

## **Girl Scouts Louisiana East Frequently Asked Questions Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards**

We know you have questions as you begin the High Award process with your Girl Scouts. At each award level, Bronze, Silver and Gold, an Adult Guideline is available. Most of your questions will be answered there. The Guidelines are available at [www.gsle.org](http://www.gsle.org). If you still have unanswered questions after reading the Guidelines and the Frequently Asked Questions below, please send inquiries to [program@gsle.org](mailto:program@gsle.org).

### **Getting Started:**

**Q: How do I get started on the awards?**

**A:** Start by visiting [www.gsle.org/for girls/bronzesilvergold.asp](http://www.gsle.org/for girls/bronzesilvergold.asp). Download the Girl and Adult Guidelines. These will explain how to start as well as detail all of the steps involved.

**Q: Are there any required trainings in order to earn the Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award?**

**A:** No, training is not required in order to work on your award, but it is highly recommended to attend a Take Action Volunteer Learning Module in order to become more informed about Take Action projects.

### **Money Questions:**

**Q: Can monetary donations and/or sponsorships be solicited from businesses in order to cover costs of a Take Action Project?**

**A:** No. The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are intended for Girl Scouts to set goals and then strive to accomplish those goals, utilizing creative efforts and hard work. Asking others to cover the costs associated with your project is not considered the appropriate way of earning a Girl Scout Highest Award. Girls should establish their own money earning projects in order to raise needed funds.

Creating relationships with community partners is encouraged, but not by asking for funds to directly cover the cost of the project. Concentration should be focused more on developing partnerships with organizations or schools to sustain the project after completion or perhaps running special incentives to benefit your project, such as holding a donation drive within their location or another special incentive to assist your project.

**Q: Can a Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award Project raise money for another organization?**

**A:** No. Girl Scouts are not to raise funds for another organization. Money Earning Projects can be completed to cover the costs of the project. Items can be donated to other organizations after being collected or purchased.

## Basics:

**Q: Are there certain age levels as well as grade levels for earning the awards?**

**A:** No. The awards are based on grade levels.

**Q: How should we recognize "grade levels" for homeschoolers?**

**A:** Although some girls may be academically advanced for their age through home schooling, most girls appreciate teaming with girls their age to take action on issues that are important to them.

**Q: Can girls begin working on their awards the summer after bridging (transition) from one Girl Scout level to the next?**

**A:** Yes. Girls can begin to earn the awards over the summer.

**Q: Can individually registered girl members or Juliettes earn the Bronze, Silver or Gold Award?**

**A:** Yes. If a girl meets the grade-level and membership requirements, she can work on her High Awards.

**Q: Are the suggested hours per girl or per project?**

**A:** The minimum suggested hours is a recommendation for *each* girl even if she is working on a group project.

## Pre-requisite and Journey Questions

**Q: Do award prerequisites have to be completed before I can begin my project?**

**A:** Yes. They are required to be completed before beginning the project.

**Q: Is the Journey the only thing that I have to do before starting my project, just that one book?**

**A:** No. Once you complete the Journey (or two Journeys for the Gold Award), you must research the root causes of an issue in the community, and then formulate a project based on your research as outlined in the guidelines.

**Q: For the Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award, do I have to complete an entire Journey, including the Journey Take Action project before I can formulate my project and get started?**

**A:** Yes, you have to complete the entire Journey, including the Journey Take action project as a prerequisite to the awards. At the Gold level, you must complete two Journeys in their entirety, including two Journey Take Action Projects, unless you have earned a Silver Award and then you only need to complete one Journey and the Journey Take Action Project. They must be at the appropriate Girl Scout level as well. Juniors work on Junior Journeys, and Cadettes work on Cadette Journeys, etc.

**Q: Please define "completion" of a Journey.**

**A:** Girls complete a Journey after they have achieved all of the awards associated with the journey. If a Journey has three accompanying awards, girls must earn all the awards to complete

the Journey. Likewise, if a journey only has one accompanying award, girls complete the Journey upon earning the Journey award.

