

Take Action Projects

A step-by-step guide



Step 1

Identify the difference between a Take Action Project and a Community Service Project

It is important to know the difference between a community service project and a Take Action project. While some community service projects address the immediate needs in the community, they only help for a short period of time.

Take Action projects are lasting service projects that create long-term, measurable change.

Review the charts below and use them to help lead discussions with your troop and co-leaders.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS	TAKE ACTION PROJECTS
Address an immediate need	Address a need, immediate or not
Address a problem by working with or for a community partner	Address the root cause of a problem by working with (not for) a community partner
Make community better for some people, right now	Create a lasting impact in the community
Contribution to the community is usually, but not always, measurable	Contribution to the community is always measurable
Not usually long-lasting or continuous	Includes provisions to ensure sustainability long after girls' involvement in the project has ended

A Take Action Project should be:

Measurable

The success of the project can be determined based on the number of people the project helped, the number of people who were involved, any reduction in the community's need, and other concrete numbers.

Sustainable

Girls should make arrangements to ensure that the project creates lasting change and is not a one-time event. Girls can do this by collaborating with community leaders and/or organizations, and building alliances with mentors.

Community service projects are an important way for Girl Scouts to serve their community. However, Take Action projects make a lasting difference in the community and give girls even more opportunities to make their world a better place!

NOTE: If Girl Scouts choose to do a Take Action project they can still participate in community service projects.

Take Action Projects vs. Community Service Projects

Issue	Community Service Project <i>(one-time effort has short-term impact)</i>	Take Action Project <i>(long-term benefits and sustainable support)</i>
Local food pantry needs help	Collect nonperishable food through a food drive at school	Collect food and develop a recipe book of nutritious foods using simple ingredients. Find local printing company to print several copies and give original to the food pantry to make more when needed.
Local animal shelter needs supplies and volunteers	Hold food and toy drive in community	Create a marketing campaign — posters, radio spots, flyers, etc. — encouraging community to donate supplies and time to the shelter. Hold drive. Give all marketing materials to the shelter for use in future drives.
An uninsured family's home is destroyed by a fire	Collect clothes, household goods, and food for the family	Work with a local Habitat for Humanity and organize a work group to rebuild the family's home.

Step 2

Use community mapping to help choose the Take Action Project

A community map is a drawing or list that shows a community's needs and resources, including contacts, that might help girls when working on a Take Action project.

Have girls draw a picture of their community—include resources such as the library, animal shelters, parks department, and more.

Next have the girls think about issues or problems in their community. Suggest that girls ask their parents, watch the local news, or simply take a good look around their area. These issues or problems may be small or large. Some examples may include: an old or unsafe playground at the local park, many stray cats that don't have a home, nothing for teens to do on the weekend, bullies at school, etc.

Make a list of the issues or problems the girls discovered in their community. Narrow this list to a few issues that the girls are interested in.

Research the issues further and discuss the resources girls can use to help them fill the community's need.

Have girls choose their Take Action project.

One key to a successful Take Action project is to determine what the community needs are **before** creating the Take Action project. There is nothing worse than creating a project plan, then finding out that it is not needed.



Step 3

Plan and go for it

Sit down with girls and determine what steps need to be taken to complete their Take Action project. Discuss who will do each step. Remember, this is a girl-led project, so step back as much as possible and only help when needed. Take time to write down each step and who is in charge. Keep the project plan close at hand for easy reference. Look back to your list of community resources to see who may be able to help the group during the project.

Stuck at a certain step? Take a break and come back to it another day to see the project in a new way.

Step 4

Celebrate!

Once your project is complete, take time to celebrate. Plan a party or ceremony to talk about what the girls have achieved. Think about inviting community partners or family members. Your group may also want to post a video of your project on the council's Facebook page or email your story to us at socialmedia@gswise.org.

The benefits of Take Action projects go far beyond the reach of the project itself. Not only does the community see sustainable changes, girls will develop strong leadership skills that will help them throughout their lifetimes. As the community sees how girls are changing the world through Girl Scouts, they will want to get involved as volunteers, and may even want to serve as project advisors on other Take Action projects.

Need more information?

Contact Customer Care at customercare@gswise.org or 800-565-4475.

Don't know where to start? Need some inspiration?

Check out this list of organizations that other troops have partnered with for their Take Action projects.

Animals

- Local humane societies
- Local farms
- Dog rescues
- Kindred Kitties
- Milwaukee Zoo
- Milwaukee Area Domestic Animal Control Commission
- Sunrise Horse Farm
- Wildlife in Need
- Wolf Haven International

Arts

- Center for Applied Theatre

Community re-build

- Habitat for Humanity

Education

- Local libraries
- Literacy Services of Wisconsin
- Children's Dyslexic Learning Center
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Environmental

- County parks
- Local parks and recreation departments
- Local nature centers
- Department of Natural Resources–Aquatic Invasive Species
- Growing Power
- Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful
- Mequon Nature Preserve
- Eco-Justice Center
- River Bend Nature Preserve
- Urban Ecology Center

Family/children

- Local nursing homes
- Local YMCA
- Local women's center
- Friends of Abused Families
- La Causa
- Ronald McDonald House
- Sojourner Truth House

Health

- Local hospitals
- American Cancer Society/Relay for Life
- American Heart Association
- American Red Cross
- Autism Society
- Jumprope for Heart
- Hoops for Heart
- Rides and Reins Therapeutic Center
- Blood Center of Wisconsin
- Vince Lombardi Cancer Clinic

Human interest

- Local food pantries
- Local churches
- Local veteran's home
- Boys & Girls Club
- Make a Wish Foundation
- Goodwill
- Brookfield Soccer Park
- The Salvation Army

Volunteer center

- Check out your local volunteer center for more ideas!

Notes: