

Girl Scout Volunteer Award Guide



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Purpose of Recognition

It's nice to be recognized for good things. When people recognize us, it feels like they care that we are here and they value our contributions.

People volunteer for many reasons, but most volunteers want to do a good job and make a positive difference. When volunteers know their time and energy are appreciated and that we all value them, they commit themselves to Girl Scouts. They want to know their service is helping the greater good and making the world a better place. Our recognition is one of the most powerful ways we can retain the invaluable individuals and groups who volunteer with Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast.

Three keys to successfully recognizing volunteers:

- Do it well.
- Do it often.
- Make it meaningful.



Award Requirements

Annual nomination deadline: December 15

Award Presentation

National and council-level awards are presented at the annual Celebration of Volunteer Achievement held in the spring. Awardees are notified that they will be honored and provided RSVP instructions.

Who Can Submit Nominations

- Girl Scout Volunteers
- Girl Scouts
- Community Members
- Council Staff

Nomination Criteria for All Awards

1. Service performed was between October 1 and September 30 of the current or previous membership year.
2. Volunteer Award Nomination form and one letter of endorsement.*
3. The candidate:
 - a. Is an active, registered Girl Scout member in good standing.
 - b. Can be involved at any level of volunteering, from parent helpers to service unit team members to council volunteers.
 - c. Encourages each of our members and shows progression as a leader in their role.
 - d. Actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behaviors.
4. The service performed is above and beyond the expectations for the position held.

How to Submit a Nomination

- Review all award descriptions and requirements in the Adult Recognition Handbook.
- Recruit others to complete and submit the required endorsement letters to you to include in the nomination submission packet.
- Complete and submit the [Nomination Form](#) with the required number of endorsement letters.

**The Living Her Legacy Award, Girl Scout Champion Award, and Community Support Certificate do not require an endorsement.*

Nomination Review Process

The Adult Recognition Committee is comprised of volunteers and staff from throughout GSWISE territory. They carefully review each nomination and endorsement and compare the information presented about the volunteer with the criteria established for each award. They only know what is presented in the completed nominations. Upon review, they will:

1. Approve the candidate for the nominated award; OR
2. Approve the candidate for a different award; OR
3. Deny the award. In a case where the information given does not indicate that candidates service meets the award criteria, the nomination could be denied.

You will be notified regarding the status of your nomination sometime in late February or early March.

Formal Recognition Considerations

Best Practices

Acceptance of any position, whether done on a paid or volunteer basis, implies a willingness to perform duties stated in the position description and to devote the time necessary to perform those duties under normal circumstances. Therefore, while doing a “good job” and putting in many hours is certainly worth a thank you, it does not necessarily indicate performance “above and beyond the expectations” of the position. Similarly, holding multiple positions indicates a willingness to perform the duties of multiple positions, and is greatly appreciated, but does not necessarily indicate that that performance in any one or more positions exceeds the expectations of that position.

Choosing the Right Award

Occasionally, a candidate’s outstanding service meets the criteria for more than one award. In this case, one should consider which award might be more meaningful to the recipient. For example, an active volunteer who has made great contributions to both the local service unit and council levels might be a candidate for either the Appreciation Pin or the Thanks Badge. If the person is particularly passionate about one role or the other, the recipient may prefer to be recognized for that work. Or, if there is an indication that the nominee may change the area of focus of their work in the future to a smaller geographic area, the award recognizing the larger area of focus may be most appropriate at this time.

Focus on Service

Focus refers to the areas or groups benefitting from the service. In many cases, a volunteer works with a troop, and/or coordinates service unit events, and/or participates on a council-wide committee or task group. To help determine which award is appropriate, review award descriptions and criteria on pages 11-14.

Impact of Service

When you consider impact, consider both the number of years in a position and the results of a person’s service. Length of time in a position, while always deserving of appreciation, does not necessarily justify an official award. The results of service are more important than length of service, but generally it takes more than one year in a position before the person can achieve truly outstanding results.



How to Write a Nomination or Endorsement

Be specific – if the form asks you to describe a service provided that meets the qualifications of the award, be very descriptive.

