



# Take Action and the Highest Awards Program

## All take action projects have three things in common:

- Sustainable over time
  - Creates long term positive change, working with the community to be part of the solution, allows others to benefit for years to come and **creates opportunities for other people to volunteer or be part of the solution**
- Measurable using numbers
  - Includes tools to measure the success of a project using numbers, facts, figures, surveys, etc.
- Target the root cause or underlying factors of a problem
  - Addresses the origins of a problem, goes deeper than a Band-Aid to prevent the problem from happening again in the future

At each age level, girls learn more about Take Action and can participate in more challenging and complex projects. So, what is considered “sustainable” for a Gold Award is more rigorous than what is appropriate for a Bronze Award. See the Bronze, Silver, Gold Award overview chart on the next page for more information.

## How do girls benefit from the Highest Awards Program?

To put it simply, the Take Action process builds girls into thoughtful leaders. Take Action enables each girl to speak her mind, forge healthy relationships and develop career readiness skills (such as time management, cooperative decision making and problem solving). The focus of earning any High Award is on building these skills so that girls can be positive agents of change, making our world a better place.

For more information about the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and the specific outcomes girls achieve through the Highest Awards Program, take a look at [Transforming Leadership](#) or additional [Highest Awards resources](#) on the Girl Scouts of Western Washington page.

## What’s the difference between Take Action and community service?

Take Action and community service projects are beneficial to the community and are an important part of Girl Scouts, just in different ways. Take Action is a very specific model that helps girls achieve leadership skills while they create long term change. When girls complete Take Action projects, they come up with their own creative ideas and partner with others to make it happen!

Simply put, a Take Action project is completed *with* the community while community service projects are done *for* the community. All Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards are earned by completing a Take Action project.

Community service projects address an immediate need in the community or fix the symptoms of a problem. This type of service is often completed short-term or one time. Girl Scouts might complete community service by volunteering for a project that someone else planned. Service projects often help people or animals feel more comfortable or get immediate access to important materials (such as food). *Some examples of community service: repainting/refurbishing an area at the park, participating in a food drive, collecting/sewing blankets to donate to an organization.* Girl Scouts can earn several [awards for community service](#).

## Take Action Projects that are Sustainable, Measurable and Target the Root Cause

Project Description	Sustainable	Measurable	Targets the Root of a Problem
Working with park staff member to create a story hike. To make a story hike, you paint each page of a short story onto large boards or signs. You install the signs, in order, spread out along the trail. When people walk from one end of the trail to another, they can read the story bit by bit.	This project is sustainable because the girls asked the naturalists and rangers who work at the park to encourage visitors to utilize the story hike. The girls gave the park staff information about the benefits of the story hike and info about how to maintain the signs.	This project is measurable because there is a sign-in sheet at the beginning of the trail, so there is a record to count how many people go on the story hike each day. The Bronze Award earners set a goal of 30 hikers in the first month and were able to track their progress towards the goal!	Many families do not spend enough time outside or completing physical activities (which leads to health problems). This project provides a fun and safe way for people to get into better shape.
Silver Award earners worked with a high school soccer team to create an annual soccer workshop. The event teaches young girls new soccer skills, so they can be healthier and more confident.	This project is sustainable because during the first year, you can create planning resources and a model for the workshop that can be repeated each year. The high school soccer team members are knowledgeable about soccer and have the tools to continue the workshop for years to come.	This project is measurable because attendance records for the workshop will show how many girls learn new soccer skills. The Silver Award earners set a goal of 50 girls attending the workshop the first time it is offered—and a goal that each participant learns one new skill!	Many young girls feel self-conscious or do not have enough opportunities to participate in team sports. Sometimes girls feel especially nervous trying to learn new athletic skills around boys, so this workshop provides a safe environment for girls to learn new skills and develop confidence.
A Gold Award earner is working with voter rights groups to create a public service announcement, brochures, and a website to teach others about the importance of voting and how to register to vote.	This project is sustainable because she is creating print and online resources to teach people new skills <b>and</b> she is partnering with community organizations that can distribute and update the materials each year. She's met with the groups to make sure they'll continue the work she started!	The goal was to share brochures with at least 1,000 teens, have at least 300 views on the website and get at least 75 teenagers to register as new voters. This was tracked using spreadsheets and other charts to measure progress.	This targets the underlying problem of people being uninformed or unaware of their rights as citizens. The project educates people and connects them to important community resources.
A Silver Award earner partners with local veterinarians, animal shelters and dog trainers to host a series of dog agility workshops.	This project is sustainable because she is offering a series of workshops where people will be able to build new skills over a longer period of time. She is partnering with other organizations who may be able to offer workshops in the future and connecting dog owners with new resources.	The goal was to have 10 owners and their dogs participate in the workshop...and to have each pair improve their dog agility by the end. She kept track of attendance at each workshop. She also designed a simple agility test and scored pairs at the beginning of the series and during the final workshop to measure skills.	This targets the problem of dog obesity and poorly trained dogs. Many families give their pets to animal shelters because of bad/wild behavior. Dog agility courses provide a chance for dog owners to establish a better partnership with their dog and teach the dog how to behave well. When dogs behave well, they are less likely to be discarded at animal shelters.
A Gold Award earner is working with elementary school teachers and the high school math team to plan an annual fun math competition for 5 <sup>th</sup> graders.	This project is sustainable because the teachers and high school math team will be able to host the event each year. The Gold Award earner provided specific information about how to plan the event and made sure the math team was comfortable continuing it.	The goal was to have 100 students participate in the competition, for 75% of participants to improve math skills and for 90% of participants to have higher self-esteem. A pre-test was given at the beginning of the year to test students' skills and comfort with math. A post-test was given after the event to see improvements.	This targets the underlying problem of many kids being uninterested in math or discouraged because they feel it is too hard. It provides an opportunity for kids to learn new math skills and show them off in a fun and competitive environment. Reaching out to 5 <sup>th</sup> graders at a young age will help inspire them to pursue math as they get older.

