



Highest Award Take Action Project FAQ's

Q: When did the Girl Scouts of Central & Western MA adopt the current requirements for the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards?

A. **No changes have been made since 2010.** GSCWM changed to the current requirements to the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards October 1, 2010 to align with GSUSA's current requirements. The layout looks different now, but since October 1, 2010, we have just reworded and made the guidelines and GSCWM Highest Award webpages more user-friendly.

Q: How do I know if I've completed the pre-requisites?

A: The prerequisite for the Bronze and Silver Awards is to complete one Age -level journey and to be a registered Girl Scout. For the Gold Award prerequisite, there are two options: Option 1: Complete one Senior or Ambassador Journey and the Silver Award. Option 2: Complete two journeys at either the Senior or Ambassador level. The journey is complete when you have completed each of the individual awards and have done a Take Action project.

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

A. The Journey Take Action project is formulated as a team and based on the topic of the Journey. It is done within the Journey and a final Journey Award is earned as a result. The Journey Take Action project may be done by a group of girls or an individual girl. It has no specified number of hours to earn it. The Take Action impact may directly affect Girl Scout members only or the community outside of Girl Scouts. The Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Take Action project is based on the interest of the girls. The Bronze Award can be done to affect the Girl Scout Community but the Silver and Gold Award Take Action focus on the needs of the community, not Girl Scout members. The Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Take Action projects have a suggested minimum number of hours to earn each award. Girls must develop a team of volunteers to assist them in the project.

Q: What's the difference between Community Service and a Take Action Project?

A. Being of service to others means being helpful – doing the right and kind thing. Serving is often the immediate and much needed response to tragedy. Service is also an everyday kindness. We are of service when we feed the hungry, offer clothing to the homeless or simply help a friend with a tough homework assignment. In serving, we are most mindful of basic human needs; food, clothing, shelter, care. Being of service is a vital way to help and care. Collecting and donating items to an organization is a service, not a Take Action project.

When we move beyond immediate and necessary service to understand the root causes of a problem, we move toward **action**. When we team up and mobilize others in our efforts to find ways to solve that problem, we are **taking action**. **Action** can happen in many ways – from partnering with your town or

school to organize more sports events for girls, to getting the local toy store to stop following stereotypes when selecting its inventory, to holding, “Take Back the Night” events where teens have a safe and fun place to hang out together once a month.

Service makes the world a better place for some people “right now.” **Action** strives to make the world better for more people for a much longer time. Sometimes, service and action can naturally blend together into one sustainable effort. As a Girl Scout, you use both service and action to live out the Girl Scout Law and make the world a better place. To explore this topic more check out our [Take Action Vs Community Service Handout](#).

Q: Who are the GS Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Volunteer guides for – council staff, parents, or volunteers?

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

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

A: 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 any girls — encourage flexibility and the recruitment of advisors that can work with the girl individually.

Q: Who approves the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Proposals?

A: The Troop Leader approves the Bronze Award and ensures the project meets all the guidelines.

For Silver and Gold Award Proposals, Troop Leaders review and give the approval for the project to be submitted to GSCWM. Silver Award Proposals are submitted to Silveraward@gscwm.org and council reviews and gives the final “go ahead” and permission to begin the project.

For Gold Award Proposals girls submit the proposal via the online Go for Gold application <https://www.girlscouts.org/gogoldonline/default.aspx>. Once received, GSCWM sends the proposal to one of our three Gold Award Committees which is a volunteer based group who will conduct the initial interview, provide feedback on the project and approve the project. All Gold Award proposals must be interviewed before their project will be approved by GSCWM.

Q: If a troop leader approves the Silver and Gold Awards, why do I send in my Proposal Form to GSCWM for the “go ahead”?

A. GSCWM reviews and provides feedback and suggestions and gives the “go ahead” to start working on your project to ensure that each project will meet guidelines and requirements to earn the Silver and Gold Award upon completion. In addition, Gold Award nominees receive an interview before being granted the “go ahead” to work on their Gold Award project.

Q: Can I start my Silver and Gold Award project even though I haven’t received the go ahead from GSCWM?

A. No. You need to secure the go ahead and feedback from GSCWM before starting your Silver and Gold Award projects. Plan a starting date in your timeline that allows for possible modifications before receiving

council go ahead. Should your starting timeline be too soon, you may risk over promising to your community partner or having not all hours worked on the project being able to count towards the award.

Q: Can my whole troop work on the same project?

A. For the Bronze Award, it should be completed as a troop or group project. For the Silver Award up to **4 girls** can work on one project. If working in a group, each girl must have an individualized leadership role. Girls may also choose to work individually. **No exceptions.** For the Gold Award all projects should be completed by individual girls, no group projects.

Q: But what if my entire troop really wants to do a Silver and Gold Award project together as one project and we have more than 4 girls in the troop?

A. The Silver Award team is no more than 4 girls per team with additional volunteers to help them carry out their plan. It is a progression from doing the Bronze Award as a troop or large group, to the Silver Award as a small team, to the Gold Award as an individual. At the Silver and Gold Award level, you should be stepping up to the challenge of taking on greater responsibility in your project and smaller teams or working as an individual ensures that this will happen. Plan to do separate projects and help each other as volunteers so you are still all working together and supporting each other as Girl Scouts do.

Q: What are the suggested hours for earning the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards?

A. After the journey(s) requirement is fulfilled, the suggested minimum number of hours for the Bronze award is 20 hours, Silver is 50 hours and Gold Award is 80 hours. 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. Not all projects will require the same length of time to complete from planning to sharing and celebration. Quality projects that have a positive impact on the community should be emphasized over quantity of hours.

