

Highest Awards: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why are the Journeys prerequisites for earning the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards?

A. The Journeys let girls experience what they'll do as they work to earn Girl Scout's highest awards — discover an issue they're passionate about, connect with experts in their community, and take action to make the world a better place. The skills girls gain while working on Journeys will help them develop, plan, and implement Take Action projects for their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award.

Q. How do girls know when a Journey is "completed?"

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

Q. What makes the guidelines for Girl Scout's highest awards different from those for the Journeys?

A. In contrast to Journey Take Action projects, which give girls themes on which to base their projects, highest award Take Action projects have no pre-designed theme. Girls focus on an issue, and then they design and execute their Take Action project.

Q. What are the suggested hours for earning each of the awards?

A. The time it takes to earn the awards will depend on the nature of the project, size of the team, and degree of community support. Quality projects should be emphasized over quantity of hours. After Journey requirements are fulfilled, the suggested minimum number of hours to use as a guide is:

- Bronze Award: 20 hours
- Silver Award: 50 hours
- Gold Award: 80 hours

Q. Can a troop work towards an award together?

A. At the Bronze level, girls must work together in a team setting. When girls work toward their Silver Award, they have the option to work individually or in small groups. The Gold Award, a Girl Scout's greatest achievement, is earned by an individual Girl Scout.

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

A. Yes, if they have completed all of the award prerequisites.

Q. Can Take Action projects from the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards focus on Girl Scouting?

A. Yes, Take Action projects for the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards may benefit the Girl Scout community. However, there is a specific award progression that should be honored: Take Action projects for the Bronze Award may focus on service in support of the Girl Scout Movement, while Take Action projects for the Silver and Gold Awards are expected to reach into the community to "make the world a better place." At the Silver and Gold Award levels, a girl should first consider issues she's passionate about in her school, community, and world that she'd like to address. Then, she should investigate her issue to uncover its root cause, connect with the community to begin developing a solution, and enlist her team. As she develops her project plan, she'll determine her target audience. It's at this step that she might decide Girl Scouts is the best audience or beneficiary.

Overall, our award progression offers younger girls the opportunity to develop their planning and leadership skills within the comfort and familiarity of Girl Scouts, or another local community. As they mature, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors are ready to move beyond the Girl Scout family to share their leadership skills—and impact—with the wider community.

Q. If a girl starts working on her Take Action project and moves, can she still earn her award?

A. Councils and Overseas Committees are encouraged to be flexible to serve girls' best interests. If a girl moves, she should work with her council or committee to complete her award project.

Q. Who are the adult guides for: Council staff, parents, or volunteers?

A. Any adult is welcome to use the adult guides, which were designed for volunteers working directly with girls earning their awards. Note that we offer guides specifically tailored to how parents/ caretakers, project advisors, and troop/group leaders can support their girls in pursuit of the Gold Award.

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

A. No. Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award work is done to the best of a girl's ability. There is no need to have special requirements for girls with disabilities. Modifications and accommodations to the requirements can be made with consideration of the individual's special needs.

Q: Can a troop or group work on the Gold Award together?

A: No. The pursuit of the Gold Award is ultimately an individual Girl Scout's journey. While troop/ group members may help, earning her Gold Award requires a girl to take control of her leadership development as she builds and leads a team.

Q. Is sustainability differentiated at each grade level?

A. The guidelines give girls tools to examine the underlying root cause of issues, develop sustainable project plans, and measure the impact of their projects on their communities, target audiences, and themselves. And yes, there is progression from one grade level to the next. Girl Scout Juniors working toward their Bronze Award will reflect on how their projects could be continued, Girl Scout Cadettes reflect on and put a plan in place for continuation, and Seniors and Ambassadors work to ensure their Gold Award project is sustained beyond their involvement.

Q. Does a Senior or Ambassador need to complete the two Journeys in any particular order?

A. No. She can complete two Girl Scout Senior Journeys, two Ambassador Journeys, or one of each. Note: If she earned her Silver Award, she only needs to complete one Senior or Ambassador Journey.

Q. How can we make sure that Girl Scout awards represent quality projects?

A. The best way to make sure a girl is working at 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 community service and a Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Take Action project. It's the responsibility of the troop/group volunteer, council staff member, or Gold Award committee to work with the girl to ensure she meets the quality requirements of the award.

Note that Take Action and community service are different—and both are essential to Girl Scouting. When a girl performs community service, she responds to immediate need in a one-off, “doing for” capacity; with Take Action/ service learning, she explores the root causes of a community need and addresses one in a sustainable way.

Q. What is the difference between a troop/ group volunteer and a Girl Scout project advisor? Do girls need both?

A. A troop/group volunteer is the adult who works with Girl Scouts. Once a girl identifies her issue, the troop/group volunteer might help her identify a person in the community who could be a great project advisor.

A project advisor is an adult who chooses to be on a Girl Scouts team and is an expert on the issue that girl's project addresses. Parents, caregivers, or troop leaders of girls pursuing high awards cannot be advisors. Adults, siblings, and family members like aunts and uncles can sometimes be advisors if they're experts on the issue the Girl Scout is exploring. However, we encourage Girl Scouts to branch outside of their families when possible.

A project advisor offers a Girl Scout guidance and expertise as needed during the planning and execution of the girl's Gold Award project. Note that it's important that the project and its core ideas be the Girl Scout's own.

Q. How does a girl measure project impact?

A. A project is measurable when the girl collects information/data throughout her project and uses it to show that her actions have had an impact on the community issue she's chosen. Girls are encouraged to think about what they can count in their project. (How much? How many?)

Q. What are the current deadlines?

A. The yearly deadline to submit final reports is March 1, in order to be honored at the Honor Awards Ceremony later that year. All girls have until September 30 of either their Junior-level 5th grade year, Cadette-level 8th grade year, or Ambassador-level 12th grade year to qualify and turn in reports.

