

Girl Scout Silver Award Guidelines for Girl Scout Cadettes



The Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

The Girl Scout Promise

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

*Members may substitute for the word God in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.



The Girl Scout Silver Award

Have you ever looked around your neighborhood or school and wondered how you could make a change for the better? Going for the Girl Scout Silver Award—the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette can earn—gives you the chance to show that you are a leader who is organized, determined, and dedicated to improving your community. Earning the award puts you among an exceptional group of Girl Scouts who have used their knowledge and leadership skills to make a difference in the world.

Here are the steps you will take to earn your Girl Scout Silver Award:

1. Pre-requisite requirement: Go on a Girl Scout Cadette Journey.
2. Strongly recommended: Attend the Girl Scout Silver Award Training either in person or by viewing the video training at www.gswise.org/silveraward
3. Identify issues you care about.
4. Build your Girl Scout Silver Award team or decide to go solo.
5. Explore your community.
6. Choose your Girl Scout Silver Award project.
7. Develop your project.
8. Submit your *Girl Scout Silver Award Project Proposal* to the council.
9. Make a plan and put it into motion.
10. Reflect, share your story, and celebrate.
11. Submit your *Girl Scout Silver Award Final Report* to the council.

Once you complete your Journey, the suggested minimum time for earning your Girl Scout Silver Award is 50 hours. These suggested hours are a guide. You can start by planning the time in chunks, dividing it up by the steps.

As a Girl Scout, you are committed to doing your very best with each step, but how much time per step is different for every Girl Scout. The number of hours are a suggestion, not a rule. Remember that the hours include the fun and challenges you will share with your Girl Scout Silver Award team. Each step you take toward making a difference in the world around you gives you a chance to learn and grow, and that will make your award project amazing!

The girl guidelines, tools, and forms are also available at www.gswise.org/silveraward.

Step 1: Go on a Girl Scout Cadette Journey

The first requirement for earning your Girl Scout Silver Award is completing one Girl Scout Cadette Journey, including the Take Action project. This important step helps you build the skills you need to take on your award project and understand how to show leadership through the Discover, Connect, and Take Action keys.

Once you have finished your Journey, celebrate your accomplishment and get ready to move forward toward your goal: earning a Girl Scout Silver Award! (Tip: keep your Journey(s) handy as you work toward your award—you might find yourself going back to it for ideas.)

Step 2: Identify Issues You Care About

To solve any problem, you need to identify it first. Start by asking yourself what matters most to you.

- Do you find yourself reading articles about endangered species?
- Do you worry about where children experiencing homelessness sleep at night?
- Do you wish that younger students had a cheerful place to stay after school while waiting for their parents to pick them up?

If so, what connections can you make between the issues you care about and the issues in your own community?

Start by jotting down some notes in the following Issues Chart. You are not choosing your project yet, just tuning in to the topics you care about.

Issues Chart

Issues that Concern You	Why is it important to you?	How does this issue affect your community?

Step 3: Build Your Silver Award Team

There are two ways to earn your Girl Scout Silver Award: You can work with a small team of two to four people, or you can create and implement your own project.

- **Small team model:** The team you work with can be Girl Scouts, non-Girl Scouts, or a combination of both. If the other Girl Scout Cadettes on your team also wish to earn the Girl Scout Silver Award, each Girl Scout needs to play an active role in choosing, planning, and developing the team's Girl Scout Silver Award project. Keeping your team small helps make sure that everyone can participate fully. You and your team will also partner with others in the community to complete your project. Teams should not exceed four team members total.
- **Solo model:** You can create and implement a project on your own. However, if you choose the solo option, you will still want to partner with others in your community (friends, neighbors, and business owners) in order to earn your award. After all, leaders like you know how to team up with others, even when they are in charge.

If you have decided to work independently, you can skip to step 4. If you are working with other Girl Scout Cadettes who also wish to earn the Girl Scout Silver Award, use the following tips to create a great team.

Build a team whose members all commit to:

- Respecting different points of view and ways of work
- Contributing to the project—everyone needs to help out!
- Accepting constructive suggestions
- Working together to create and develop a plan
- Resolving conflicts

Team members do not always agree, but leaders know how to help others get along. When disagreements arise, remember:

- To be considerate and respectful of your fellow teammates
- To be a sister to every Girl Scout on your team
- That cooperation is very important when working with others

After you have built your team, hold your first meeting. If you do not know each other well—or even if you do—play a team game to get better acquainted. Spend some time discussing what makes a great team and how you would like to work together. Write everyone's suggestions on a large piece of paper and post that paper on the wall every time you have team meetings. Before the end of your first meeting, discuss how often you want to get together and where you will meet.