Uninformative Example

Sally Jones should receive the award because she is always organized and is great with parent volunteers. We are all very fond of her and are willing to be under her leadership.

Informative Example

Sally Jones should receive the award because she is a great example of adult volunteer leadership to both girls and adults. Under the wing of her leadership, ten parents are actively volunteering with troop functions. She recently delegated event preparation details to us while she was out of town for a few weeks.

Because she sends regular troop volunteer emails about the bank account status, upcoming adventures, year-to-date troop goals progress, and continuing volunteer needs, we feel informed and organized to step up to the leadership challenge! Sally is always paying thanks for our support to the troop. When she came back from her trip, she paid thanks to us at the service unit meeting by organizing a potluck in recognition of her troop volunteers who provide her with endless support. Other troop leaders at the meeting were taking notes on all of her great ideas!

Avoid using only “feel good” statements – provide concrete facts rather than opinions.

Uninformative Example

Mary Smith is really good with cookies with her Cadette troop. When she took over as Service Unit Cookie Chair when the previous volunteer resigned, it was a successful sale.

Informative Example

When the Service Unit Cookie Chair resigned, Mary Smith volunteered to help. She has worked with the cookies for several years and was able to adapt to the service unit level. She processed 19,000 packages of cookies without any errors. Through skillful management techniques, her service unit achieved 100% troop participation and increased cookie sales by 40%.

Show Results – how is the service measurable?

Uninformative Example

Brenda Garcia provided an excellent training to our volunteers.

Informative Example

Brenda Garcia not only provided excellent Medic First Aid training to the volunteers in the area, she was called upon last minute when the assigned trainer became ill. Because of her volunteer service, 20 new recruits had a chance to become certified in First Aid and CPR.

Letter of Endorsement Sample

Letter of Endorsement of Jane Jones for the Honor Pin

January 20, 2023

The opening paragraph should introduce the purpose of the letter, the nominee, how you are familiar with their work, and the reason for the nomination.

I am writing this letter to support Jane Jones, who is the service unit leader in the Sherman Park Service Unit for the Honor Pin. Jane has diligently worked in our neighborhood, as well as Bayshore and WISE Girls Service Units to provide quality training to leaders which has resulted in improved delivery of Girl Scouting in all three areas.

The body of the letter should describe the specific service, who benefited from the service, and provide results of the service that went beyond the position description.

Jane recognized that many of our leaders did not complete the trainings necessary to help them be successful in their first year as leaders. She realized that in our community many adults work second and third shifts which became a real challenge in trying to get them trained. She found that several nearby areas were struggling with the same issue. She called a meeting of the service teams and proposed that they offer training at unconventional times due to the nature of the audience they wanted to serve. Everyone was immediately in agreement with her proposal.

Jane went to the Membership Experience staff at the Girl Scout council. Working together with both volunteers and staff, Jane established and delivered three training sessions that offered the courses needed by the untrained volunteers. The amazing thing is that they were offered at a local church from 6 – 9 a.m. when everyone was getting off work. Jane's dedication paid off when 30 inexperienced leaders from three service units were trained to work with their troops. She showed that by collaborating with each other, much can be accomplished. Jane's work across the three service units benefitted over 200 girls in new troops and has created strong relationships with the three service unit teams and staff members. For her innovation in training and in partnership with three service units and staff members, Jane Jones deserves the Honor Pin.

The closing of the letter must include the writer's name, as well as their phone number and email. If the writer is a Girl Scout under the age of 14, it should include her parent or guardian's email address and phone number. Girl Scouts over the age of 14 may include their own email address and phone number in addition to their parent or guardian's email. Here is an example:

Sincerely,

Mary Smith

msmith123@aol.com

602-452-7000

Formal Recognition Official GSUSA Awards



Volunteer of Excellence Pin



Appreciation Pin



Honor Pin



Thanks Badge



Thanks Badge II



Formal Recognition Official Council Awards

Volunteer Awards



Living Her Legacy



Sustained Service Pin

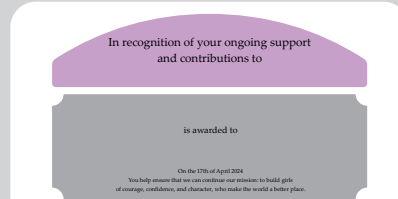


Marion Chester Read Award

Community Awards



Girl Scout Champion Award



Community Support Certificate



Formal Recognition National Awards

Volunteer of Excellence Award

Area of Service:

