The Girl Scout Silver Award

Adult Volunteer Guide

As a Girl Scout troop/group volunteer, you are choosing to use your experience and time to help girls learn about themselves and the world around them, gain new skills, overcome challenges, and make a difference in their community. In so doing, you are preparing them for a lifetime of caring about others in their community and the world. You'll guide girls and make going for their Girl Scout Silver Award a fun and fulfilling experience. Plus, girls earn the highest award for a Girl Scout Cadette.

Your primary role as a troop/group volunteer is to support Girl Scout Cadettes as they complete a Cadette journey and create a Take Action project that improves their neighborhood or local community. After girls complete the Cadette journey, the suggested minimum time for earning their Girl Scout Silver Award is 50 hours for an individual girl or each girl on the small team. Girls earn the award by focusing on an issue they care about; building a team; exploring their community; picking, planning, and putting their Take Action project into action; demonstrating an understanding of sustainability and the wider world; and sharing what they have learned with others.

Tips for the Troop/Group Volunteer

The following are the steps Girl Scout Cadettes will complete to earn the Girl Scout Silver Award, along with tips for how you can help. Use these tips along with the girl guidelines for the Girl Scout Silver Award, which is posted on the Girl Scouts of the USA Web site at www.girlscouts.org.

Step 1: Go on a Girl Scout Cadette Journey

What girls do:

- Get a full experience, using the three keys to leadership: Discover, Connect, and Take Action.
- Gain skills from the Girl Scout Cadette journey that will help them create, plan, and develop their award project.

Why they do it:

- Girls gain the skills they'll need to create a Take Action project that is based on an issue they care about in their neighborhood or local community.

- Girls apply the Girl Scout Promise and Law, which ensures that they are honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong; that they respect themselves, others, and authority; and that they use resources wisely and take responsibility for what they say and do.

Coaching tips:

- Encourage girls to talk about what they learned by completing a journey. Use the tips in the journey adult guides.
- Suggest they reflect and share where and how they applied the Girl Scout Promise and Law as they completed the journey.

Step 2: Identify Issues You Care About

What girls do:

- Explore their interests and how those relate to issues that concern them.

Why they do it:

- This step lays the foundation for girls to imagine new solutions for the issues that interest them.

Coaching tips:

- Help girls explore their interests using the Issues Chart in the girl guidelines.
- Create an open, comfortable environment where girls (whether one girl or a group) can share their thoughts and ideas.
- Encourage girls to take time to think about what really matters to them. When something matters, it becomes a fun challenge to think of different solutions.
- Guide girls as they fill out their Issues Chart.

Step 3: Build Your Girl Scout Cadette Team or Decide to Go Solo

What girls do:

- Form a team of Girl Scouts (approximately two to four Cadettes), non–Girl Scouts or a combination of both. If other Girl Scout Cadettes are on the team they can also earn the Girl Scout Silver Award. Each Girl Scout Cadette going for the Girl Scout Silver Award must play an active role in choosing, planning and developing the team's Take Action project.
- If working solo, independently connect with people in the community.
- Learn and develop team-building skills.

Why they do it:

- Cooperative learning encourages team-building, trust-building, and problem-solving.

Coaching tips:

- Encourage girls to demonstrate being a friend to every Girl Scout as they build their team.
- Work with girls to locate people in the community who might be able to help with their project.
- Use games and activities to promote team-building.
- Use the following tips to help girls create and maintain a strong team at each step:

Traits of a Good Team	Coaching Tips
1. Respect different points of view and ways of work.	• Encourage girls to promote an inclusive environment as they work on their project. • Discuss ways that team members can respect each other and the diverse backgrounds, viewpoints, and life experiences of the girls on the team.
2. Contribute to the project.	• Encourage girls to make a task list for each girl on the team and how they can participate in putting the project into motion.
3. Accept constructive suggestions.	• Talk to girls about the differences among constructive suggestions, criticizing, and attacking. For example, if an idea is

	criticized, ask the girl who gave the feedback whether she has any suggestions that might help make the idea better. • Encourage girls to be courteous, considerate, and respectful of fellow teammates by living the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
4. Work together to create and develop a plan.	• Encourage girls to use their knowledge and skills to locate tools and resources they need, and also to know when, where, and how to enlist the help of others.
5. Solve problems.	• Discuss how problem solving skills contribute to effective leadership. • Discuss some of the obstacles that may come up during their Take Action project and how the team can work together to overcome them.

Have fun! Keep things light-hearted. Take a team picture, encourage girls to come up with a fun name for their team, and so on.

Step 4: Explore Your Community

What girls do:

- By exploring their community, girls find out what their community needs and where their areas of interest and community needs overlap. Girls move from thinking about issues they care about in general to finding specific problems/opportunities/solutions they want to address.

Why they do it:

- Getting to know their community is a learning experience, in which girls take the time to see the world around them from different perspectives and to get ideas about what is needed and what is possible.

Coaching tips:

Observation and Exploration

- Encourage girls to take time to explore their neighborhood and local community in a new way. Doing so will help them develop an awareness and a new understanding of local issues, how issues are tackled, and how improvements are made.
- Encourage girls to have fun while they're out and about, talking with people and exploring their community.

- If working with a small group of girls, encourage the group to share their individual observations from their community exploration and brainstorm ways that they can make a difference in their community.

Community Map

- Guide girls as they draw a community map. Creating a community map allows girls to observe different aspects of their community and look for what people need—that is, what will improve their lives. By exploring and observing their community, girls connect with people who may help them with their Take Action project.

