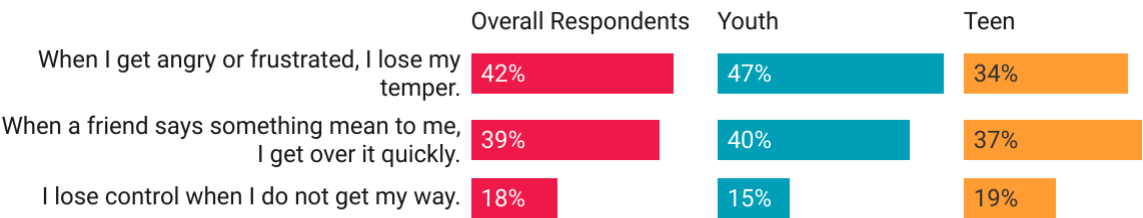
DILIGENCE & PERSEVERANCE

81% of girls across the network believe they are hard workers, although they could use some support in managing their workloads to get things completed on time.



SELF REGULATION

There is a significant gap between youth (9-12) and teens (13-18) on the self-regulation scale, particularly in losing their temper—47% of youth reported doing so compared to 34% of teen respondents. While this makes sense considering their developmental milestones, youth may need more intentional support in this area.



BOLD (Life Skills Instruction)

AGENCY

Most participants reported a strong sense of personal agency, with 67% believing that they could control the important things in their lives and 66% saying they could handle their problems.



67% of respondents believe they can control the important things in life.



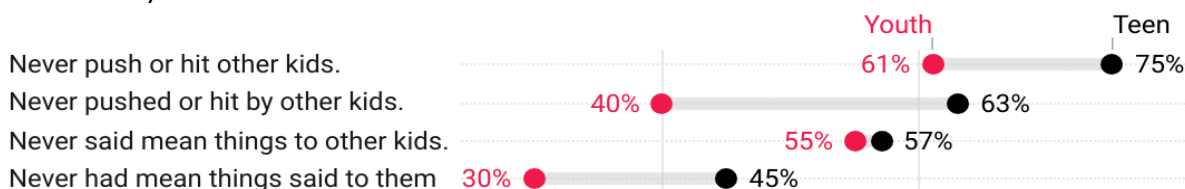
66% of respondents believe they can handle their problems

"I have gained **confidence** in my abilities and learned to **advocate for myself.**"

"I have learned not only to **trust myself** more but also to **not be afraid to lean on others.**"

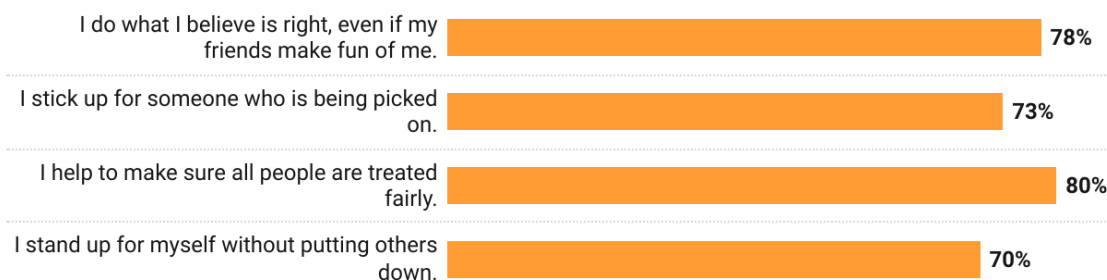
BULLYING

Bullying remains a nationally recognized area of concern for youth. According to the [2024 YRBS Summary & Trends Report](#), 22% of female high school students reported being bullied at school, a higher rate than their male counterparts. The SSBOS asked Girls Inc. participants whether they had experienced bullying and/or bullied others, focusing on two specific behaviors: pushing and hitting, and "saying mean things." Results showed notable disparities between youth and teens:



STANDING UP

Participants indicated high levels of standing up to ensure equity and fairness in their daily lives, with 70% or more saying they stand up for themselves and others.



BOLD (Life Skills Instruction)

OPENNESS

Girls Inc. participants reported being open to ideas, concepts, and identities that are different from their own; more than 75% reported that they listen to other ideas and get along well with people from other backgrounds.



89% get along well with people of different races, cultures, religions, and identities.



87% listen to other people's ideas and feelings.



78% listen to people even if they disagree with them.

"[Girls Inc. taught me] to **be open** to new experiences and individuals that walk into my life."

"Something important I learned in Girls Inc. is how to **compromise** with each other and how to be **open minded** about what people say and think."

FUTURE MINDEDNESS

Girls Inc. participants were positive about their future prospects, indicating that they think about who they will be when they are older and anticipate a great future for themselves.