Troop

Who to Consider:

The Volunteer of Excellence Award recognizes volunteers who have contributed outstanding service while partnering directly with Girl Scouts in any pathway through the use of the National Program Portfolio *or* who have contributed outstanding service in support of the council's mission delivery to Girl Scouts and adult members.

Criteria:

- The nominee is an active, registered adult Girl Scout.
- The nominee has successfully completed a term of service in all requirements for the position.
- The nominee has performed beyond expectations for the position to deliver outstanding experience to Girl Scouts using the National Program Portfolio.
- The nominee actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.

OR

- The nominee's performance has been beyond the expectations of the position and has supported the council's mission-delivery goals in one or more of the following functional areas: membership development/community cultivation, volunteer relations and support, program, leadership and governance, fund development, and council support service.
- The nominee actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.

Nomination Requirements

- Troop members, families, Girl Scouts or other Girl Scout volunteers, or members of related organizations need to submit Nomination Form.
- At least one (1) completed Letter of Endorsement is required.



Formal Recognition National Awards

Appreciation Pin

Area of Service:

Service Unit

Who to Consider:

The Appreciation Pin recognizes an individual's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout mission. This service, which has had a measurable impact on one geographic area of service, helps the council reach and surpass its mission-delivery goals for that area.

Criteria:

- The nominee is an active, registered adult Girl Scout.
- The service performed by the nominee is above and beyond the expectations for the position held and made an impact on one service unit within the council's jurisdiction.

Nomination Requirements

- Troop members, families, Girl Scouts or other Girl Scout volunteers, or members of related organizations need to submit a Nomination Form.
- At least one (1) completed Letter of Endorsement is required.

Honor Pin

Area of Service:

Two (2) or more service units, smaller than the entire council

Who to Consider:

The Honor Pin recognizes an individual's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout mission, which has had measurable impact on two or more geographic areas of service, allowing the council to reach and surpass its mission-delivery goals.

Criteria:

- The nominee is an active, registered adult Girl Scout.
- The service performed by the nominee is above and beyond the expectations for the position held, and made an impact on two or more service units within the council's jurisdiction.

Nomination Requirements

- Troop members, families, Girl Scouts or other Girl Scout volunteers, or members of related organizations need to submit Nomination Form.
- At least one (1) completed Letter of Endorsement is required.

Formal Recognition National Awards

Thanks Badge

Area of Service:

Entire council

Who to Consider:

The Thanks Badge honors an individual whose ongoing commitment, leadership, and service have had an exceptional, measurable impact on meeting the mission-delivery goals and priorities of the entire council or the Girl Scout movement.

Criteria:

- The nominee is an active, registered adult Girl Scout.
- The outstanding service performed by the nominee resulted in outcomes that benefitted the total council or the entire Girl Scout organization and is so significantly above and beyond the call of duty that no other award would be appropriate.

Nomination Requirements

- Troop members, families, Girl Scouts or other Girl Scout volunteers, or members of related organizations need to submit Nomination Form.
- At least one (1) completed Letter of Endorsement is required.

Thanks Badge II

Pre-requisite:

Thanks Badge

Area of Service:

Entire council

Who to Consider:

The Thanks Badge II honors a previous Thanks Badge recipient who has continued to provide exemplary service in a leadership role, resulting in a measurable impact that benefits the entire council or Girl Scout movement.

Criteria:

- The nominee is an active, registered adult Girl Scout.
- The nominee has received the Thanks Badge for past accomplishments.
- The outstanding service performed by the nominee resulted in outcomes that benefitted the total council or the entire Girl Scout organization and is so significantly above and beyond the call of duty that no other award would be appropriate.

Nomination Requirements

- Troop members, families, Girl Scouts or other Girl Scout volunteers, or members of related organizations need to submit Nomination Form.
- At least one (1) completed Letter of Endorsement is required.

