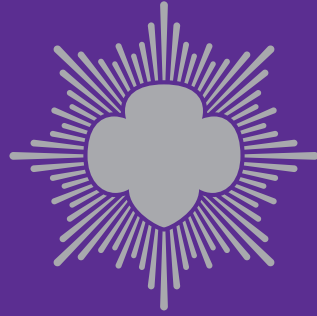




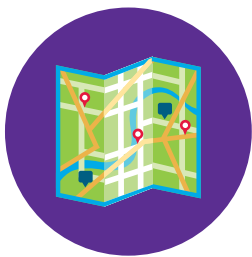
Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award



girl scouts 
of western new york

Silver Award at a Glance

7 Steps to the Silver Award



Prerequisite:

Complete a Cadette Leadership Award or Journey, if you haven't already earned the Bronze Award.



Step 1:

Identify issues that you're passionate about and how they affect your community.



Step 2:

Build your team. Work with a team of up to three other Cadettes or on your own. Either way, plan to partner with the community.



Step 3:

Explore your community to learn more about issues that interest you. This can be your neighborhood, your school, Girl Scouts, your place of worship, or another community of interest.



Step 4:

Choose your Silver Award project based on your passions and what you've learned by exploring your community and talking to others.



Step 5:

Make a plan to carry out your Silver Award Take Action project.



Step 6:

Put your plan in motion. You and your team will each spend about 50 hours to earn the award. Planning time counts too! Use the Time Log to track your time.



Step 7:

Spread the word and submit your final report. Inspire others! You can give a presentation to another Girl Scout troop, your local Girl Scout community, or to students at school. Turn in your final report to your council before September 30 after completing 8th grade.



Then...

Celebrate! Submit photos to communications for spotlight.

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What is a Girl Scout Silver Award Take Action Project?

You probably have questions about how to earn the Silver Award.

It may be different than other projects you've done as a Girl Scout. If you earned a Bronze Award, some of the steps will be familiar. And, if you didn't earn a Bronze Award—that's OK. Any Girl Scout Cadette can rock a Silver Award Take Action project. Go Silver!

You'll plan a Take Action project by:

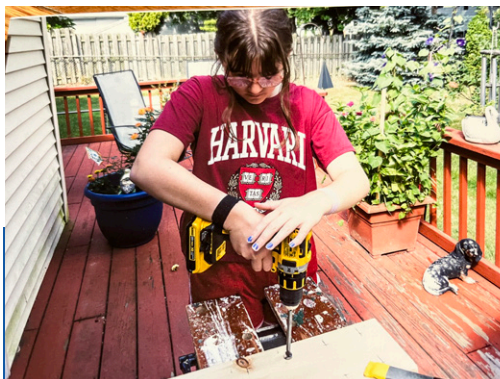
- ✓ Showing leadership
- ✓ Addressing a real root cause of an issue
- ✓ Making a lasting impact, even after you're done (sustainable)

These are the required elements. If they are new to you—no worries! We'll explain each of these in more detail. You'll be a Silver Award Take Action project expert in no time.



In 2021-22, Scouts in Cadette Troop 70173 from Pendleton dedicated their Silver Award to improving the Memory Garden at Camp Windy Meadows in Lockport. They worked for two years weeding, planting, mulching, staining the bridge, and led a ceremony to commemorate the new brick path, and made thank you notes to the donors. The girls learned about plants that keep mosquitoes away and they learned how much work it takes to keep a garden looking good.

The troop voted to buy a bench to beautify the garden and to store gloves and shovels for other troops to use, as well as photo directions (before and after) for troops to weed the bricks.



Hannah Thompson from Troop 61046 built a butterfly house and certified Monarch butterfly garden to help increase the population of Monarchs and other local butterflies. Her garden/habitat contains butterfly nectar plants, caterpillar host plants, bushes for year round color, pollinator-friendly spring bulbs, and a butterfly house for resting butterflies.

