

Silver Award FAQs

Why must girls complete Journeys before earning Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards?

Earning one of Girl Scouts' highest awards challenges girls to be their best. By first completing a "regular" Journey, girls learn what it takes to successfully complete a Take Action project—so they're better prepared to develop, plan, and implement the more involved Take Action project for their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award.

What do you mean when you say a girl's Journey is "completed"?

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

Are the guidelines for the highest awards the same as those for Journeys?

As you might expect, there are some differences. Take Action projects for a Journey have predetermined themes. To earn a Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award, girls are required to come up with their own Take Action project theme.

How many hours should it take to earn each of the highest awards?

No two projects are alike, so the time to plan, share, and complete a project will vary depending on the scope of the project, team, and community support. The quality of the project should be emphasized over the quantity of hours necessary to complete it. However, after fulfilling the required Journey, the suggested minimum number of hours is:

Bronze Award: 20 hours

Silver Award: 50 hours

Gold Award: 80 hours

Can girls, or even an entire troop, work together on an award?

That depends on the award level. Girls are required to work as a team to earn the Bronze Award. Girls working toward their Silver Award may work individually or in small groups. Because the Gold Award is the highest achievement in Girl Scouts, girls must earn the award as individuals. Accordingly, different leadership skills are developed at each award level.

Can girls get a head-start and begin working on their award projects right after they bridge (transition) to the next level?

Absolutely. Once a girl bridges to the next level, she can begin working on her award; this includes the summer months.

Is it possible to choose Girl Scouting itself as the focus of a Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award?

The Girl Scout movement can be the focus of a Take Action project for the Bronze Award, but not for the Silver and Gold Awards. Take Action projects for the Silver and Gold Awards must be into the community to “make the world a better place.”

Younger girls earning their Bronze Award are allowed to develop their planning and leadership skills within the comfort of a smaller group. Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors are ready to spread their wings, work more independently, and develop projects with—and for—a larger community.

What happens when a girl moves to a new city, state, or country while she’s in the middle of her award project? Can she still earn her award?

Yes, but she may need to seek special permission. We advise a girl in this situation to work with her new council and/or Overseas Committee to complete the project. And we encourage councils and Overseas Committees to be flexible and serve girls’ best interests.

Are adult guides just for council staff and volunteers? Or can parents use them too?

Even though the guides are designed for volunteers working directly with girls achieving their awards, any adult is welcome to use them.

What about girls with disabilities? Is there a different set of requirements for them?

No. Because Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award work is to be done to the best of a girl's ability, there really is no need for special requirements for girls with disabilities. We encourage advisors to be flexible and to work with the girl individually as she earns her award.

How do you define “sustainable” when it comes to the highest awards?

Simply put, a sustainable project lives on in the community after a girl's involvement ends.

How do girls achieve that? They might focus on education and raising awareness. Or they might develop workshops and hands-on learning sessions that inspire others to keep the project going. Working with local government, community groups, nonprofit agencies, civic associations, and/or religious organizations can also help ensure the project lasts beyond the girl's involvement.

Does “sustainability” mean something different for different grade levels?

It's more the degree of sustainability that differs from level to level. We give girls tools to help them explore issues they may want to address so that they can develop sustainable projects, as well as measure impact on their community, target audience, and themselves.

Like many aspects of earning the highest awards, it becomes more challenging as girls progress to the higher levels. Girl Scout Juniors working on their Bronze Awards might think about how their projects could become ongoing. But Cadettes working on their awards actually plan for sustainability. Seniors and Ambassadors are required to make sustainability an essential component of their projects in order to meet Gold Award standards of excellence.

Do you have any advice on how to generate higher-quality projects?

A good first step is to make sure girls and their advisors understand the difference between a one-time community service project and a highest award Take Action project that serves an entire community for an extended period of time. The troop/group volunteer, council staff member, or Gold Award committee (for Gold Award only) should also work closely with girls to ensure that every project meets the quality requirements of the award.

How can we accurately measure the impact of a highest award project?

Check the award guidelines. We provide tools to help girls identify project goals for their community, target audience, and themselves using a “success indicator” matrix.

Can a girl complete her project after turning 18 and graduating? What about after she starts 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 to complete her project.

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

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