Formal Recognition National Awards

President's Award

This is a team award and GSWISE only approves one President's Award per year.

Who to Consider:

The President's Award recognizes the efforts of a service-delivery team or committee whose exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout mission surpassed team goals and resulted in significant, measurable impact toward reaching the council's overall goals.

Criteria:

- All team members are registered Girl Scouts.
- All team members have met requirements and expectations of the positions held.
- The team has significantly contributed to meeting one or more of the council's mission-delivery goals.
- The team reflects the diversity of the target audience or area it serves, in Girl Scout and adult membership, in all pathways.
- The team actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.

Nomination Requirements

- Troop members, families, Girl Scouts or other Girl Scout volunteers, or members of related organizations need to submit Nomination Form.
- At least one (1) completed Letter of Endorsement is required.



Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast Council Awards

Living Her Legacy Award

Area of Service:

Troop

Who to Consider:

The Living Her Legacy Award recognizes a troop leader who started a troop as kindergarten Daisies and continued the same troop/group of Girl Scouts until they became graduated Ambassadors.

Criteria:

- The nominee is an active, registered adult Girl Scout at the time of nomination.
- Be the troop leader of a troop that is graduating the following spring or graduated the previous spring.

Nomination Requirements

- A troop member, troop family, or other Girl Scout should submit the Nomination Form.
- *No endorsement letter is required for this award.*

Marion Chester Read Award

Except in circumstances of extraordinary volunteer service, GSWISE only approves one Marion Chester Read Award per year.

Pre-requisite:

Thanks Badge

Area of Service:

Entire council

Who to Consider:

The Marion Chester Read Award recognizes a volunteer who has received the Thanks Badge and is still showing additional support to Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast.

Criteria:

- The nominee is an active, registered adult Girl Scout.
- The nominee has demonstrated noteworthy volunteerism, modeled the Girl Scout spirit, and shared their skills and talents to advance the Girl Scout mission.

Nomination Requirements:

- Troop members, families, Girl Scouts or other Girl Scout volunteers, or members of related organizations need to submit Nomination Form.
- At least one (1) completed Letter of Endorsement is required.
- Additional Letters of Endorsement are encouraged, but not required.

Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast Council Awards

Sustained Service Pin

If a volunteer is eligible for another national or council award that they have not yet earned, they should be nominated for that award instead.

Pre-requisite:

Previous National or Council Awardee

Area of Service:

Varies

Who to Consider:

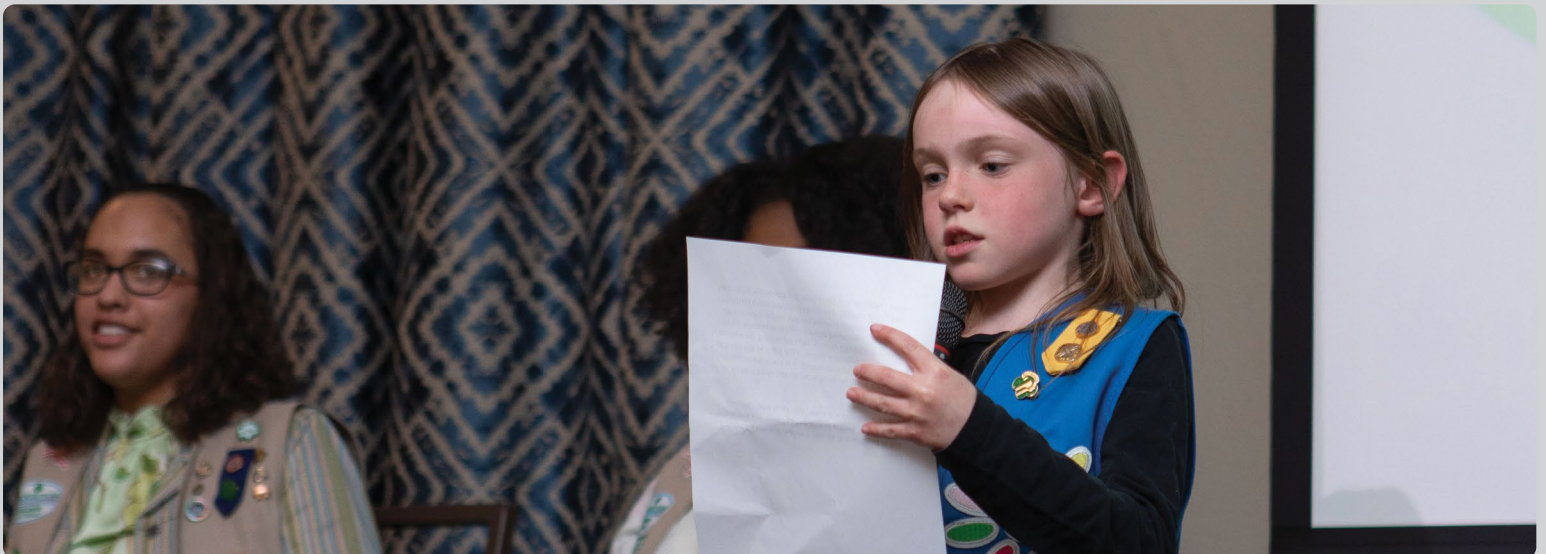
Awarded to an individual who has continued to volunteer at the service unit level or above for an additional three years after receiving a national or council award.

