

Girl Scout Silver Award Packet



Silver Award Guidelines



Girl Scout Silver Award Guidelines

Girl Scouts of Western New York

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 girls who have used their knowledge and leadership skills to make a difference in the world.

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

- Step 1: Go on a Cadette Journey**
- Step 2: Identify Issues You Care About**
- Step 3: Build Your Girl Scout Silver Award Team**
- Step 4: Explore Your Community**
- Step 5: Pick Your Take Action Project**
- Step 6: Develop Your Project**
- Step 7: Make a Plan and Put It Into Motion**
- Step 8: Reflect, Share Your Story, and Celebrate**

Your Girl Scout Silver Award Project is at least a 50 hour project. Once you complete your journey, you'll need to start keeping track of the hours you spend on planning and implementing your Silver Award Take Action Project. You can do this on the log included with the Girl Scout Silver Award Final Paperwork, or any computer generated spreadsheet that collects the same information.

As a Girl Scout, you commit to doing your very best with each step, but how much time per step is different for every Girl Scout, so the hours aren't a rule. Remember, too, that the hours include the fun and challenges you'll share with your Silver Award team. Each step you take toward making a difference in the world around you gives you a great chance to learn and grow, and that will make your award project an amazing one!



Step 1: Go on a Cadette Journey

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

Once you've finished your journey, celebrate your accomplishment and get ready to move forward toward your goal: earning a Girl Scout Silver Award!

Step 2: Identify Issues You Care About

- **Medical related issues:** Teens feel strongly about finding cures and spreading awareness about conditions like cancer, addiction, teen suicide and depression.
- **Environment:** Teens want to give back to the environment and ensure a healthy earth for all future generations.
- **Safety Issues:** Teens worry about their own personal safety at school, at home, in the world and online. They also worry about their safety from other kids such as bullies.
- **Self-image issues:** Teens want to focus on promoting self-worth and healthy living, including healthy relationships and healthy eating habits.
- **Poverty:** Teens want to give back to those who do not have their basic needs met.
- **Animal rights:** Teens care deeply about the humane treatment and protection of animals.

What issues do you care about?

Do your friends and you care about the same issues?

Do you see these issues in your own life, family, school, neighborhood or community?

What issues affect your everyday life?

How can you change these issues?



Fill in the Issues Chart with issues that concern you. This is not choosing your project, just focusing on issues you care about. You can begin to see connections between issues you care about, and issues in your own community.

ISSUES CHART		
Issue that Concern You	Why Is it Important to You?	How Does this Issue Affect Your Community?



Step 3: Build Your Girl Scout 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 girls, or you can create and implement your own project.

- **Small team model:** The girls 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 must play an active role in choosing, planning, and developing the team's Take Action project.
- **Solo model:** You can create and implement a project on your own, but 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're in charge.

If you've decided to work independently, you can skip to step 4; otherwise read on.

If you plan on working with a team, use the following tips to create a great team whose members are committed to:

- Respecting different points of view and ways of work
- Contributing to the project—everyone needs to help out! All girls need to put in 50 hours
- Accepting constructive suggestions
- Working together to create and develop a plan
- Resolving conflicts

Team members don't 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 communication and cooperation are very important when working with others

After you've built your team, hold your first meeting. You can play a team game to get better acquainted. Spend some time discussing what makes a great team and how you'd like your team to work together. You can 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'll meet.



Step 4: Explore Your Community

Your Silver Award Project should address a community need outside of Girl Scouts.

Community: A community is a group of interacting people sharing an environment. This can be your block, neighborhood, place of worship or school.

Needs: A gap between what is and what should be. It can be felt by a group, individual or an entire community.

What is a community you belong to?

Every Community has its own needs. Looking at the needs will help you gain a better understanding of your community as well as help make a decision about your priorities for improvement.

Problems are a part of life, every community has problems too. Like people communities try and solve their problems. Analyzing problems helps find solutions.

No one knows your community better than you do! Can you name problems in your community? Start a list:

What is a problem or need you think is a priority?

Does one happen more (frequent)?

Has one been ongoing (duration)?

Does one affect more people (range)?

The problem is intense (severity)

Problems can vary from place to place and person to person, or can be a global issue reaching beyond your community. Examining situations closely helps uncover what is truly needed, and leads you towards future improvement.