What Does “Take Action” Mean?



When you plan a Take Action project, you research a community issue to understand what causes it (root causes). You work with community members to learn more and discover solutions. And you develop a project that is sustainable, which means that it has a lasting impact.

Lots of Girl Scouts have done service projects before. And sometimes they get these confused with Take Action projects. Here's the difference:

What's the Difference?

Service Projects

Are done **for** the community

Solve a problem “right now,” like collecting food for a food bank. The food feeds the hungry “right now.” But collecting and donating food doesn’t solve or reduce the root cause of why people go hungry.

Are a “one-time” deal.

Take Action Projects

Are done **with** the community

Look at what causes the issue (“root causes”) and work to eliminate or reduce the cause.

Have the potential for making a lasting impact.

What a Silver Award Project Isn't



It's not a collection project.

Collecting food for a food pantry, for example, won't do. When you collect food once, it's not sustainable. It's really just a one-time gig. And it doesn't identify and solve a root cause, like food insecurity.



It's not a fundraiser.

Planning a 5K or another event to raise funds for a cause won't work. That's because money alone doesn't usually address the root cause of a problem. And money runs out. So it's not sustainable. Also, in your role as a Girl Scout, you can't raise money for another organization.



It's not a make or donate project.

Making blankets or donating food for homeless families doesn't meet project requirements. While helpful, donations don't identify and address a root cause, and they provide immediate but not long-term relief. So make or donate projects are not sustainable.

Turn a Service Project into a Take Action Project

Turn this service project...

Donate books to a local school.

Donate food to a food pantry.

Pick up trash from a public park.

Collect pet food and products for an animal shelter.

into this Take Action project

→ Organize a “reading buddy” club that pairs older students with students who are just learning to read.

→ Start a community garden to feed the homeless and train others to keep it going.

→ Partner with the city to have recycle cans installed and hold “reduce, reuse, recycle” workshops.

→ Partner with the shelter to hold community workshops on why spaying and neutering is important.

How Do I Show Leadership in My Project?

You've got two options to meet the Silver Award leadership requirement. You can work with a small team (up to 4 girls max). Or you can take on a project on your own. Either way, plan to partner *with* community members to take action. Community members might be teachers or school administrators, business or church leaders, staff at a shelter, or city planners. They should be experts in the issue you're working on.

How Do I Find the Root Cause of an Issue?

You probably have a few ideas about community issues that interest you. Maybe there is something at school that bothers you. Or, something in your neighborhood that could be improved. Research to find the root causes of these issues. Read online. Talk to community experts who work in this area. Ask *what triggers* the issue. And then ask *why* these triggers happen to find the real root causes.

How Do I Make My Project Sustainable?

Your project is sustainable when it lasts, even after you're done. Making your project sustainable isn't hard.

You can:

- Hold a workshop so that people in the community can learn about your project
- Educate other Girl Scouts about your project at a troop or service unit meeting
- Post an educational video or blog
- Partner with someone who can continue the work (i.e., a club at school)

What makes this sustainable?

- Educating others makes a lasting impression!
- Your project continues, even after you've done your part—brilliant!



How Much Time Does it Take?

Spend at least 50 hours on the Silver Award project—that's the per-girl minimum. Keep track of your time in the Time Log or use an app or your own notebook. You can include the time it takes to research, plan, take action, and complete the final report.

Girl Scouts from Troop 30248 learned building techniques and how to use power tools when they designed the bat boxes. ►



When is the Award Deadline?

September 30 after completing 8th grade is the absolute last day you can submit a Silver Award final report, but you can submit your final report anytime during the year when you are finished with your project.

How Do I Know When I'm Ready to Start?

- Excited to get moving on earning your Silver Award? Check these requirements off of your to-do list first.
- You're a Girl Scout Cadette (grades 6-8)
- You've completed a Girl Scout *Cadette Leadership Award* or *Journey* if you haven't already earned the *Bronze Award* - that's the first step!
- Optional: You've attended a Silver Award Training (highly recommended)





Step 1: Identify Issues



How to start? Begin with your passions! What makes you excited? What do you love to do? What have you always longed to know more about?