Criteria:

- The nominee is an active, registered adult Girl Scout.
- The nominee has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the areas of advancing participation in meaningful programs and inspiring service and community partnerships.
- The service performed by the nominee has remained above and beyond the expectations of any position held and has continued to help the council reach or surpass its strategic priorities for at least one service unit.

Nomination Requirements:

- Troop members, families, Girl Scouts or other Girl Scout volunteers, or members of related organizations need to submit Nomination Form.
- At least one (1) completed Letter of Endorsement is required.



Community Awards

Girl Scout Champion Award

The Girl Scout Champion Award recognizes an individual or couple who does not currently hold a volunteer role and has given special assistance or contributions to Girl Scouting within the GSWISE jurisdiction. The awardee has provided support to a troop, service unit, or the entire council.

Community Support Certificate

The Community Support Certificate recognizes a business or organization that has given unusual assistance or special contributions to Girl Scouting within the GSWISE jurisdiction. The business has provided support to the troop, service unit, or entire council.



Numeral Guard and Years of Service Pin

Numeral Guard

The Numeral Guard is a longevity recognition for an individual for their total years of registered membership, including years as a girl and as an adult member.

Years of Service Pin

The Years of Service Pin is a longevity recognition for an adult volunteer's dedication to Girl Scouting.

- Years do not need to be consecutive.
- Pins are available in five-year increments.
- Individuals track their total years.

GSWISE does not automatically distribute pins. Please submit a request form to receive your pin(s).



Troop Leader Core Awards

Troop leader Core Awards coincide with the GSWISE 5 Troop Leader Expectations. Each award is earned independently and can be earned annually. Once the award is earned once, recipients can add year bars to the award, indicating their continued work.

Council staff will determine early in each membership year who has earned the award for the previous membership year and notify the recipients. Awards can be picked up by showing the email in any Resource Center during open hours.



Expectation: Take all recommended training

Award requirement: Complete all required and recommended training.

- For new troop leaders: Complete New Troop Leader Onboarding and at least 5 monthly spotlight trainings (announced monthly in the Volunteer Voice email newsletter).
- For returning troop leaders: Complete Annual Trainings for Volunteers and at least 9 monthly spotlight trainings (announced monthly in the Volunteer Voice email newsletter).



Expectation: Be inclusive and kind

Award requirement: Re-register 100% of your troop and two or more adults during Early Registration.



Expectation: Participate in the annual Girl Scout Cookie Program Activity

Award requirement: Participate as a troop in both the Fall Product Program & Girl Scout Cookie Program.



Expectation: Manage troop finances

Award requirement: Turn in troop's ACH Form & Cash Report *on time*.



Expectation: Provide the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

Award requirement:

- Set up a year plan for the troop in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK).