93% think about who they will be when they are older
AND believe they have a great future ahead of them

"I have learned to love myself and **envision a future of success** for myself."

"I learned that thinking about our future at early age will **help us reach our goals.**"

"I have learned at Girls Inc is an organization dedicated to helping girls learn how to express themselves and build them into the **future of tomorrow.**"

BOLD (Life Skills Instruction)

LEADERSHIP

Overall, Girls Inc. participants responded positively about their leadership capabilities. 77% of girls felt seen as a leader by their peers, while 85% felt confident in leading others to a goal. A significant majority, 93%, agreed that girls like them could be leaders.



"I learned to be **courageous**, and to be a **leader** in the future like many of the women we got to hear from."

"I've learned that **my voice matters** and that I can be a **leader** in my community."

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (teen-only)

Girls Inc. teen participants held financial responsibility in high regard: about 90% believed it is important to know how much one spends, plan for big purchases, and manage your money well.



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (teen-only)

Of the teen participants of the survey, most felt a responsibility to protect the planet and believed in the importance of being active and informed about current events.

87%
It is important to be an active and informed citizen.

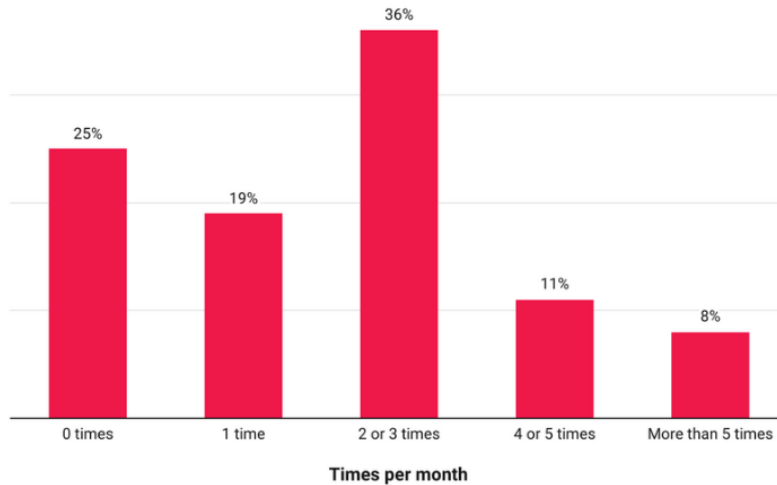


76%
I am responsible for protecting our planet

BOLD (Life Skills Instruction)

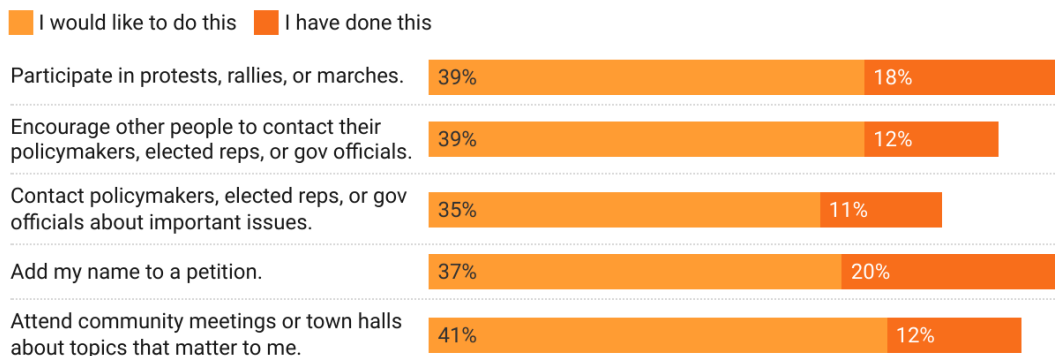
VOLUNTEERING (teen-only)

Teens at Girls Inc. were engaged in their communities with 75% of respondents reporting volunteer activities at least once a month.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & EFFICACY (teen-only)

About half of teen respondents were eager to be civically engaged in activities such as participating in protests, contacting policymakers, or adding their name to a petition.

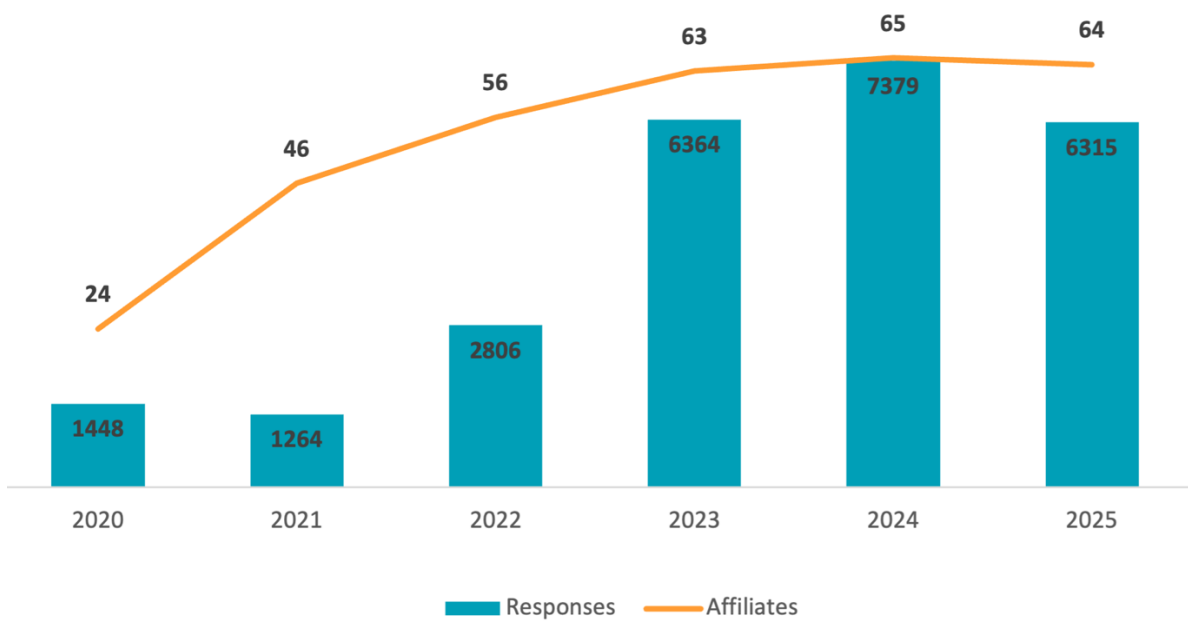


85% of teens believe they can make a positive difference in their communities AND can use what they know to solve "real-life" problems in their communities

"[Girls Inc. taught me] the importance of being an **informed and active citizen.**"

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE 2026 SSBOS

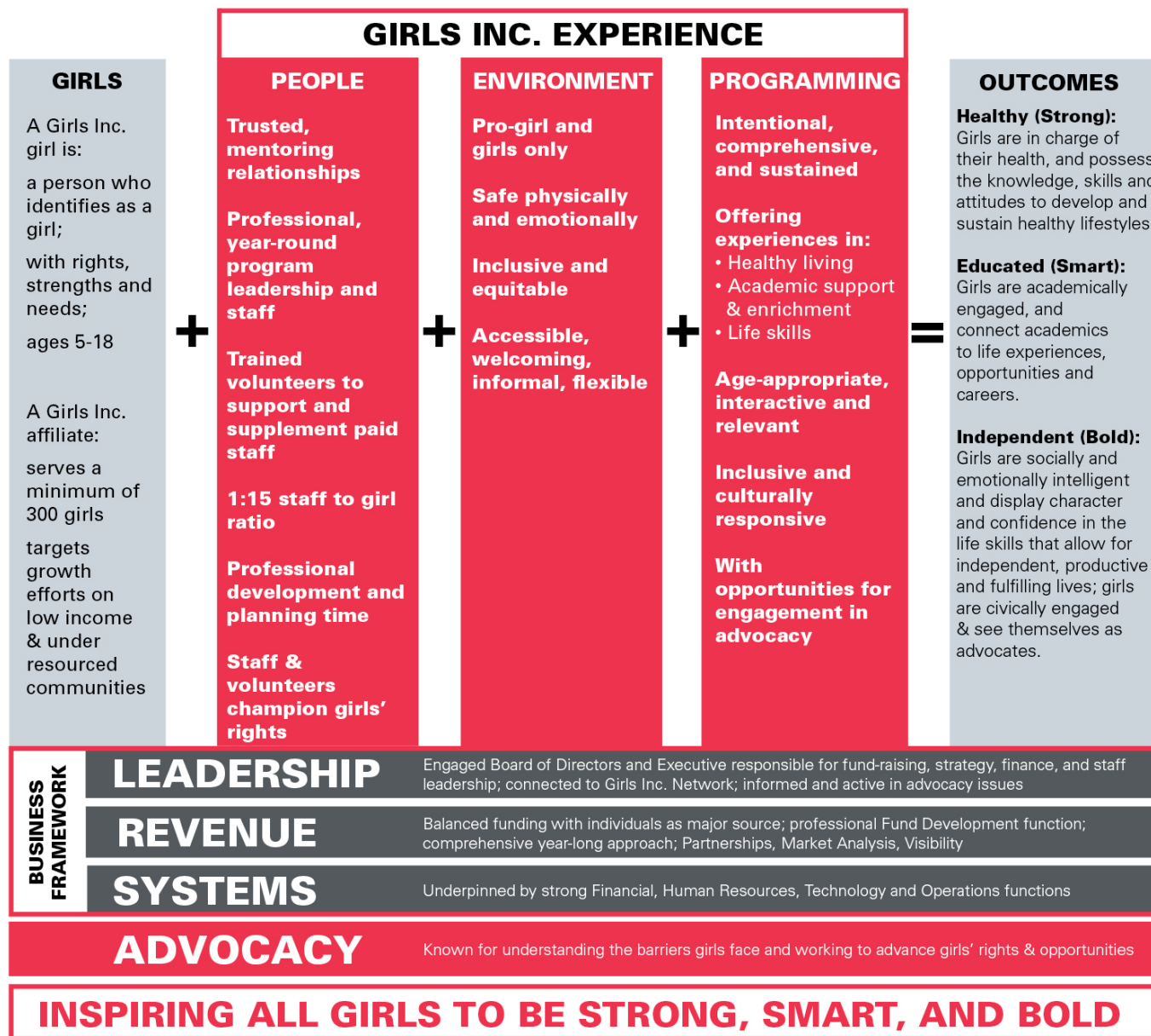
As the primary tool to understand the participants served by Girls Inc., the SSBOS will continue to evolve to meet the needs of the Network. Looking ahead, we hope to further streamline the survey administration process, making it easier for affiliates to administer and continuing to make the survey accessible to all participants in the Network. As Girls Inc. participants continually adapt to an ever-changing world, Girls Inc. is ready to adapt along with them.



