

# Girl Scouts' Highest Awards: Frequently Asked Questions



What are the minimum hours for earning each of the awards?

After the journey(s) requirement is fulfilled, the minimum number of hours to use as a guide is:

The Bronze Award -- minimum 20 hours

The Silver Award -- minimum 50 hours

The Gold Award -- minimum 80 hours

Not all projects will require the same length of time to complete from planning to sharing and celebration. The time it takes to earn the awards will depend on the nature of the project, the size of the team, and the support of the community. Quality projects should be emphasized over quantity of hours.

How many girls can work on a Take Action project together?

Bronze Award – whole troop can work together.

Silver Award – up to 4 girls can work together but each girl must have an individual leadership role. Each girl must complete her own paperwork to be submitted with other group members' for approval.

Gold Award – girls must work individually.

Despite the group size restrictions, girls should be partnering with members of their community to implement their project plans.

Why are journeys prerequisites to earn the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards?

The journeys give girls a full experience of what they will do as they work to earn the highest awards. The skills girls gain while working on the journeys will help them develop, plan and implement their award Take Action project.

How do girls know when a journey is "completed?"

A journey is completed when a girl has earned the journey awards, which include creating and carrying out a Take Action project.

What makes the awards' guidelines different from the journeys?

In contrast to journey Take Action projects, which give girls themes on which to base their journey Take Action project, the Girl Scout Award Take Action projects have no pre-designed theme. Girls select their own theme, design, and execute their Take Action project.

What is happening with the prerequisites for the awards (i.e. the signs, interest patches, career and leadership awards)?

These awards will no longer be prerequisites under the new guidelines. However, girls can continue to earn these awards.

Can girls begin working on their awards the summer after they bridge (transition) from one Girl Scout level to the next?

Yes. Girls can begin to earn the awards over the summer.

As a project advisor what can I do to support my girls?

The best way to make sure that a girl is doing the best of her ability is to ensure that both she and her project advisor receive orientation about the award and understand the difference between a one time community service opportunity or event and a Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Take Action project. Orientation for the awards is covered during the council-sponsored Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Workshops.

Do I need to get approval for my project before I begin?

Girl Scout Bronze Award Take Action projects are approved by the advisor working with the project. A final report form is submitted to the Brooklyn Center Service Center for tracking purposes.

Girl Scout Silver Award Take Action projects are approved by council. Girls should submit their project proposal at least 3 weeks prior to project start date.

Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action projects are approved by the Gold Award Committee. Girls should submit their project proposal at least 4 weeks prior to project start date. Girls will present their proposal to the Gold Award Committee for approval.

What does it mean to have a sustainable project?

A sustainable project is one that lasts after the girl's involvement ends. A focus on education and raising awareness is one way to make sure a project is carried on.

Workshops and hands-on learning sessions can inspire others to keep the project going.

Another way to create a sustainable project is by collaborating with community groups, civic associations, non-profit agencies, local government, and/or religious organizations to ensure the project lasts beyond the girl's involvement.

Is sustainability differentiated at each grade level?

The guidelines give girls tools to examine the underlying root cause of issues, develop a sustainable project plan and measure the impact of their project on their community, the target audience and themselves. There is progression. While Junior Girl Scouts working on their Girl Scout Bronze Award will reflect on how the project could be kept going, Girl Scout Cadettes plan for sustainability. Seniors and Ambassadors work to ensure the sustainability of their project in order to meet the Gold Award standards of excellence.

While Juniors explore an issue that affects their Girl Scout community, Cadettes create a community map of their neighborhood or school. Meanwhile Seniors and Ambassadors earning the Gold Award assess an issue and its effect more broadly by interviewing community leaders, research using a variety of sources and investigate other community's solutions to a similar problem.

How does a girl measure project impact?

Girls identify their project goals for their community, target audience and themselves and evaluate how those goals were met.

What if a girl's project is not completed by the council ceremony time?

Girls and their project advisors are encouraged to work within the council timeline; however, the ceremony time should not dictate whether or not a girl is able to earn her Girl Scout Gold or Silver Award. She can be honored in a local ceremony or come back for the council-wide ceremony the next year. Final reports are due March 1, 2010 to be included in the River Valleys 2010 Gold and Silver Award Ceremony.

We really want to help raise money for our local hospital because someone in our troop is sick. Can we do this?

You need to follow national and council guidelines for fund raising. You cannot raise money for another organization according to GSUSA policy. However, you can volunteer for that organization. Instead of marching in a walkathon, what about volunteering to help with registration or making sure everyone has water and a snack along the route? It is really important that you consult the Council Reference Guide and *Safety-Wise* for troop money-earning guidelines.