Then, look to your community. What are the challenges? Who could use some help? Is there a way to bring your passions to the community to make the world a better place?

There are no wrong answers—no pressure. In this step, you're simply exploring, jotting down what comes to mind.

On a separate sheet of paper or in a notebook, create a chart like the one on the bottom of the page.



Tip: Once you begin this step, start tracking your time so you don't get stuck trying to recreate it at the end. Each Cadette should spend approximately 50 hours working toward the Silver Award. Track your time using a spreadsheet, or a piece of paper—just don't lose it. You'll need to submit your Time Log with your Final Report.



What issues are you passionate about?

Environment



Why are these issues important to you?

Trees are essential for so many animals. I see a lot of trees being cut down to make room for new buildings.



How do the issues affect your community?

There is less space for the birds and their nests.



Step 2: Build Your Team

To meet the Silver Award **Leadership** requirement, you'll need to build a team. You've got options:

- **Small team model:** Work with a team of up to three other Cadettes. Your team can be made up of Girl Scouts from the same troop, other troops, or individually registered Girl Scouts. Each Girl Scout must play an active role in choosing, planning, developing, and completing the team's project, and must have their own role and responsibilities in the project.
- **Solo model:** You can create and implement a project on your own. Recruiting and engaging your peers and/or adult volunteers from your network and around your community will be necessary to complete specific tasks.



Girls from Troop 30248 built 9 bat boxes, created informational packets and handed out, delivered, or installed all 9 of them.

Teamwork makes the dream work.

Since each Cadette will spend 50 hours on this project, focus on an issue you are really interested in. Don't just pick an issue your friend is doing because you want to work with them.

- Respect your teammates and their different points of view.
- Decide on team rules—use the Girl Scout Law as your guide.
- Contribute your share.
- Have a conflict? Resolve it quickly by talking things out.

No matter which option you choose:

- Plan to partner *with* community members to learn about your issue, discover the root cause(s), make a plan, and take action. Community members might be teachers or school administrators, neighbors, business owners, religious group leaders, or staff at a local community center working on the issue you are interested in. They should be experts in the issue you're working on.
- Show active leadership by involving others in your efforts and directing them to help you meet the goals of your project. Keep track of who helps you and how so you can thank them upon completion and list them in your Final Report.
- You should have the support of at least one **registered, background-checked adult Girl Scout volunteer** who is responsible for safety and Silver Award procedures like your troop leader.
- Try it: Having a **project advisor** is not required but can be very helpful. Lots of people are happy to play a part in helping a Girl Scout make the world a better place.
- The Final Report will ask you to identify and reflect on your individual leadership role, responsibilities, and experience.



A project advisor is an adult who is an expert that has some level of knowledge, skills, or access to resources that can help with your project.

While parents/legal guardians and troop leaders can be project advisors, try to expand outside your familiar circles and grow your network!

If you've chosen a group for your team, hold your first meeting.

Explore how you can collaborate. Play a game or two to get the ball rolling—you might try “spider web!” First, form a circle. Then, toss a ball of yarn or string to each other. The person receiving the yarn tells the group a characteristic about themselves before tossing the yarn to the next person. The yarn should be held tightly and above the ground at all times. Use this activity to discuss how the members all depend on each other. If a single person pulls the yarn, it affects everyone in the group; if one person's yarn is cut, the whole web is broken. Have fun!

For more team-building activities, ask your adult volunteer, advisor, or another trusted adult to check out the *Volunteer Toolkit* Silver Award Meeting Plans.



Step 3: Explore Your Community

You've had a chance to think about the issues that you're passionate about and why they are important to you. You've also thought about how these issues might impact a community. In this step, you'll zoom in on your community. Your mission is to see your community in a way that you never have before.