Step 4: Explore Your Community

Now that you have begun to think about issues that concern you, it is time to do some exploring to find out what your community needs are and where your areas of interest and the community needs may overlap.

Communities are groups of people who have something in common. You belong to many communities: Your school is a community, for example. So is your math class, your dance team, and Girl Scouts. Even kids who ride the same bus every day are a community. Other communities include your neighborhood, your place of worship, your town, and so on. Think about what communities you belong to.

After you have listed your communities, think of ways to map them. A community map is a drawing that shows the community's needs and resources, including contacts that might help you when you start working on your Girl Scout Silver Award project.

The key to making a community map is observation. Because a community is made up of people, you will be looking for what people need—what will improve their lives, help them out, or make them happier. To get started, try walking through your school, biking around your neighborhood, or taking a bus ride through your town. During the course of your travels, you will naturally see different aspects of your community as you shop at stores, gather at your Girl Scout meeting place, go to school, and so on.

You can also visit places, such as the library, town hall, community center, or your place of worship, where there are people and resources that can help you identify community needs. You might even attend one or more town meetings to find out what concerns people in your area.

Continue to draw your map by writing down the things you see that could be improved or places where your special talents and skills could be used. (Tip: go back to your Journey(s) for more ideas about spotting community needs.) When you meet people who might be able to help you with your project, jot down their names and contact information in the Community Contact List on the next page.

For a sample community map, go to www.gswise.org/silveraward.



Step 4: Explore Your Community

Community Contact List

Community Contact	Organization	Contact Information	How They Can Help

Now it is time to talk to people to get in-depth information about community issues. As you conduct interviews, you will improve your communication skills, begin to see how your time and talents can make an impact, and build a network of contacts you may need when you do your Girl Scout Silver Award project.

Start by talking to people you know, such as neighbors or teachers, and ask them to introduce you to other people in your community, such as business owners, neighbors, teachers or school officials, religious leaders, council members, police officers, and staff members at community centers.

Note: Always be safe when you talk to new people! Discuss safety tips with your troop/group volunteer and family, and always go with a friend or team member. Also, before going online, remember to

take the *Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge* at <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/footer/help/internet-safety-pledge.html>. And, of course, never give out your address or any other personal information when you are on the Internet.

Prepare your questions ahead of time so you can use your interview time wisely.

Here are some questions to get you started:

- I am interested in doing a project that will help the community. What are some of the issues affecting our community? Do you know about how people have tried to work on these issues in the past? What worked? What did not work?
- Can you suggest a project I could do to address one of these issues?

Step 5: Choose Your Silver Award Project

You have come a long way to get to this point! Now that you have thought about the issues you care about and explored your community, it is time to choose a project based on what you have learned. Remember, Girl Scouts are not allowed to solicit money on behalf of another organization.

Before you choose your project:

- Review your Issues Chart, community map, and interview notes. If you are working with a team, do this together! If you are on your own, pull a few people together (such as your troop/group volunteer, friends, sisters or brothers, a teacher) to help you sort through all you have gathered.
- Choose a project based on what matters most to you or where you think you can create some positive change. If you have a hard time deciding, write a pro/con list for each choice. If you are working on this part solo, ask your troop/group volunteer for help.
- Many issues are big and complicated—and hard to fix! It might be a good idea to narrow your focus. Pick just one aspect of your issue, and then develop a solution to that specific problem. Imagine focusing a camera lens in order to get a clear picture. The process of focusing an idea so that it is simple and clear is just like that.
- Remember, you can always go back to your Journeys for project ideas and examples.

After you have chosen your project, make sure everyone is clear about what you want to do and why. As a team, answer these questions:

- What is our project?
- Why does it matter?
- Who will it help?

Think about the following:

- Which of your leadership skills do you think you will use as you work on your Girl Scout Silver Award project?
- How will these skills help you better understand who you are and what you can do?
- How will you live the Girl Scout Promise and Law while earning your Girl Scout Silver Award?



Step 6: Develop Your Project

Now that you have chosen a project, it is time to make a plan.