APPENDIX A

GIRLS INC. AFFILIATE MODEL

THE STRONG, SUSTAINING, GROWING GIRLS INC. AFFILIATE



APPENDIX B

SOURCES FOR SSBOS METRICS

The SSBOS currently contains 80 youth/teen questions and an additional 17 teen-only questions, including several demographic questions aligned with the US Census and two open-ended questions to elicit participant voice. The remaining items measure various aspects of the Girls Inc. Experience, with metrics drawn from the sources below. Given the preponderance of US-based Affiliates and participants, the SSBOS currently incorporates metrics from organizations in the United States. Canadian Affiliates may have access to local/national datasets with comparable metrics.

Source	Strong	Smart	Bold	GIE	Source Notes
Child Trends	3 youth/teen	5 youth/teen + 1 teen-only	4 youth/teen	10 youth/teen	These questions were developed specifically for Girls Inc. in collaboration with Child Trends as part of a wider 3-year engagement to codify the model for the Girls Inc. Experience.
CHKS	6 youth/teen	2 youth/teen + 1 teen-only	5 youth/teen		The California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) is administered to children in grades 5, 7, 9, and 11 to assess school climate, safety, and overall student wellness.
NCSSLE		4 teen-only			The University of Washington National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) developed the Communities That Care Youth Survey (CTC-Y) in 2014 to assess various community risk factors among students in grades 6-12.
Colorado Trust			3 youth/teen	8 youth/teen	The Colorado Trust's 2004 Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development provides questions designed for staff to assess youth outcomes in after-school programs serving youth ages 8-15.
Hello Insight		1 teen-only			Hello Insight offers an array of child and youth surveys designed to inform practitioner efforts to build social-emotional skills among youth and young adults ages 5-23.
Partnerships in Education and Resilience		3 youth/teen			The PEAR Institute's Common Instrument Suite for Students (PEAR-CIS-S) measures a variety of STEM-related attitudes among students in grade 4 and higher; questions designed with out-of-school time (OST) programs in mind.
Search Institute			1 youth/teen + 10 teen-only		The SEARCH Institute's Youth Civic and Character Measures Toolkit offers questions designed to measure civic engagement and character strength among youth ages 9-18 in grades 4-12.
Youth Experience Survey		3 youth/teen			The Annie E. Casey Foundation developed middle school and high school versions of the Youth Experience Survey that city and state agencies can administer biannually to monitor key child/youth outcomes and associated risk and protective factors.
YRBS	7 youth/teen*				The US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention administer the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to middle and high school students every two years to monitor priority health behaviors that can lead to negative outcomes among youth and young adults.
Girls Inc.	2 youth/teen	4 youth/teen + 5 teen-only	1 youth/teen + 6 teen only		These questions were developed to assess specific aspects of the Girls Inc. Experience and/or Girls Inc. programming. Some of these questions were added to the SSBOS after its initial development.

girls inc.

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to be strong,
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