Your troop leader can help you safely visit places as a team. Or you can explore on your own with an adult. Walk through your neighborhood. Take a bus through town. Observe on your way to and from school and around places you shop. Take note of the resources that you see like major businesses, libraries, animal shelters, parks, community or cultural centers, and more.

1. **Draw a community map** to keep track of what you see and your ideas for change.

Think of all the communities that you belong to or know about: your neighborhood, school, sports group, place of worship, Girl Scouts, and more. Then, think about other places you know. Did you adopt a dog from a local shelter? Does a younger sibling go to a different school? Have you visited grandparents in a senior community? Do you have a favorite outdoor space? What can be improved or who needs help in these communities? How can you use your unique skills? See an example of a Community Map on the next page.

2. **List the names and contact info** of those you meet in your community who might be able to help you with your project.

Community experts are important because they can offer their knowledge or advise you on how to take action on the issue(s) you are thinking about addressing through your project. Create a chart like the one below in your notebook or separate sheet of paper.

Name and Contact Info	Organization	How might they help?
<i>Teacher, neighbor</i>	<i>Neighborhood preschool</i>	<i>Ideas on how to engage preschool students in learning</i>
<i>Carpenter, local store owner</i>	<i>Local hardware store</i>	<i>Ideas for the materials to use for the hands-on shoe-tying tool</i>

Example of a Community Map



3. Learn what others know of your issue.

Chat with the people you know to learn about your issue in the community. It's another way of finding a project idea that might interest you. Start with friends of the family, neighbors, or teachers—people you're comfortable talking with. Once you've learned from them, ask who else they know. Who could they introduce you to? They may know business owners, school officials, religious leaders, council members, police officers, or community center staff.

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 <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/footer/help/internet-safety-pledge.html>. 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?
- What causes this issue?
- 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?

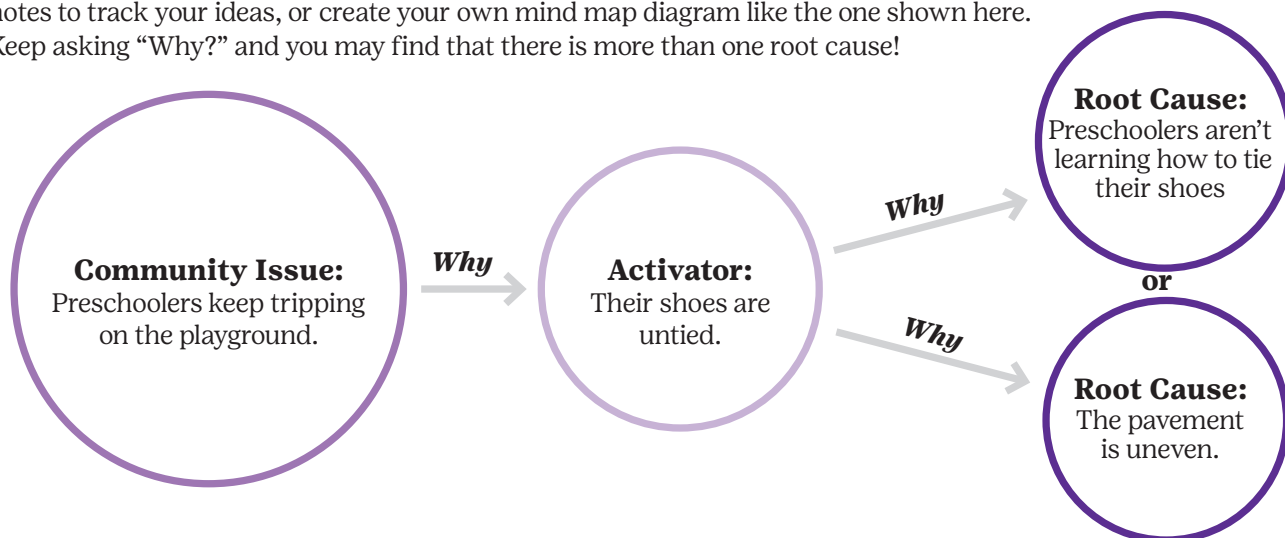
Create the chart below in your notebook or separate sheet of paper to organize your interview notes