**Q: How long do Journeys take to complete?**

**A:** It depends on how often girls meet, the nature of their projects, and involvement in other Girl Scout activities (i.e. badges, product sale, “side trips”). The Journeys are complete when girls earn all the awards in the Journey.

## Take Action Projects

**Q: What is a Take Action project?**

**A:** A Take Action project in Girl Scouting offers a sustainable solution to a community issue or problem while addressing the root cause of the issue (i.e. an on-going intergenerational program at a nursing home, a sustainable community garden, or a lasting tutoring program). Girls can develop sustainable Take Action Projects by educating or informing others about their project and/or by partnering with local organizations or schools to ensure the project lasts after the girl’s involvement ends.

**Q: What is the difference between a Journey Take Action project and an Award Take Action project?**

**A:** The *Journey Take Action* project is formulated as a team, based on the topic of the Journey, and is done within the Journey to complete and earn the Journey Awards. The Journey Take Action Project may be done by a group of girls, or by an individual girl; it has no specified number of hours to earn, and it may be focused on or within Girl Scouts. A Journey Take Action Project may be for the Girl Scouts, like running a Service Unit Camporee or Outdoor Living Skills course.

The *Award Take Action* Project is based on the interest of the girls and the needs of the community. At the Bronze Award level, it is a group project of the troop. At the Silver Award level, it is a small group project for 2 to 4 girls requiring a suggested minimum of 50 hours. At the Gold Award level, it is an individual project requiring a suggested minimum of 80 hours. All award levels develop teams of people to assist them in completing the project.

**Q: Can Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award projects be done in the Girl Scout Community?**

**A:** No. The Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are expected to be done in the local community beyond the Girl Scouting community. The project should be visible to the public and seen as Girl Scouts making an impact on their community to make the world a better place.

**Q: If I complete the entire Journey, including the Journey Take Action Project, and then complete an Award Take Action Project, then I will be doing two Take Action Projects!**

**A:** That is correct. You will be doing an entire Journey, including a Journey Take Action Project, and then formulating your own Award Take Action project for the community as well. The Journey Take Action Project is practice and preparation for the Award Take Action Project.

**Q: Do you suggest the project advisors as well as the troop advisor take the Take Action Learning Module?**

**A:** Any volunteer who will be guiding girls through an awards project is encouraged to participate in the Take Action Learning session so that they have a good understanding of the expectations and can best assist girls in fulfilling their project plans. The adult learning course is suggested, not mandatory.

**Q: Is the Take Action Learning Module specific to each award or a general training all can attend together?**

**A:** The Take Action Learning Module focuses on the development of quality take action projects at all awards levels.

**Q: Are Take Action adult learning sessions mandatory for the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards?**

**A:** Trainings are not mandatory. However, they can help better educate volunteers and girls in planning, implementing and sharing quality take action awards projects.

## **Bronze Questions**

**Q: Can a girl earn a Bronze Award on her own?**

**A:** The Girl Scout Bronze Award is a team-based project earned by a group of Girl Scouts.

**Q: Can Bronze Take Action projects be done in the Girl Scout Community?**

**A:** No. The Bronze Award Projects are expected to be done in the local community beyond the Girl Scouting community. The project should be visible to the public and seen as Girl Scouts making an impact on their community to make the world a better place.

**Q: Who can be an advisor for a Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award project?**

**A:** For the Bronze Award, a Parent or Troop Leader can be the advisor

**Q: Do I have to turn in paperwork for the Bronze Award?**

**A:** Yes, the Bronze Award Final Report is to be turned into the council once the project is completed. The leader will be sent approval to purchase the awards once the report has been reviewed and approved. Each girl must write her own paperwork in her own words and a troop/group project should be submitted together as one packet. Girl Scouts Louisiana East Bronze Award forms may be downloaded from the website or obtained from the council office. Once filled out, original signed forms must be submitted to the council office. Be sure to make copies for your records. Do not fax or email scanned documents, only original signed documents will be accepted.

**Q: What if someone approves a Bronze Award that is not acceptable?**

**A:** The troop leader/advisor should be fully prepared and understand the rules and regulations of the Bronze Award according to the packet of information provided. Leaders/advisors should not

begin to mentor a group of Girl Scouts without knowing the requirements of an award project or what should be expected from the girls.