## The Progression of the Highest Awards

Awards	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award
<b>Grade</b>	Girls must be registered Juniors in grades 4-5.	Girls must be registered Cadettes in grades 6-8.	Girls must be registered Seniors or Ambassadors in grades 9-12.
<b>Final Deadline</b>	September 30 after grade 5 is completed/beginning of grade 6	September 30 after grade 8 is completed/beginning of grade 9	Final Report must be approved by September 30 after grade 12 is completed/beginning of college. Recommended that all final reports are submitted by mid-August to allow enough time for review/approval.
<b>Prerequisites</b> (complete prior to starting award)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete at least one Junior Journey (<i>Get Moving, Agent of Change, aMuse</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete at least one Cadette Journey (<i>aMaze, Breathe, Media</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete at least 2 Senior or Ambassador Journeys <b>OR</b></li> <li>Earn Silver Award and at least 1 Senior or Ambassador Journey</li> </ul>
<b>What does the team look like?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually completed as a troop or group</li> <li>All Girl Scouts share equal responsibilities and focus on team work and group decision-making</li> <li>Help and guidance provided by troop/group volunteer and families</li> <li>Individuals and experts from other community groups may volunteer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be completed by an <b>individual girl</b> or earned by a <b>small team of 2-4 Cadettes (Silver Awards CANNOT be earned by more than 4 Cadettes working on one project)</b></li> <li>Silver Award earners—the girls—take the lead on all aspects of the project</li> <li>Troop volunteers and/or family members provide <b>safety</b> support and positive encouragement</li> <li>Each Silver Award project team should have a Project Advisor (an adult). We recommend that you find an adult who is an expert in a field related to your project topic, but that is not required. Your Project Advisor could be a guardian or troop leader and must be a trustworthy adult.</li> <li>Silver Award earners may recruit people to help with the project (including other Girl Scouts or community members)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earned by an individual girl who takes the lead as project manager</li> <li>Troop volunteers and/or family members provide <b>safety</b> support and positive encouragement</li> <li>Project advisor is an expert in a field related to the project <b>(not a troop volunteer or parent)</b></li> <li>Gold Award earner may recruit people to help with the project (including other Girl Scouts or community members)</li> <li>Gold Award earned should involve at least five people in the project who have diverse skillsets/areas of knowledge to contribute to the project</li> </ul>
<b>Take Action Project Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take Action project can focus within Girl Scouts or should be related to a local community.</li> <li>Puts the Promise and Law into action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take Action project <b>must</b> primarily benefit a community outside of Girl Scouts.</li> <li>Take Action project <b>CANNOT</b> raise money directly for another organization</li> <li>Puts the Promise and Law into action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take Action project <b>must</b> focus primarily on a community outside of Girl Scouts.</li> <li>Take Action project <b>CANNOT</b> raise money directly for another organization</li> <li>Must demonstrate a link to regional, national or global issue.</li> <li>Puts the Promise and Law into action</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable</b>	By the time the project is complete, girls develop a better understanding of sustainability by talking together about how solutions can be lasting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls demonstrate an understanding of <b>sustainability</b> in the project plan and implementation.</li> <li>Girls demonstrate an attempt at connecting with community groups or other volunteers to establish partnerships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project proposal includes specific ideas about how the project can be sustained beyond the Gold earner's involvement.</li> <li>Sustainability plan includes partnerships with other volunteers or community organizations.</li> <li>Final report shows specific evidence and includes a detailed plan of how the project will be sustained.</li> <li>Gold Award earner puts in effort to support the likelihood of the project being continued/sustained in the future</li> </ul>
<b>Measurable</b>	By the time the project is complete, girls develop a better understanding of measurability by talking together about aspects of the project that can be counted or tracked.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls demonstrate an understanding of <b>measurability</b> in the project plan and implementation.</li> <li>Girls set at least one number-based goal</li> <li>Girls use at least one tool to measure progress towards their goal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project proposal includes a specific plan for measuring the successes or shortcoming of the project. (about 3-5 goals)</li> <li>Measurement process includes quantitative and/or qualitative tools/data.</li> <li>Final report describes measurement tools that were used and includes numbers, facts or figures to show successes of project.</li> </ul>