Who I Talked to	Issue(s) They Suggested	What Causes the Issue	What Worked in the Past	What Didn't Work
<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Students tripping</i>	<i>Shoelaces untied</i>	<i>Learning the skills at home</i>	<i>School nurse teaching students</i>
<i>School nurse</i>	<i>Students needing more support to learn how to properly tie their shoes</i>	<i>Students not getting enough practice</i>	<i>Presentation on how to tie shoes</i>	<i>Students forgot how to tie shoes after the presentation because there was no practice involved</i>

4. Research root causes by asking what causes an issue and why, then ask why this happens again.

Understanding the **root causes** of your issue is an important part of a Take Action project. By looking at the root causes of an issue, you figure out why the issue is happening in the first place and then you can create a solution to stop it from happening again.

Uncovering root causes may seem hard but it can be surprisingly easy. Brainstorm with your team, use colorful sticky notes to track your ideas, or create your own mind map diagram like the one shown here. Keep asking "Why?" and you may find that there is more than one root cause!





Step 4: Choose Your Silver Award Project

You've thought about your interests and passions. You've explored your community. You've talked to others, and you've researched to understand root causes of one or more issues. The moment you've been waiting for has arrived: it's time to choose a project!

Make it official by writing it down. Use a separate sheet of paper or notebook to answer these questions. You will transfer your answers to your Final Report.

The issue my project will address is...

It matters because...

A root cause of my issue is...

My target audience (who is going to benefit) is...

My team's project idea plans to address the root cause by...



Girl Scouts from Troop 70173 in Pendleton at Camp Windy Meadows, proud of their work in the Memory Garden.

Still not sure about your project? Try these to help you make a decision:



Review the info you've collected. Check out your issues chart, your community map, and the ideas you gathered from talking to others. If you're working with a team, sort the information you've gathered together and rank your ideas.



What matters to you most? Or, where could you or your team make the most positive change? Make a list of pros and cons you are considering. Use the Pros and Cons Chart in the template pages.



Feeling overwhelmed? Some issues are complicated and have a lot of pieces. It might help to narrow your focus. Can you break the issue down and take action on one part? Contact your local council if you need help.



Step 5: Make a Plan

Planning ahead helps your Silver Award Take Action project go smoothly.

Though it takes a bit of time, it's worth having a basic plan for reaching your goal. Answer the following questions to get ready to take action:

- What is the goal that you would like to achieve with your project?
- How will your unique talents and leadership skills be used in this project?
- What community experts will you work with?
- What supplies will I/we need? How much will they cost? On a separate sheet, create an estimated budget, see example below.
 - Take Action projects often focus on education and advocacy. These don't cost very much.
 - If your Silver Award Take Action project has a large budget, re-evaluate. Is the project truly a Take Action project?

Your plan is just that: a plan. If it changes over time, that's OK!

Example Budget Worksheet:

Supplies Needed	Estimate How Much They Will Cost
<i>Pressed wood</i>	<i>\$25</i>

- How will we earn money/get donations for our project, if necessary?
Please see Financial Guidelines on next page.
- How will you make your project sustainable? Three possibilities are:
 1. Create a permanent solution that can be used after the project is complete.
 2. Educate and inspire others in the community or within Girl Scouts to be part of the change.
 3. Advocate to change a rule, regulation, or law and encourage others to join.
- How much time will you need to finish the project?
 - Proposed Start Date: (ex: Fall of 7th Grade)
 - Proposed End Date: (ex: Fall of 8th Grade)
 - Is this timeframe realistic?