## Silver Questions

**Q: Are Silver Award projects limited to only three to four girls?**

**A:** Girl Scout Silver Award projects should be led by an individual girl or approximately two to four Girl Scout Cadettes. Each Cadette on the team should have distinct roles and responsibilities.

**Q: Do I have to turn in paperwork for the Silver Award?**

**A:** Yes, the Silver Award Final Report is to be turned into the council once the project is completed. The leader will be sent approval to purchase the awards once the report has been reviewed and approved. Each girl must write her own paperwork in her own words and a troop/group project should be submitted together as one packet. Girl Scouts Louisiana East Silver Award forms may be downloaded from the website or obtained from the council office. Once filled out, original signed forms must be submitted to the council office. Be sure to make copies for your records. Do not fax or email scanned documents, only original signed documents will be accepted.

**Q: When do I have to complete the Silver Award?**

**A:** Cadette Girl Scouts have until the end of the 8th grade Girl Scout registration year to complete the award Silver Award project (September 30 of 9<sup>th</sup> grade).

**Q: Who can be an advisor for a Silver Award project?**

**A:** For the Silver Award, Troop Leaders and other qualified adults. "Other qualified adults" refers to someone who may have technical expertise in the girl's field of interest for her Award Take Action Project, such as a school principal or teacher, a staff member from an agency, and a city or parish official with whom the girl will be working to complete her project. The project advisor must be a screened volunteer if he or she will be working alone with girls.

**Q: What if someone approves a Silver Award that is not acceptable?**

**A:** The troop leader/advisor should be fully prepared and understand the rules and regulations of the Silver Award according to the packet of information provided. Leaders/advisors should not begin to mentor a group of Girl Scouts without knowing the requirements of an award project or what should be expected from the girls.

## Gold Questions

**Q: Can more than one girl work together on the same project and earn the Gold Award?**

**A:** The Girl Scout Gold Award is an individually-earned award.

**Q: Do I have to turn in paperwork for the Gold Award?**

**A:** Yes, the Gold Award requires a project proposal be sent to the Gold Award Committee for approval PRIOR to beginning work on the project. Additionally, once the project is completed, a final report must be sent to the Gold Award Committee for final approval. Once filled out, original signed forms must be submitted to the council office. Be sure to make copies for your records. Do not fax or email scanned documents, only original signed documents will be accepted.

**Q: Who can be an advisor for a Gold Award project?**

**A:** For the Gold Award the advisor should be an adult besides parent/troop leader. This adult may have technical expertise in the girl's field of interest for her Award Take Action Project, such as a school principal or teacher, a staff member from an agency, and a city or parish official with whom the girl will be working to complete her project. The project advisor must be a screened volunteer if he or she will be working alone with girls. Please refer to the additional document entitled *Gold Award Project Advisor Fact Sheet*.

**Q: Does the Gold Award project proposal have to be approved before starting the project?**

**A:** Yes, it must be approved by the council Gold Award Committee.

**Q: Does a girl have to physically meet with the Gold Award Committee after submission or proposal?**

**A:** Yes. The Gold Award Committee must meet individually with each girl once she has submitted her proposal. A girl must get approval from the committee before she can begin work on her take action project.

**Q: When does the Council Gold Award Committee meet?**

**A:** The Gold Award Committee meets on an, as needed basis.

**Q: How long does it take to get a Gold Award proposal approved?**

**A:** Once a proposal is submitted to the council, a time will be set up for the girl to personally meet with a board of committee members to discuss her proposal. The end result of this meeting will either be the approval of the proposal, or a revision and guideline process in which the proposal will be resubmitted based upon the suggestions discussed in the meeting. All attempts will be made to establish such a meeting within 3-6 weeks of receipt of the proposal by the council, based on availability of members and girl schedules.