OR

- Purchase a year's worth of badge-in-a-box programming from GSWISE.

OR

- New troops receive the Girl Scout Leadership Experience Box from GSUSA.

Individual Award

President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA)

Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast is proud to be a certifying organization of the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA). The PVSA recognizes United States citizens and lawfully admitted, permanent residents of the United States who have achieved the required number of hours of service over a 12-monthtime period or cumulative hours over the course of a lifetime.

In 2003, the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation founded the President's Volunteer Service Award to recognize the important role of volunteers in America's strength and national identity. This award honors individuals whose service positively impacts communities in every corner of the nation and inspires those around them to take action, too. It is a national award led by AmeriCorps and managed in partnership with Points of Light. <https://presidentialserviceawards.gov/>

Volunteer Eligibility

- United States citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States.
- Completes eligible service within a 12-month period (for annual PVS Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards) and over a lifetime (for Lifetime Achievement Awards).

Eligible Service: Unpaid acts of volunteer service benefitting others.

Eligible service does not include:

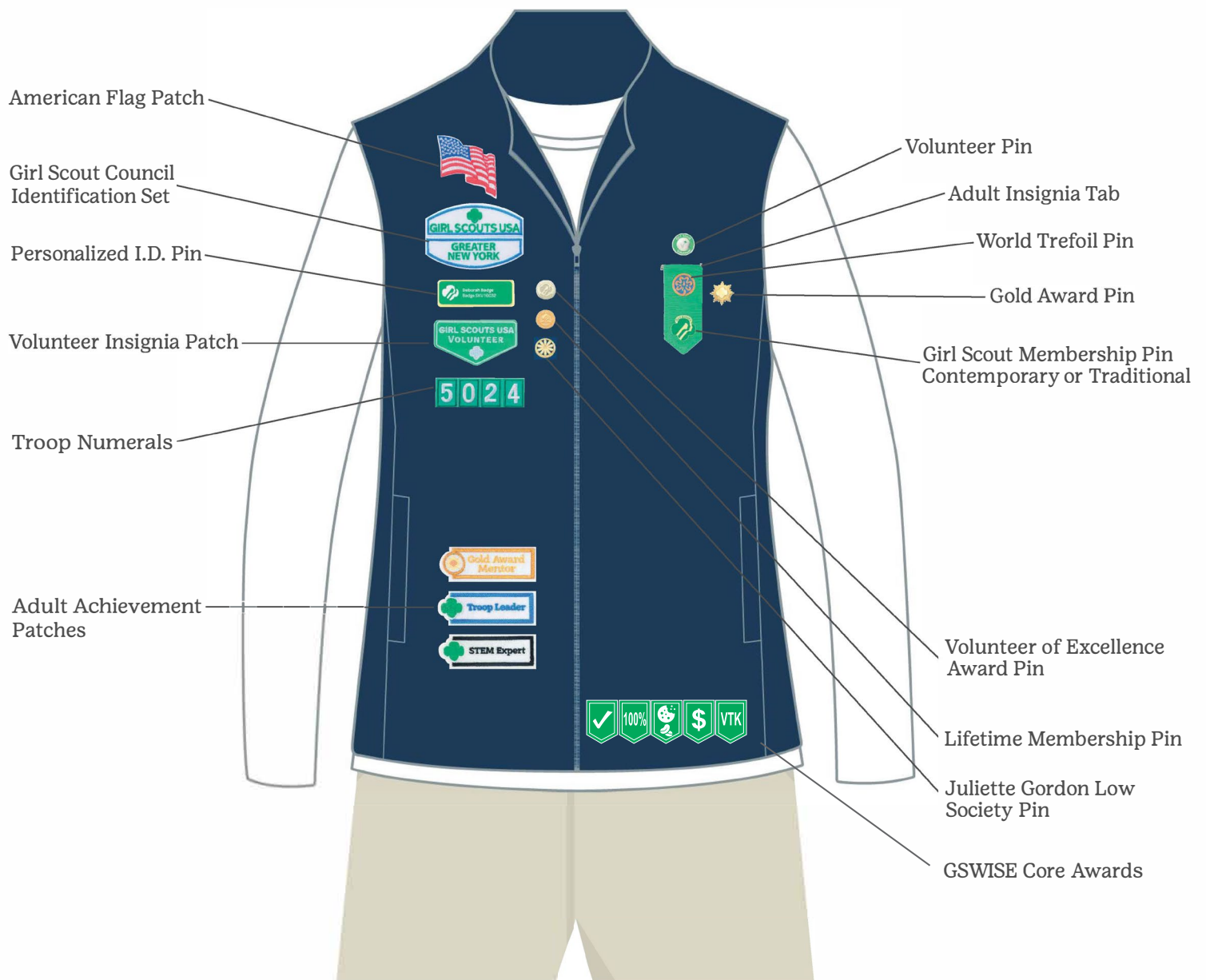
- Donating funds
- Political lobbying (non-partisan voter registration is an eligible activity)
- Religious instruction or proselytizing
- Conducting worship service
- Volunteer service performed as part of court-ordered community service
- Serving only family members