Be sure to get approval for your project from your registered and background-check adult Girl Scout volunteer before continuing work on your project. They will make sure that your project idea is complete and meets all the requirements for a Girl Scout Silver Award Take Action project. Once it's approved, you'll be ready to get started.

Financial Guidelines

- Girls may not raise or solicit money for other organizations.
- Girl Scout Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash.
- Girls may not ask for any donations of materials or service from organizations, businesses, corporations, foundations or individuals. As the girls are minors, all requests must come from the girl's leader, project advisor, mentor or parent. Girls may request donations to be placed on GSWNY letterhead.
- Girls may not ask individuals or businesses for money or gift cards, although they can use any gift cards that are donated to you.
- Money-earning should not exceed what is needed to support the Take Action Project.
- All fundraising methods employed by Girl Scouts must be in keeping with the principles for which the organization stands.
- All fundraising events must have council approval.
- Any individual donation of over **\$200** must be preapproved by the Council office.
- Girl Scouts discourages the use of games of chance. Any activity which could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo) must be approved by the local Girl Scout Council and be conducted in compliance with all local and state laws.
- You must make Council aware of the businesses you are reaching out to for donations.
- Money-earning applications <https://bit.ly/3PNFAJr> must be submitted for approval AT LEAST THIRTY (30) DAYS prior to project.
- If a donor wants to claim the donation as a tax deduction, he or she will need to make the donation to the council for IRS purposes and get a receipt signed by a council staff person.



Q: Can I use my own money on the Girl Scout Silver Award Project?

A: Yes. If you want to use your own money, you can. You may receive help from your family too. However, we encourage you to work with others to earn the money. That's part of the process. Completing your Silver Award Project should not be a hardship. As you design your project, think about how you can make a difference with little or no money.

Q: Can I ask friends and neighbors for help?

A: You shouldn't ask for donations of money, but you can ask for donations of time and materials.

Q: Can I seek help from other organizations when doing my Silver Award Project?

A: Yes, with some qualifications. Many service organizations have budgets for community projects. You can use their interest as leverage to support your project and get volunteers to help you. However, remember the rules about having the adult doing the "ask" for donations and clearing your joint approach with council. (Council may be asking the same group for a major donation and you don't want to interfere with the council's "ask".)

Q: Can we charge for a Girl Scout event to earn money?

A: If it is a service project, a fee can be collected to cover the cost of materials. The project ceases to be a service project if you are charging a fee for the event above cost, in which case the hours cannot go toward service hours in any award. If you are doing an event as a Girl Scout (e.g., a Badge Workshop, Bike Rodeo, etc.) and are planning to charge a fee **above** the cost of materials, you **must first** clear this with your Girl Scout Council. Provision should be made for scholarships for troop/groups or individual girls who cannot afford fees to your event and you must be clear in your advertisements and materials that this is a money-earning event for your troop/group. If your actual project is an event for the public, you can charge a fee to cover the cost of materials.

Try it!

Making your project measurable and making a national and/or global link is optional. Why take these steps? They will make your project stronger and help you prepare for the Girl Scout Gold Award.

Can you make your project measurable?

As you work on your project, try to set one goal that will help you measure your project's success. Think about what you can count to show the impact you've made on your community issue.

Possibilities include:

- The number of people the project helped.
- The number of people who got involved.
- A number that shows the change in a community's need (survey before and after).

Write down your goal in your Project Proposal.



Can you make a national and/or global link?

Your project has a national and/or global link when you can identify how other people and places address your issue.

You can:

- Investigate how people in other communities or other parts of the world address your issue.
- Ask: What kinds of programs do they have in place? How can you learn from these? Can you incorporate what you learn about other communities into your project?

Share what you learn in your Project Proposal.

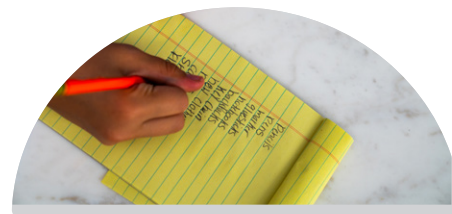




Step 6: Put Your Plan in Motion

Ready to take action? It's time to put your plan in motion.