Before You Start

The following questions will help you think through your project before you get started:

- What steps do we need to take to reach our goal?
- What special talents can each team member use to help make the project a success?
- What did we learn when we earned our Girl Scout Cadette Journey awards that will help us make sure this project runs smoothly?
- Do we know enough to get started or do we need more background information? Where can we get that information?
- Which groups or organizations can we work with? Who can we ask for help?
- How can we get other people involved?
- What supplies will we need?
- How will you fund your project, if necessary? Your troop can use funds from your troop treasury, or, your troop/group volunteer can help you come up with money-earning ideas that follow Girl Scout policies. Be creative! You may realize you do not need that much money after all. Use the Budget Sheet at the end of this guide to estimate income and expenses.
- How much time do we need to finish our project? Is that timeline realistic?

Make It Last

You will be investing a lot of yourself in your project, so you will want to develop it in a way that keeps it going even after you are done. This is a chance for you to make your mark in your community!

For example, if you think the kids at your local elementary school need more interesting stuff to do at recess, you might plan a week of special activities. But then what? Well, how about planning team games that the fourth graders can do with the second graders all the time! Your Girl Scout Silver Award project keeps going and going and going.

Remember to keep it simple. A clear, focused, and well-thought-out plan can often be more sustainable than taking on a huge project. Read on to see examples of Girl Scout Silver Award projects that will last.



Step 6: Develop Your Project

Girl Scout Silver Award Examples

Example #1

Problem: Kids cannot walk to school safely because there are not any sidewalks.

Root cause: Lack of planning when the roads were built.

Solution with long-term impact: Create a petition asking that a sidewalk be built, get local residents to sign it, and present it to the city council.

Making the solution sustainable:

- Once the sidewalk is built, it will be in place for years, offering a safe route for future generations.
- You may need to encourage kids to change their habits and walk—that can be a fun group activity.

Example #2

Problem: Children in homeless shelters often struggle in school.

Root cause: Lack of stability and family resources, both financial and emotional.

Solution with long-term impact: Work with a local homeless shelter and school to establish an ongoing tutoring program that matches student volunteers with children in the shelter.

Making the solution sustainable:

- Work with the school and shelter to find adult staff members who will continue to coordinate the program.
- Establish a transition tradition, such as an end-of-school-year party, where potential new student volunteers can meet current volunteers and people in the homeless shelter.

Find a Project Advisor

Your project advisor is an expert who can answer specific questions about your issue. Look at your list of the people you met while researching issues. Is there someone who can serve as a project advisor? If you have not yet met anyone who is familiar with your issue, talk to your troop/group volunteer. They might be able to help you identify experts in your community.

Make a Global Connection

Think about others who may have worked on the same problem in the past, or check the Internet to see how others around the globe deal with your issue. What can you learn from their approach? Consider how you may be able to extend the reach of your project into other communities besides your own. Are there ways to share your plan with other communities who are facing the same issue? Can you create a plan that other people could use to replicate your project in their own communities?

Take One Last Look

By this point, you are probably anxious to get started. But before you get going, take a step back and look at your project one more time. You may need to narrow your focus a bit more or shift your approach slightly in order to make the project work. That's okay! Taking some time to fine-tune things now will make it easier to actually get it done.

Ask other people for feedback, especially your troop/group volunteer. They will make sure your project idea is complete and meets all the requirements for a Girl Scout Silver Award project.

Even though you have done a lot of work already, remember to be open to new ideas and suggestions. You may need to rethink certain parts of your idea, but this will help you refine your project and make it better. Once your project idea meets the requirements, you will be ready to get started!

Step 7: Make a Plan and Put it Into Motion

It is time to get started! Your project needs to involve action by you and your Girl Scout Silver Award Team (if you have one), from the planning stages all the way to earning the Girl Scout Silver Award.

Build a list of what you need to do and how it can be done, and then figure out who will be doing what. Remember that you are a team, so one or more team members can volunteer for each task. Also decide when each task needs to be finished. Then write all the information in a Planning Chart like the one on the next page.

When your steps are identified and your plan is set, **submit one *Girl Scout Silver Award Project Proposal* per project to the council** at least two weeks before you wish to begin your project. The online form is available at www.gswise.org/silveraward. Then... do it! Keep a record as you go by taking photos, shooting video, or making a scrapbook. Not only will it make it easier to share your story when you are finished, but it is lots of fun!



Step 7: Make a Plan and Put it Into Motion

Make a Plan Chart

What is the task?	How will the task be done?	Estimated completion time?	When should this task be finished?	Which team member(s) will complete the task?
<i>Example:</i> Research how a petition is presented to the city council.	Talk to a council member or the mayor	2 hours	September 7	Monique

Step 7: Make a Plan and Put it Into Motion

Project Tips

Before you begin your project

- ❑ **Girl Scout Membership:** Make sure your Girl Scout membership remains current while you are working on all steps of the Girl Scout Silver Award.
- ❑ **Submitting a Project Proposal:** Submit one *Girl Scout Silver Award Project Proposal* per project two weeks before beginning the project. All forms are available at www.gswise.org/silveraward.

