

# Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards Frequently Asked Questions

### Why were the award guidelines revised?

The guidelines were revised to align with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, to incorporate the Journey books and new grade levels, and to focus more on community, sustainability, and global connection.

### What are the new grade levels for earning the awards?

Bronze	Earned by Girl Scout Juniors	4-5 grades
Silver	Earned by Girl Scout Cadettes	6-8 grades
Gold	Earned by Girl Scout Seniors or Ambassadors	9-12 grades

# What are the new prerequisite requirements to earn the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards?

- Bronze Award one Junior Journey
- Silver Award one Cadette Journey
- Gold Award two Senior or Ambassador Journeys -OR- if having earned the Girl Scout Silver Award, girls need to complete one Senior or Ambassador Journey

# What are Journeys?

Journeys are the exciting new way Girl Scouts is helping girls grow into leaders. Journeys also help girls experience the three keys to leadership: *Discover, Connect,* and *Take Action*. By completing a Journey, girls are actively engaging in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience while participating in some Girl Scout traditions, too. Each grade level has its own series of Journeys to engage girls in exploring their surroundings. Each series has a theme. There are now two Journey series: *It's Your World-Change It!* and *It's Your Planet-Love It!* A third set is expected to be released by GSUSA in 2010. Journeys were designed with input from girls!

Why are Journeys prerequisites to earn the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards? The Journeys give girls a full experience of what they will do as they work to earn the highest awards. The skills girls will gain while working on the Journeys will help them develop, plan, and implement their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold award project.

### How do you do a Journey book?

There is an adult *how to guide* and a girl book that is appropriate for every grade level in each series. The adult *how to guide* includes sample sessions, tips on creating a quality experience, health and safety information, national leadership outcomes, and more. The girl books are interactive and girl friendly and address issues of today's girls. Girls can earn awards throughout the Journey based on what activities they choose to do, instead of just one award at the end. Journeys are set up as 6-8 sessions of approximately two hours each and are fully customizable by girls and volunteers. Girls can complete a Journey over the course of a year, six weeks, or maybe less. They can do it on their own or at Girl Scout meetings. Girls can pick and choose what activities they want to do, what topics they want to explore and exactly how in depth they want to explore a topic or activity. Girls need to earn all awards in the Journey to fulfill the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award prerequisite requirement.

# How do girls know when a Journey is *completed*?

A Journey is completed when a girl has earned the Journey awards, which include creating and carrying out a Take Action project.

# What makes the award project different from the Journey Take Action project?

In contrast to the Journey Take Action projects, which give girls themes on which to base their Journey project, the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award projects have no pre-designed theme. Girls select their own theme, design, and ways to execute their award project.

# What is happening with the old prerequisites for the awards (i.e. the signs, interest patches, career and leadership awards)?

These awards will no longer be prerequisites under the new Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold award guidelines. However, girls can continue to earn these awards.

# Who are the Adult Guides intended for – council staff, parents, or volunteers?

The guides were designed for volunteers, project advisors, and parents working directly with girls on achieving their awards.

# When will the new guidelines officially take effect?

Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast transitioned to the new guidelines September 2009. Any girl/troop beginning to work towards one of the awards in September 2009 or later should follow the new guidelines.

# What happens to girls who are using the old guidelines?

Girls currently working on a Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award can complete their projects using the old guidelines.

# Can a girl following the old guidelines move up to the next grade level while still working on one of the awards?

Yes. For example, a Girl Scout Junior who is working on her Girl Scout Bronze Award could move up to Girl Scout Cadette in grade 6, but she needs to finish her Girl Scout Bronze Award by the end of grade 6.

# Can girls begin working on an award the summer after they bridge from one Girl Scout level to the next?

Yes. Girls can begin to earn the awards over the summer.

#### Can girls work on two awards at the same time?

No. One award needs to be completed before work begins on a new one.

### What are the suggested hours for each of the award projects?

Not all projects will require the same length of time to complete from planning to sharing and celebration. 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. Quality projects should be emphasized over quantity of hours. After the Journey(s) requirement is fulfilled, the suggested minimum number of hours to use as a guide is:

- Girl Scout Bronze Award suggested minimum 20 hours
- Girl Scout Silver Award suggested minimum 50 hours
- Girl Scout Gold Award suggested minimum 80 hours

# Can the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award projects be done in the Girl Scout community?

- Bronze Award Project is within their Girl Scout or local community
- Silver Award Project is within their local neighborhood or community (beyond the Girl Scout community)
- Gold Award Project is within their local community, region, or beyond (beyond the Girl Scout community)

#### Are group projects allowed?

That depends on whether or not a girl is following the new or old guidelines. Following the old guidelines girls can work as individuals or in groups for the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award. Following the new guidelines:

- Bronze Award girls work in teams
- Silver Award girls work individually or in small teams of 2-4 girls
- Gold Award girls work individually

Girl Scout Juliettes can work individually on the Girl Scout Bronze Award, but they will need to recruit a team of friends and/or organizations as support. Girls working individually on the Girl Scout Silver and Gold will still be required to recruit a team for support.