Awards	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award
<b>Target the Root Cause(s)</b>	By the time the project is complete, girls begin to understand the difference between service that is done once and solutions that create a lasting impact over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls identify at least one root cause of their community issue</li> <li>Girls discuss ways to target a root cause</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project proposal identifies more than one root cause of a community issue</li> <li>Project proposal includes at least one specific action for addressing at least one root cause</li> <li>Final report describes how at least one root cause was addressed through the project</li> <li>May include research/statistical information</li> </ul>
<b>Global Dimension/ Broader Context</b>	By the time the project is complete, girls develop an understanding of the wider world by talking together about how others may experience the same problem that their project helped resolve.	During planning and implementation, girls connect with new friends outside their immediate community, learn how others have solved similar problems, and determine if the ideas of others can help with their plan.	During planning and implementation, girls connect with local, regional and/or national experts to learn more about the problem(s) being addressed. Girls identify ways in which her project is connected to national or global problems. Project demonstrates an understanding of cultural competency. Girls determine if the ideas of others can help with their plan. Before submitting final report, girls share their project and experiences with others to inspire and educate.
<b>Approvals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Money-earning</b> approval from Girls Scouts of Western Washington staff before any money-earning activities can proceed</li> <li>Not required from Girl Scouts staff</li> <li>Troop/group volunteer okays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Money-earning</b> approval from Girls Scouts of Western Washington staff before any money-earning activities can proceed</li> <li>Silver Award project ideas <b>DO NOT</b> require pre-approval from Girls Scouts of Western Washington staff before project is started</li> <li>Utilize this sheet, review the Silver Award Guidelines <b>for girls</b> or <b>for volunteers</b>, and work with your Project Advisor to make sure your project idea is on track.</li> <li>Project Advisor signs Final Reports based on guidelines</li> <li>Girls Scouts of Western Washington staff looks at Final Reports before sending recognition certificates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Money-earning</b> approval from Girls Scouts of Western Washington staff before any money-earning activities can proceed</li> <li>Pre-approval required from Girl Scouts of Western Washington Highest Awards Review Committee <b>before implementation</b></li> <li>Please see the <a href="#">Proposal Review Rubric</a></li> <li>Final report approval/awarded by Girl Scouts of Western Washington Highest Awards Review Committee</li> <li>Please see the <a href="#">Final Report Review Rubric</a></li> </ul>
<b>What about hours?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hours are <b>not</b> a Highest Awards requirement, but to give you a guideline, each Junior should spend approximately 20 hours on the process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hours are <b>not</b> a Highest Awards requirement, but to give you a guideline, each Cadette should spend approximately 50 hours on the process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hours are <b>not</b> a Highest Awards requirement, but to give you a guideline, each Gold Award earner should spend approximately 80 hours on the process</li> </ul>

**More Resources:** (all of these resources can be accessed by visiting [www.girlscoutsww.org](http://www.girlscoutsww.org) and searching for key words)

[Online Learning Modules](#)

[In-person Learning Opportunities](#)

[Silver Award Resources](#)

[Gold Award Resources](#)

[Gold & Silver Award Project Successes \(examples\)](#)

[Conversation Starters](#)

[Make it Sustainable](#)

[Make it Measurable](#)

[Target the Root Cause](#)

[Make it Global](#)