Q: If I'm working in a group, how do we count our hours?

A. If you are working in a group, each girl's hours must be counted separately. You can only count hours spent working on your own portion of the project. For example: For a project with four girls working on the award, if only two girls spent 2 hours writing lesson plans only those two out of the four can count those hours. The other two girls working on the project must make up the two hours towards the suggested hours on a different part of the project.

Q: What counts as hours?

A. Any time when you are working on your project, you can count it as hours. Brainstorming, finding an advisor and speaking with your mentor all count as hours. Helping another girl in your troop with her project does not count as hours or volunteering for other community service projects does not count towards your hours.

Q: Can any of my project volunteer's hours be counted in my hours for the project?

A. No, the suggested needed hours need to be that of each of the girls on the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award Take Action project team. The volunteer hours are nice to track to see how many hours went into the project overall but you cannot count other people's hours as your own.

Q: How do I fund my Highest Award projects?

A: As Girl Scouts working on a Highest Award project, you should develop a budget and expected expenses for your project. Some important things to remember, you are unable to ask for direct donations of cash or materials as a Girl Scout. You are unable to raise funds for another nonprofit. It is important to review our **MONEY and Your Highest Award** handout with your troop leader and advisors to ensure you are within all federal tax guidelines and GSUSA and GSCWM money earning guidelines.

Q: What does it mean to have a sustainable project?

A: A sustainable project is one that lasts after the girl's involvement ends. A focus on education and raising awareness is one way to help a project to become sustainable. Workshops and hands-on learning sessions can inspire others to keep the project going and take over the project afterwards. 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. Flyers, brochures and educating others on the issues are only sustainable if a group or organization agrees to use the material you created for the long term. Handing out flyers, brochures and sharing information by themselves is not sustainable.

Q: Why can't a parent/ Troop Leader be a Girl Scout Silver and Gold Award Project Advisor?

A: Girls are encouraged to connect with their community when earning the Girl Scout Silver and Gold Award. That means working with a project advisor who is not her parent/ troop leader. The project advisor expands the network of adults and provides expertise for a girl's project. The project advisor should also be someone who is an expert and has work experience in the field so they are able to offer advice and expertise in the field the project is working to address.

Q: What are the deadlines?

A: The project must be completed - including having the paperwork finished signed and turned into council, by September 30th of the year you bridge to the next Girl Scout year. So for Bronze Award the year you enter 6th grade, Silver Award the year you enter 9th grade and for Gold Award the September after you graduate high school.

If you wish to attend the annual GSCWM Gold & Silver Ceremony in June, final paperwork must be in by April 1st of that year. There is no deadline for project proposals.

Q: Where do I send my proposal or my completed final report paperwork?

A: For Bronze Award either by email bronzeaward@gscwm.org or by mail: GSCWM 301 Kelly Way Holyoke, MA 01040 Attn: Bronze Award.

For Silver Award either by email silveraward@gscwm.org or by mail: GSCWM 301 Kelly Way Holyoke, MA 01040 Attn: Silver Award.

For Gold Award via the online tool: <https://www.girlscouts.org/gogoldonline/default.aspx>

Q: How do I get my Bronze, Silver or Gold Award Pin and who pays for the pins?

A: For Bronze Award, upon receiving the Bronze Award Troop/Group Final Report, GSCWM will send a congratulatory e-mail to the address provided. This e-mail will give your leader or parent instructions on how troops can purchase Bronze Award pins. Pins are not available to purchase without a letter from GSCWM. E-mails will be sent within 2-3 weeks of submitting the Girl Scout Bronze Award Troop/Group Final Report. GSCWM also includes a packet with letters and certificate for each Bronze Awardee from our CEO Pattie Hallberg and Program Project Coordinator Katie Chappell.

For Silver and Gold Awards, Girl Scouts of Central & Western MA will purchase each Silver and Gold Award pin; they will be available at the Gold & Silver Ceremony in June. If you are unable to attend the ceremony, your troop leader/parent may pick up your Silver or Gold Award Pin at a Service Center after the Gold & Silver Award Ceremony. Emails will be sent to all girls who attended or did not attend the ceremony with additional instruction on how to pick up their pins after the ceremonies.

Q: How can we celebrate our Bronze, Silver or Gold Award?

A: For Bronze Award, GSCWM provides each troop leader with a packet for each Bronze Award recipient which includes a certificate and letter from GSCWM's CEO and Program Project Coordinator. Troops and Service Units are encouraged to celebrate the successful completion of their Bronze Award.

For Silver and Gold Awards, Girl Scouts of Central and Western MA host two Gold and Silver Award ceremonies in June of each year. Honorees are invited to attend free of charge, and are given the chance to showcase their projects to everyone in attendance. They may do so with a PowerPoint, videos, and/or tri-boards. BE CREATIVE!

Each Silver Award recipient will receive two additional invitations to invite, family, troop leaders or project advisors to attend the ceremony at the ticket price for the event. Girls may invite more than two attendees but only receive two invitations. There is an entrance fee for the ceremony.

Each Gold Award recipient will receive two additional tickets at no charge to the Gold Awardee to share with families, friends or those who supported her along her Gold Award journey. Gold Awardee may invite more than the two additional no charge tickets to the event but there is an entrance fee for the ceremony.

Additional Questions? Contact: Katie Chappell, Program Project Coordinator
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