If a girl starts working on her Take Action project and moves; can she still earn her award? Councils and Overseas Committees are encouraged to be flexible to work and serve the girls' best interests. If a girl moves, she should work with her council and/or Overseas Committees to complete the project.

Do we need a different set of requirements for girls with disabilities to earn the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards?

No. The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are done to the best of a girl's ability. There is no need to have special requirements for girls with disabilities — encourage flexibility and the recruitment of advisors that can work with the girl individually.

### **Specific questions related to the Girl Scout Gold Award**

Who can earn the Girl Scout Gold Award?

A girl must be a registered Girl Scout Senior or Girl Scout Ambassador.

Can individually registered girl members or Juliettes earn the Girl Scout Gold Award?

Any girl, who meets the grade-level and membership requirements, can work on her Girl Scout Gold Award.

Can a girl earn the Girl Scout Gold Award even if she hasn't been in Girl Scouts very long?

Yes! She just needs to be a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador to begin her Gold Award project.

Does a Senior or Ambassador need to do the two journeys in any particular order?

No. She can complete either two Girl Scout Senior level journeys, two Girl Scout Ambassador level journeys or one of each.

What is the difference between a troop volunteer and a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor in the Girl Scout Gold Award process? Do girls need both?

A Troop Volunteer is the adult who works with an ongoing troop or group. Once a girl identifies her issue, the troop volunteer might help her identify a person in the community who could be a great project advisor.

A Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor is a volunteer that guides a girl as she takes her project from the planning stage to implementation. The project advisor is not a girl's parent or a Girl Scout troop volunteer. The project advisor is typically someone from the community who is knowledgeable about the issue and who can provide guidance, experience and expertise along the way.

Why can't a parent be a Girl Scout Gold Award Project Advisor?

Girls are encouraged to connect with their community when earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. That means working with a project advisor who is not her parent.

At what point should a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor be identified?

The project advisor should be identified in the planning phase before the Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal is turned in to the council. The project advisor expands the network of adults and provides expertise for a girl's project. If a girl has an idea before she starts any work on her Girl Scout Gold Award, she might want to identify her project advisor from the very beginning.

What if a girl is 18 and graduating? Can she complete her project when she is in college?

A girl has until the end of the Girl Scout membership year (September 30th) after graduation from high school.

What is the role of the council's Girl Scout Gold Award committee?

Girl Scout Gold Award Committees are typically comprised of community members, educators, key volunteers and young women who have earned their Girl Scout Gold Award. The Committee works with designated council staff.

The committee's role is to ensure that girls' projects meet the national guidelines. The committee reviews the Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal, makes recommendations for project development and resources, reads the final report, and approves the project. If a girl's project has not yet achieved its goals, the committee provides suggestions and tips to help her develop a high quality Gold Award project.

For more information, forms and documents, and additional resources please refer to the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Information Packets, which can be found on the Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys website: [www.girlscoutsrv.org](http://www.girlscoutsrv.org).

If you need further assistance, all program specialists can answer general questions about each of the Girl Scouts' highest awards. For specific questions pertaining to individual projects, please contact program specialists by location as follows:

Girl Scout Bronze Award: Council-wide - Steph Helkenn, [steph.helkenn@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:steph.helkenn@girlscoutsrv.org)

Girl Scout Silver Award:

- Brooklyn Center - Bertrene Cage, [bertrene.cage@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:bertrene.cage@girlscoutsrv.org)
- Northfield & Redwood Falls - Steph Helkenn, [steph.helkenn@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:steph.helkenn@girlscoutsrv.org)
- Rochester - Liana Michelfelder-Tessum, [liana.tessum@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:liana.tessum@girlscoutsrv.org)
- St. Paul - Mary Gwen Thompson, [mary.thompson@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:mary.thompson@girlscoutsrv.org)

Girl Scout Gold Award:

- Brooklyn Center - Sarah Kuenle, [sarah.kuenle@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:sarah.kuenle@girlscoutsrv.org)
- Northfield & Redwood Falls - Steph Helkenn, [steph.helkenn@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:steph.helkenn@girlscoutsrv.org)
- Rochester - Liana Michelfelder-Tessum, [liana.tessum@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:liana.tessum@girlscoutsrv.org)
- St. Paul - Nicole Huebner, [nicole.huebner@girlscoutsrv.org](mailto:nicole.huebner@girlscoutsrv.org)