Hours required to earn awards in each age group:

Age Group	PVSA Bronze	PVSA Silver	PVSA Gold	Lifetime Achievement
Young Adults (16-25)	100-174 hours	175-249 hours	205+ hours	4,000+ hours
Adults (26+)	100-249 hours	250-499 hours	500+ hours	4,000+ hours

Nomination: Submit a spreadsheet listing hours completed to customercare@gswise.org

Adult Award Insignia Placement



Vest and insignia can be purchased at any GSWISE Resource Center location.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: We worry that if we give out too many recognitions, their significance will be “watered down.” How do we maintain quality?

A: We should celebrate having growing numbers of people who deserve recognition. Take pride in having many to recognize. Girl Scout adult recognitions are not a competition. There should be no limit to the total number of awards given.

Q: What about recognizing people more than once. Should you give the same recognition to a person more than once?

A: It is great to celebrate people whose continuing service and commitment make a difference in Girl Scouting. Rather than giving a duplicate award, consider the Sustained Service Pin if it has been at least three years since the most recent award. This would be appropriate when someone deserves repeated recognition at the same level, for example, as an Appreciation or Honor Pin recipient.

Q: How does a person decide which recognition to wear?

A: If an adult has received more than one special recognition (e.g., Volunteer of Excellence & Appreciation pins), typically the award with the largest area of service received is the one worn on the uniform. People with numerous pins usually retire the remaining ones with honor, either placing them in a scrapbook or framing together with other mementos.

Q: If a nomination requires an endorsement letter, can I copy my nomination write-up and have it signed by other people?

A: Each individual who writes a letter of endorsement should give their own account of the significant contributions of the nominee. Copying the nomination or using “form” endorsement letters take the sincerity out of the letter and may give the committee cause to question if the nominee’s service is deserving of the formal recognition.

Q: Is there a hierarchy for the awards?

A: We recognize that volunteers do amazing work and should be recognized when that work occurs. A volunteer can earn any award at any time*, as long as they meet the criteria outlined for the award.

*The only exceptions are the Thanks Badge II and the Marion Chester Read Award, which require the candidate to have previously earned the Thanks Badge.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is an “area of service”?

A: An area of service refers to the areas in which a volunteer has an impact.

1. Community – the volunteer’s local community/vicinity
2. Service Unit – the cluster of troops within a defined area, such as a school district
3. Council – the entire council footprint of Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast
4. Movement – the entire Girl Scout organization nationwide

Q: Can I submit a nomination after the deadline?

A: Unfortunately, due to the tight timeline between the date award nominations close and the date that the awards approval committee needs to be provided with the nominations so they are able to carefully review them, we cannot accept late nominations. We encourage you to submit nominations early, beginning on May 1 each year to avoid the need to submit at the last minute in December.

Q: My place of worship recognized Girl Scout volunteers with awards specific to my faith. I don’t see anything about those here. Where do I find information about that?

A: P.R.A.Y. is an organization that assists many denominations with administering awards that Girl Scouts, and Girl Scout Volunteers, can earn. Information is available at girlscouts.org/faith or through your place of worship.