Make a list of things you need to do as shown in the chart below. If you're working in a team, decide what tasks each member will do. Then, decide when each item on the list needs to be completed.



Silver Award Take Action Project: To-Do List

Example	Task	How? Supplies needed?	Date task needs to be completed
Gloria	Develop the hands-on tool.	Discuss ideas with the carpenter and preschool teacher.	March 7
	Get supplies for the hands-on tool.	Donation from the hardware store: pressed wood, nails, and yarn.	April 8

You and each of your team members must keep track of your own time spent on the project. Use the Time Log in the Final Report to track your own work. See example entries below.

Date	Task	Time Spent	Running Total
3/7	Meet with the carpenter.	1 hour	1 hour
4/8	Get supplies.	1 hour	2 hours



Be sure to wear your Girl Scout uniform or favorite Girl Scout gear, if you have one, when taking action in your community; people may be more eager to help you when they know that you are a Girl Scout!



As you work on your project, take photos or videos to document the work you do. Submit them to: communications@gswny.org Include your name, troop number and a description of the project.





Step 7: Spread the Word and Submit Your Final Report

Spread the word by sharing the story of your project.

Why? Because when you share your project, you inspire others—and you bring attention to the important issue you were addressing. Telling your story is one of the best ways to celebrate all that you have accomplished!

There are lots of possibilities. You can give a presentation to another Girl Scout troop, your local Girl Scout community, or to students at school. Create a visual display for a local library or community center. Submit an article to the local news or your school website. How will you spread the word?

Download the [Final Report form](#).

Once completed, submit your Final Report to highawards@gswny.org.



Each project team will submit a Final Report about your project to your leader and council.

The report will contain individual sections for you to share your role and reflect. Once your Final Report is approved, it's official: You're a Silver Award Girl Scout!

Keep a copy of your final report for your own records and submit before September 30 after completing 8th grade.

What if you didn't meet all of your goals?

The Silver Award is a leadership award. The most important outcomes are the ones you gain for yourself: improved confidence, better organization, stronger teamwork, and more. It's less about the perfect final product and more about what you discover along the way!

What Comes Next?

Your certificate will be mailed to your troop leader.

Go for Gold!

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest achievement in Girl Scouting. Seniors and Ambassadors who earn the Gold Award tackle issues that are dear to them and drive lasting change in their communities and beyond. Think of the Gold Award as a key that can open doors to scholarships, preferred admission tracks for college, and amazing career opportunities. Find out more at: <https://www.gswny.org/en/our-program/highest-awards/gold-award.html>



Girl Scout Silver Award Checklist

Check these items off to ensure that you meet Silver Award requirements

- ☐ I am registered as a Girl Scout Cadette in grades 6-8.
- ☐ *I have finished the Bronze Award, a Cadette Leadership Award, or a Cadette Journey.*
- ☐ I've reviewed the Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award
- ☐ I have thought about the passions and issues that interest me.
- ☐ I have formed a Silver Award team or decided to work on my own.
- ☐ I have explored my community and researched community issues.
- ☐ I have made a list of community contacts who I can work with.
- ☐ I have interviewed community members who I can work with.
- ☐ I have researched and understand the real root causes of the community issues that interests me.
- ☐ I have chosen a topic for my Silver Award Take Action project.
- ☐ I have made a plan and a budget and got it approved by my registered, adult volunteer.
- ☐ I have made my project sustainable. It has a lasting impact.
- ☐ I have tracked the time I have spent on my Silver Award Take Action project. Each Cadette should spend approximately 50 hours working towards the Silver Award.
- ☐ I have spread the word about my project by sharing it with my service unit, school, other Girl Scouts, the community, or online.
- ☐ I have submitted a final report to my registered adult volunteer and Council no later than September 30 after finishing 8th grade.