During your project

- ❑ **Safety:** Consult *Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints* for potential safety issues and program standards regarding every aspect of the project including, but not limited to: adult/child ratios, first aid or CPR-certified adults, and money earning. Safety Activity Checkpoints are available at gswise.org.
- ❑ **Money matters:** All money-earning projects need to have approval from the Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast. For council money earning guidelines, refer the *Council-Wide Groups and Events* hub in Rallyhood under the Resources tab. For approval, complete the *Group Money Earning Application* form, available in Rallyhood.
- ❑ **Grants:** If aiming to secure a grant to fund your project, contact the council first at customercare@gswise.org or 800-565-4475 to be connected to our Philanthropy team who will work with you on the grant application and reporting processes.

- ❑ **Pictures:** Don't forget to take pictures throughout your project. If you want the council to use the photos, you must collect completed **Photo Release Forms** from everyone in the photo.
- ❑ **Working with the press:** Inform Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast (GSWISE) of the project before seeking attention from the media and work with GSWISE regarding press releases.
- ❑ **Contracts:** Only the CEO or designee can sign agreements or contracts on behalf of GSWISE.
- ❑ **Insurance:** You need to purchase Plan 2 Insurance for non-registered Girl Scouts involved in your project. Complete the *Mutual of Omaha Plan 2 Enrollment Form* and submit with payment at least two weeks prior to your event or activity. This form can be found in the *Council-Wide Groups and Events* hub in Rallyhood under the Resources tab.

When you complete your project

- ❑ **Submit your final report:** Submit one *Girl Scout Silver Award Final Report* found at www.gswise.org/silveraward.
- ❑ Girl Scouts earn their Silver Award at the time the project is completed and approved by the co-leaders. An optional Highest Award Celebration event is held annually for Girl Scouts who have earned this award. Girl Scouts must be current members during the membership year of the council's celebration to attend. Final Reports are due March 1 to be recognized at that year's celebration.

Some Girl Scouts might need additional support in going Silver or may have other special factors that GSWISE's Highest Awards Team should be aware of as you pursue the Silver Award. If this applies to you, please reach out to us at 800-565-4475 or customercare@gswise.org to let us know and we will work with you to make appropriate accommodations as necessary.

When your Girl Scout Silver Award project is complete, submit your *Girl Scout Silver Award Final Report* to the council. Submit one form per project.

Step 7: Make a Plan and Put it Into Motion

Budget Sheet

Estimated Income Troop checking account, money-earning activities, donations, grants.	Estimated Income
TOTAL	\$

Step 8: Reflect, Share Your Story, and Celebrate

Congratulations, you have completed a project that makes a difference! Take some time to reflect on what you have accomplished.

These questions may get you started:

- What did you discover about yourself?
- How did you connect with your local and global communities? Who do you know now that you did not know before?
- What did you learn from others who worked to solve the same problem?
- How did that help you make your project better?
- What skills did you gain (such as public speaking, teambuilding, advocacy, blogging, and so on) that help you as a person and a leader?
- What impact did your Girl Scout Silver Award project have on your community? How will it continue on past your involvement?
- How did you live the Girl Scout Promise and Law?

Demonstrating to an audience what you have learned sets the stage for even broader impact. It is sometimes the best way for you to recognize what you have accomplished and see how much you have grown. It will also help you get others inspired to act!



Here are some ideas for how you can share your story:

- Create a website or blog about what you have learned and how your project will help your community.
- Log on to some websites where you can share your story:
 - Girl Scouts of the USA: forgirls.girlscouts.org/map-it-girls-changing-the-world/
 - World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts: wagggg.org/en/projectsTaking it Global: tigweb.org
 - Global Youth Service Day: globalyouthserviceday.org
- At a workshop for community members, present what you have learned and what your project will do for the community. Or do a presentation for a group of younger Girl Scouts—you will definitely inspire them!
- Make a video about your project and post it online. Invite friends, community leaders, and people from organizations that are tackling a similar issue to watch and share your video with others.
- Write an essay or an article for your school newspaper.

As you wind down your project, remember to thank all the people who helped you along the way, from the people you interviewed to those who drove you around town! Not only is this good manners, but also an inspiration to people when they hear what you have done—and they will be proud to know they helped make it happen.

Now celebrate your accomplishment! You took the challenge and made a difference in your world!