#### What does it mean to have a sustainable project?

A sustainable project is one that lasts after the girl's involvement ends. A focus on education and raising awareness is one way to make sure a project is carried on. Workshops and handson learning sessions can inspire others to keep the project going. 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.

### Is sustainability differentiated at each grade level?

The guidelines give girls tools to examine the underlying root cause of issues, develop a sustainable project plan and measure the impact of their project on their community, the target audience and themselves. There is progression. While Girl Scout Juniors working on their Girl Scout Bronze Award will reflect on how the project could be kept going, Girl Scout Cadettes plan for sustainability. Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors work to ensure the sustainability of their project in order to meet the Girl Scout Gold Award Standards of Excellence.

While Girl Scout Juniors explore an issue that affects their Girl Scout community, Girl Scout Cadettes create a community map of their neighborhood or school. Meanwhile Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors earning the Girl Scout Gold Award assess an issue and its effect more broadly by interviewing community leaders, research using a variety of sources, and investigate other community's solutions to a similar problem.

# How does a girl measure project impact?

Girls identify their project goals for their community, target audience, and themselves by developing success indicators using a matrix provided in the guidelines.

# How can we make sure that Girl Scout Awards represent quality projects?

The best way to make sure that a girl is doing the best of her ability is to ensure that both she and her project advisor receive orientation about the award and understand the difference between a one-time community service opportunity or event and a Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award project. It is the responsibility of the troop/group volunteer, council staff member, or Girl Scout Gold Award Mentor Committee (for Gold Award only) to work with the girl to ensure that she meets the quality requirements of the award.

# What is the difference between a troop/group volunteer and a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor in the Girl Scout Gold Award process? Do girls need both?

A *Troop/Group Volunteer* is the adult who works with an ongoing troop or group. Once a girl identifies her issue, the troop/group volunteer might help her identify a person in the community who could be a great project advisor.

A Girl Scout Gold Award *project advisor* is a volunteer that guides a girl as she takes her project from the planning stage to implementation. The project advisor cannot be a girl's parent or a troop/group volunteer. The project advisor is someone from the community who is knowledgeable about the issue and who can provide guidance, experience, and expertise along the way.

Why can't a parent or troop/group volunteer be a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor? Girls are encouraged to connect with their community when earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. That means working with a project advisor who is not her parent or troop/group volunteer.

# In the Girl Scout Bronze and Silver Award process, can the troop/group volunteer also serve as the project advisor?

Yes, if they have expertise in the issue that the project addresses.

### At what point should a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor be identified?

The project advisor needs to be identified in the planning phase before the Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal is submitted to the council. The project advisor expands the network of adults and provides expertise for a girl's project. If a girl has an idea before she starts any work on her Girl Scout Gold Award, she might want to identify her project advisor from the very beginning.

# Who approves Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award projects?

- Bronze Award troop/group volunteer (final report is due at end of project)
- Silver Award troop/group volunteer (project proposal is due three weeks before the project begins and a final report is due at end of project)
- Gold Award council, through an interview process (project proposal is due three weeks before the interview date a girls wishes to attend and a final report is due at end of the project three weeks before the interview date a girls wishes to attend)

# Are the Girl Scout Silver Award workshops and Girl Scout Gold Award trainings mandatory?

The workshop at the Girl Scout Silver Award level is strongly recommended, but not mandatory. The Girl Scout Gold Award training is mandatory for any girl wishing to earn her Girl Scout Gold Award.

### What is the role of the council's Girl Scout Gold Award Mentor Committee?

The **Girl Scout Gold Award Mentor Committee** supports Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors as they go through the process of earning their Girl Scout Gold Award. It is comprised of community members, educators, key volunteers, and young women who have earned their Girl Scout Gold Award. The Committee works with council staff.

The committee's role is to ensure that girls' projects meet the national guidelines. Generally, the committee reviews Project Proposals and Final Reports, conducts interviews, makes recommendations for project development and resources, and approves projects. If a girl's project has not yet achieved its goals, the committee provides suggestions and tips to help her develop a high quality Girl Scout Gold Award project.

When the Project Proposal is submitted to the council, one member of the committee is assigned as a girl's project liaison who contacts the girl to help her prepare for her approval interview by making recommendations for clarifying the project plan, including provisions for sustainability, or expanding the project if necessary.

### When and where are the Girl Scout Gold Award interviews held?

Interviews are held multiple times through the school year and summer in multiple locations. Refer to council Web site for up-to-date information.

# Can a girl earn the Girl Scout Gold Award even if she has not been in Girl Scouts very long?

Yes. She just needs to be a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador to begin the Girl Scout Gold Award process.

# What if a girl's Girl Scout Silver or Gold Award project is not completed by the council ceremony time?

If a girl wishes to be recognized at the upcoming spring's council recognition event for earning her Girl Scout Gold Award, final reports must be received by February 1 and she must attend her final interview in February. If she misses the February 1 deadline, she will be recognized by the council the following year. Girl Scout Cadettes do not go though an interview process; they only submit the final report by February 1.

### What if a girl graduates and is 18 and doesn't have her project completed?

A girl has until the end of the Girl Scout membership year (September 30) when she is a senior in high school.

#### For more information contact:

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