As a girl scout what issues do you care about?

Is there an issue you are passionate about, that is also a problem or need in your local community?

Continue to explore your community by writing down the things you see that could be improved or places where your special talents and skills could be used. When you meet people who might be able to help you with your project, jot down their names and contact information in the following Community Contact List.



COMMUNITY CONTACTS LIST			
Community Contact	Organization	Contact Information	How They Can Help

Talk to people to get in-depth information about community issues. As you conduct interviews, you'll 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 Take Action project.

Start by talking to people you know; such as neighbors or teachers. Ask them to introduce you to other people in your community, such as business owners, school officials, religious leaders, public officials, 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 an adult. Also, before going online, remember to take the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge at www.girlscouts.org/internet_safety_pledge.asp Never give out your address or any other personal information when you're 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'm interested in doing a project that will help the community. What are some issues affecting our community? Do you know about how people have tried to work on these issues in the past? What worked? What didn't work?
- Can you suggest a project I could do to address one of these issues?



Step 5: Pick Your Take Action Project

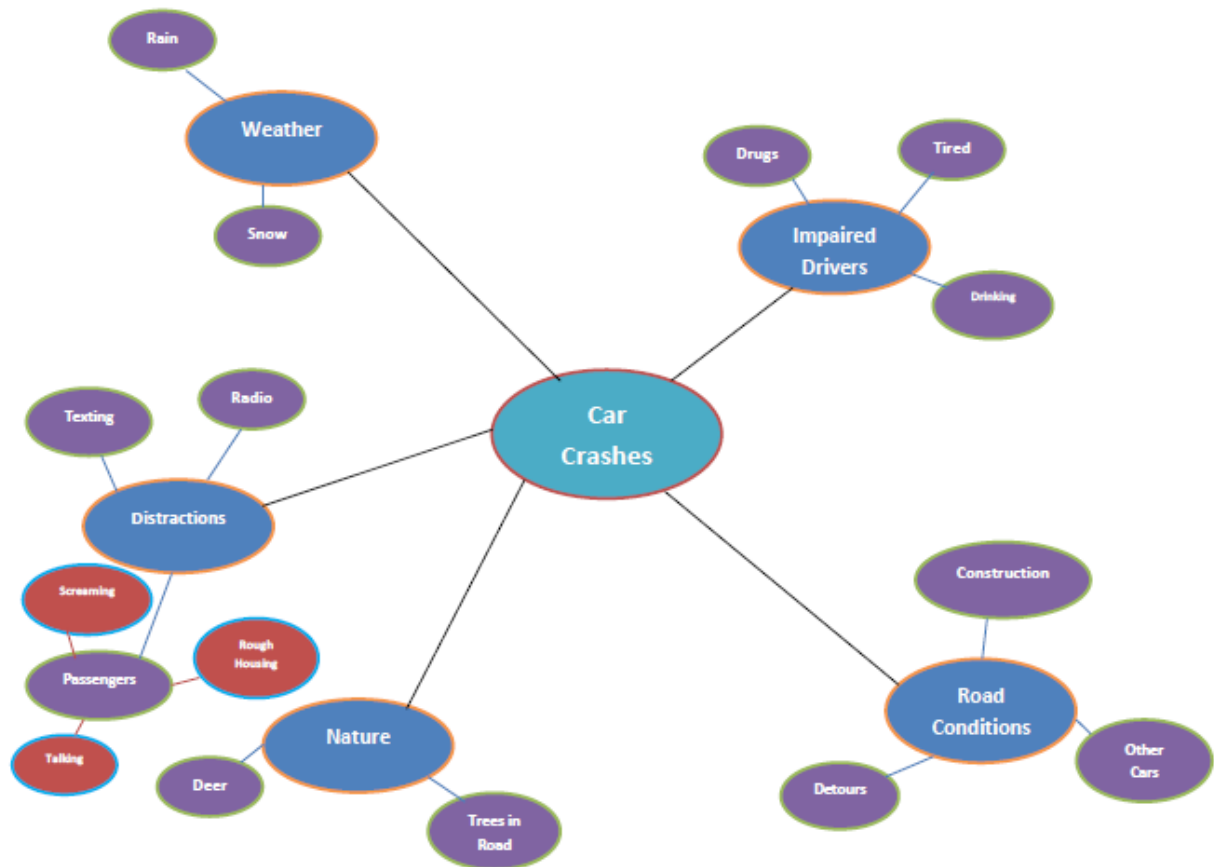
Now that you've thought about the issues you care about and explored your community, it's time to choose a project based on what you've learned.

