



BRONZE, SILVER & GOLD AWARDS

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding New GSUSA Guidelines

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 are the suggested hours for earning each of the awards?

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

The Bronze Award -- suggested minimum 20 hours

The Silver Award -- suggested minimum 50 hours

The Gold Award -- suggested minimum 80 hours

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.

What is the transition timeline?

There is a two-year transition period. Girls will have from summer 2009, when the new guidelines are released, through September 30, 2011 to transition to the new guidelines. The guidelines will become official on October 1, 2011 (beginning of the 2012 membership year). If a girl starts working on the award in 2011 and the majority of work will be done during the 2012 membership year, the new guidelines should be used.

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.

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.

Who are the adult guides for – council staff, parents, or volunteers?

Any adult is welcome to use the adult guides. The guides were designed for volunteers working directly with girls on achieving their awards.

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.

Can a girl earn her Bronze Award on her own?

The Bronze Award is a team-based project.

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.

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.

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.

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 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. It's the responsibility of the troop/group volunteer, council staff member or Gold Award committee (for Gold Award only) to work with the girl to ensure that she meets the quality requirements of the award.

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 troop/group 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 typically 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.

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

Some councils have developed **Girl Scout Gold Award Committees** to support Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors as they go through the process of earning their Girl Scout Gold Award. 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. Generally, the committee reviews Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposals, makes recommendations for project development and resources, reads the final report, and makes a recommendation to the council on whether to approve the project. In some councils the committee 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.

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.

How does a girl measure project impact?

Girls identify their project goals for their community, target audience and themselves by developing success indicators using a matrix provided in the guidelines.

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.

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 30th) when she is a senior in high school.

What if a girl graduates and is 18 and doesn't have her project completed?

In this case the girl would have until September 30 of the year she graduates.

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

This is up to the girl. She might be recognized for her work in progress at the Girl Scout Gold Award Ceremony for her peers, or she can be honored in a separate ceremony or come back for the council-wide ceremony the next year. If the council has a set time for honoring Girl Scout Gold Awardees, this should be part of the orientation to girls planning their Girl Scout Gold Award. 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 Award.