**Q: When do I have to finish my Gold Award?**

**A:** By September 30th following high school graduation.

**Q: Can more than one girl work together on the same project and earn the Gold Award?**

**A:** The Girl Scout Gold Award is an individually-earned award.

# Community Service vs. Take Action Project

## Defining Community Service Projects

Community service projects often address an immediate need in the community: girls organize a book or clothing drive, paint walls to cover up graffiti, or hold a one-time march or fair to highlight a community problem. Although these projects address a need in the community, they do so for only a short period of time.

## Defining Take Action

A Take Action project picks up from where a short-term project leaves off. For example, the girls organizing the book or clothing drive could make their project a Take Action project by holding the drive annually and getting a sponsor to advertise and organize it every year. The girls who painted the walls to cover up graffiti can create a club that travels around the city painting beautiful murals on buildings that have been defaced. And the girls who held the march or fair could expand the event to include community artisans and make it an annual gathering. For each project, girls can publicize and get people in the community to come out and support. They can even get community leaders involved.

When girls pursue Take Action projects, they take time to identify and understand the root cause of the issue they are addressing. Girls also must make sure that each project is sustainable and that the impact is measurable.

- **Measurable:** The success of the project can be determine based on the number of people the project helped, the number of people who were involved, any reduction in the community's need, and other concrete numbers.
- **Sustainable:** Girls must make arrangements (such as collaborating with community leaders and/or organizations; building alliances with mentors) to ensure that the project creates lasting change and is not a one-time event.

<b>Short-Term Project</b> (a one-time effort; has short-term impact)	<b>Take Action Project</b> (identifies the root cause; has long-term benefits and sustainable support)
<b>Issue:</b> An uninsured family's home is destroyed by a fire. <b>Solution:</b> Collect clothes, household goods, and food for the family.	A solution could be to establish a Habitat for Humanity group in the community or work with an existing Habitat group and organize a work group to rebuild the family's home.
<b>Issue:</b> Racial tensions exist in the community. <b>Solution:</b> Organize a one-time diversity celebration.	One solution could be to create an organization that holds regular seminars/meetings/workshops about racial tolerance and understanding other cultures.
<b>Issue:</b> Families are going hungry. <b>Solution:</b> Hold a food drive for families in need.	One solution could be to come up with easy-to-make recipes (in a free booklet) that include as ingredients the items families regularly receive from food pantries.

# From Good to Great: Successful Girl Scout High Award Take Action Projects

Advisors and Girl Scouts are always wondering what types of projects are suitable for the Girl Scout High Awards. It is impossible to come up with an absolute list because a project should be based on the individual skills, abilities and interests of the girl.

However, some basic guidelines are that the project should:

- Be challenging to the Girl Scout
- Make a contribution to the community
- Be specific to the individual interest
- It is important to differentiate between a community service project and a Girl Scout Gold, Silver or Bronze Award project.
- The Award project should involve planning and individual opportunities for leadership and decision-making.

**Here are several activities that start as good service projects, but with good planning have moved into the caliber of Girl Scout High Awards project.**

## GREAT Girl Scout High Award Project!

<b>Good Service Project</b>	<b>GREAT High Awards Project!</b>
Volunteering many hours at a Park Service site picking up litter.	Reseeding an area with native vegetation and ridding area of non-native vegetation. Creating an interpretive guide on what the area was like 50 years ago and why it is important to preserve native species.
Working at the local library doing children's story hours or conducting a book drive for the juvenile detention center.	Creating a reading program for a migrant work camp in the summer. Assuring that each child receives a book (bilingual) of their own. Matching young children with volunteer tutors from the high school Spanish club to create an ongoing service project.
Volunteering to collect games and food at the mall for a teen center.	Creating a health access booklet for teens in the community; culminating with a teen health fair with various organizations presenting their services. Admission is canned goods for a teen center.
Planting flowers in a park during a community service day.	Working with the city parks department to start a public gardening project in your community. Providing food to a food bank from the garden. Using a greenhouse at a school to start plants yearly with kids and retired folks as mentors.
Acting in a play to commemorate the 100th anniversary of a community.	Researching and writing a script for a cemetery tour focusing on the founders of the community. Casting parts, creating costumes and arranging for a series of evening cemetery tours to kick off the founding of the community.