Before you pick your project:

- Review your Issues Chart 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, 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! Narrow your focus. Pick just one aspect of your issue, and then develop a solution to that specific problem.

Mind Mapping

- Use Mind Mapping as a tool to break down large issues into one manageable specific problem. Here is an example of Mind Mapping to break down the issue of car accidents.





- You can now use Mind Mapping again to develop a project from one specific problem. Here is an example of selecting a project based on texting while driving.



After you've chosen your project, make sure everyone your working with or on your team is clear about what your goals are and why. Answer these questions:

- What is the project?
- Why does it matter?
- Who will it help?
- How will I/We make a difference?

Think about the following:

- Which of your leadership skills do you think you'll use as you work on your Take Action 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?

Now that you've chosen a project, it's time to make a plan!



Step 6: Develop Your Project

Before You Start

What is the goal that you would you like to achieve with your project?

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

- What steps do I/we need to take to reach our goal?
 - List step-by-step what it will take to reach your goal. Be as specific as possible so that you can put together a timeline and draw on your team to help you reach your goals
- What special talents can each girl use to help make the project a success?
- What did I/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 we earn money for our project, if necessary? Your troop/group volunteer can help you come up with money-earning ideas that follow Girl Scout policies. And remember, your time and talents are often more important than money.
- How much time do we need to finish our project? Is that timeline realistic?
 - Develop a time line, this will help you determine how much time should be allotted to each part of your project.

A Girl Scout Silver Award Take Action project addresses the root cause of an issue, produces impact that is measurable and sustainable, and is a local project that may links to a national and/or global issue.

Make It Last

You'll be investing a lot of yourself in your project, so you'll want to develop it in such a way that it keeps going even after you're done.

- How will your project create lasting change?

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 Take Action 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. Here are some examples of Take Action projects that will last:

Take Action Project #1

Problem: Kids can't walk to school safely because there aren't 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.



Take Action Project #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. She or he 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

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 it work. That's okay! Taking some time to fine-tune your project now will make it easier to actually get it done.

Does your plan sound doable? If not, take a step back and refocus. Try to find a different angle to pursue. Work with your troop/group volunteer, project advisor, and Take Action team to find solutions to problems and obstacles that come up along the way.

Ask other people for feedback. Be sure to get approval for your project from your troop/group volunteer, who will make sure that your project idea is complete and meets all the requirements for a Girl Scout Silver Award Take Action project.

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



Step 7: Make a Plan and Put It Into Motion

Project Planning Checklist

The answers to all of the questions below should be yes before you begin your Take Action project.

- Will your project demonstrate your leadership skills?
- Have you set your project goal and identified what you would like to learn?
- Have you chosen your Take Action team? Have you discussed the project with them?
- Have you created a budget for the project?
- Have you created a plan to raise funds, if necessary?
- Have you made a timeline for your project?
- Does your project address a need in the local community and have you found national and/or global links?
- Can your project be sustainable?
- Does your project challenge your abilities and your interests?

Now What?

It's time to get started! Use the Make a Plan Worksheet included in the Silver Award Final Report to build a list of what you and your team (if you have one) need to do and how it can be done, who will be doing each task, how the task will be accomplished, and when each task will be finished. The Make a Plan Worksheet must be included in the Silver Award Final Report paperwork when you turn it in.

When your steps are identified and your plan is set . . . do it! Be sure to continue to keep a record of the time you spent working on your project.

Document how you put your plan into action. Make sure you take photos, shoot a video, or make a scrapbook so you can share your story when you're finished.



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 didn't 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, team building, advocacy, blogging, and so on) that help you as a person and a leader?
- What impact did your Take Action project have on your community? How will it go 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, and 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 Web site or blog about what you have learned and how your project will help your community.
- Log on to some Web sites where you can share your story:
 - o World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts: www.wagggg.org/en/projects
 - o Taking it Global: www.tigweb.org
 - o Global Youth Service Day: www.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 local or 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've done—and they'll be proud to know they helped make it happen.

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