

Frequently Asked Questions: Girl Scout Highest Awards

1. Why are the 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

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

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. After the Journey(s) requirements are fulfilled, the suggested minimum number of hours to use as a guide is:

- The Bronze Award – suggested minimum 20 hours/per girl
- The Silver Award – suggested minimum 50 hours/per girl
- The Gold Award – suggested minimum 80 hours.
- NOTE: Hours that count for the awards are for the girl working on the project. Volunteers and advisors time do not count in the total. Girls may start counting their hours in the initial planning phases of her project.

5. When is the deadline for submitting my Final Report?

- The Bronze Award deadline – September 30th of the year the girl completes 5th grade
- The Silver Award deadline – September 30th of the year the girl completes 8th grade
- The Gold Award deadline – September 30th of the year the girl graduates high school or when she turns 18, which ever will give her the longest time

6. Can girls begin working on their awards the summer after they bridge to the next Girl Scout level.

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

7. Can a girl who is in third grade that is in a troop with Juniors earn a Bronze Award?

No, girls must be in 4th or 5th grade to earn the Bronze Award. The third grader can be part of the team but must wait until she reaches the 4th grade to work on and earn the award.

8. Do we need a different set of requirements for girls with disabilities to earn the 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.

9. Can a girl work on her Bronze Award on her own?

The Bronze Award is a team-based project earned by a group of Girl Scouts. If there are no other Girl Scouts available to work with, a girl may put together a team of friends or classmates to make up her team.

10. 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 Juniors working on their Bronze Award will reflect on how the project could be kept going, 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.

11. 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.

12. Who can earn the Gold Award?

A girl must be a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador. Any girl, who meets the grade-level and membership requirements, can work on her Girl Scout Gold Award.

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

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

14. 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 Journeys or one of each. Girl Scout Seniors complete Senior Journeys and Girl Scout Ambassadors complete Ambassador Journeys.

15. How can we make sure that Girl Scout Awards represent quality projects?

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 understand the award process and understand the difference between a onetime community service opportunity or event and a Girl Scout Bronze, Silver or Gold Award Take Action project. It is the responsibility of the troop/group volunteer, council staff member, or Gold Award Alliance Committee (for Gold work only) to work with the girl(s) to ensure that she/they meets the quality requirements of the award.

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

A **troop/group volunteer** is the adult who works with an ongoing troop or group. Once a girl identifies her issue, the 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/group 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.

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

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

18. 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 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 Gold Award, she might want to identify her project advisor from the very beginning.

19. What is the role of the council's Girl Scout Gold Award Alliance Committee?

The Gold Award Alliance Committee is made up of Girl Scout volunteers, some of who have earned their Gold Award. The committee works with designated council staff to support girls in developing high quality Gold Award projects and to ensure that the girls' projects meet the national guidelines. The committee reviews Gold Award Project Proposals, asks clarifying questions, makes recommendations for development and resources, reads the final report and makes a recommendation to the council on whether to approve the project.

20. How long does the approval process take for the Gold Award Project Proposal?

The process can take up to 6 weeks. The committee reviews the proposal and may ask questions for further information. Adequate time is allowed for both the committee and the girl to respond. Girls may not begin working on their project until they have received council approval for their project.

21. Can a Girl Scout Silver and Gold Award project be something that benefits only Girl Scouts?

As of October 1, 2018 girls may do final projects that benefit the Girl Scout community. In order to make sure that this change doesn't dilute the prestige, leadership efforts, or impact each girl's project, Silver and Gold Awards must still meet the requirements that are key to taking sustainable action. The project must still make a lasting difference in the local community, region or beyond.

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

A girl has until she turns 18 or until the end of the Girl Scout membership year – September 30 – when she is a senior in high school.

23. Does the council approve Girl Scout Bronze and Silver Award projects?

The troop/group volunteer approves the projects at this level and signs the paperwork. They are responsible for making sure the girls are following the guidelines and working on Take Action project rather than a service project. Council offers support and answers questions if necessary.

24. Does the Bronze and Silver Award paperwork need to be turn in to the council?

Girl Scouts of Montana and Wyoming requires that each girl submit a Final Report and Time Log by the deadline. The council will send each girl a congratulatory letter, certificate and certificate to purchase her pin, if the Troop Leader does not purchase it, once her paperwork has been submitted. Girls should keep a copy of their paperwork.

25. Are girls allowed to do a project for any of the awards that involves Girl Scouts of Montana and Wyoming property?

Girls need prior approval from the GSMW Property Committee and the Property Director for any project that involves our properties. A troop/group volunteer or project advisor should contact the GSMW Property Director for more information before beginning a project.

26. Who do I contact with questions?

Email your questions to customercare@gsmw.org