Connecting with the Community

- Guide girls as they interview people in the community. By interviewing people they meet, girls improve their communication skills and begin to see how their time and talents can make an impact.
- Encourage girls to build a network of contacts that they can get in touch with later, as they work on their Take Action project.
- As girls meet and talk with new people, remind them to be safe and to make sure adults know who they are meeting with, when they'll return home, and which adults or other girls are accompanying them.

Note: Girls are likely to research information online for their project, so discuss the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge (www.girlscouts.org/internet_safety_pledge.asp) and encourage girls to commit to the pledge.

Step 5: Pick Your Take Action Project

What girls do:

- Decide (as an individual or a small team) which issue that they would like to address and identify the root cause or underlying reason for the issue that their project will address.

Why they do it:

- By addressing the root cause of the problem, girls will have a better chance of ensuring that the solution they come up with works and is lasting.

- the girls care about the issues they have chosen, they will be engaged and enjoy working on the Take Action project.

Coaching tips:

- Guide girls as they review their Issues Chart, community map, and interview notes.
- Help them understand what a Take Action project for the Girl Scout Silver Award is (a project that addresses the root cause of a problem in the local neighborhood or community and brings about lasting change). Use the examples in the girl guidelines.
- Encourage girls to choose a project that is either based on what matters most to them or based on where they think they can create the most positive change. Making a pro/con list is helpful.
- Discuss with girls the leadership skills they can apply to the project.
- Although there are many projects that do not require fundraising or money-earning, some do. The girls may need to come up with ideas for how they can cover expenses. Follow the guidelines in *Volunteer Essentials*.
- Remind girls to be realistic about their project choice. Encourage them to think about the greatest good they can bring about, based on their available time and resources.
- Girls may need the help of an expert, a project advisor. This is optional and depends on the project.
- After girls choose their project, guide them as they answer the following questions. This will ensure that everyone is clear about what they want to do and why.
    - What is our project?
    - Why does it matter?
    - Who will it help?

- Encourage girls to think about the leadership skills they will use during the course of their Take Action project and how these skills can help them understand themselves and what they are capable of.

Step 6: Develop Your Project

What girls do:

- Develop a plan for creating measurable and sustainable impact in the neighborhood or local community.

Why they do it:

- Girls learn through taking the initiative on their own and engaging in hands-on activities that help them gain new skills.

Coaching tips:

- Before girls start developing their project, encourage them to answer the questions in their guidelines.
- Discuss what the girls hope to accomplish with this project and why it matters to them.
- Partner with girls to create a timeline, set up a budget, and locate resources for their project.
- Pose the following questions to help girls think about sustainability:
    - Does the issue that was chosen address a need in the neighborhood or local community?
    - Has the root cause of the problem been identified?
    - How have other people addressed this issue in a different place or a different situation?
    - Can the solution last even after you have earned your award?
    - Do you have an idea of a person or group of people who might be able to continue your project in the future?

  - Can the project be expanded later?
  - How would you go about sharing your project so that other people can be inspired to get involved even after you earn your award?

- Help girls ensure sustainability in their project by encouraging them to:
  - Focus on ways that others can keep the project going.
  - Partner with people in the community (community groups, civic associations, non-profit agencies, local government, and religious organizations make great partners) who can carry the project into the future.

The following are two examples of Take Action projects that are sustainable. These are also included in the girl guidelines.

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.

Finding a Project Advisor

Although this is not required as part of the Girl Scout Silver Award, some girls might want to enlist the help of an expert who can answer specific questions about their issue. This person can be the team or individual girl's project advisor.

If girls choose to work with a project advisor, guide them as they make their decision. Discuss who might work best; this could be someone they met while researching issues or someone they have not yet met, but who is familiar with their issue. Offer suggestions: a local business owner, an official at City Hall, a teacher?

Making a Global Connection

Encourage girls to check the Internet to see how others around the globe deal with their issue. Encourage girls to consider how they might be able to extend the reach of their project into other communities besides their own. Are there ways to share their plan with other communities who are facing the same issue? Can the girls create a plan that other people could use to replicate their project in other communities?

Through connecting with new friends outside of their immediate community, girls learn how others have solved similar issues and determine if the ideas of others can help with their plan.

Step 7: Make a Plan and Put it Into Motion

What girls do:

- Write a list of what they need to accomplish, who will be doing which tasks and when the tasks need to be completed using their Make a Plan chart.

Why they do it:

- Girls build critical-thinking skills and become creative problem-solvers as they address challenges, work cooperatively with their team, and stay open to new ways of work.
- Girls use their leadership skills to create a project in their community that has measurable and sustainable impact.

Coaching tips:

- Let girls take the lead to plan and implement their project.
- Guide girls as they fill out their Make a Plan chart.
- Encourage girls to keep a to-do list for what they would like to accomplish with their project.

This can be the most fun and rewarding step in earning the award; seeing the project happen can be very exciting! Nevertheless, things sometimes don't go exactly as planned. Help girls be persistent and persevere through challenging times.

Step 8: Reflect, Share Your Story, and Celebrate

What girls do:

- Reflect on what they have achieved.
- Share their experiences to educate and inspire others to act.
- Discuss the impact the project made on themselves and their community.
- Celebrate their accomplishment.

Why they do it:

- Reflection promotes critical thinking and helps broaden girls' perspectives about the world and how they can help.
- Through reflection, girls understand the impact of their project on the community and how it might relate to others in other community.

- Demonstrating to an audience what girls have learned sets the stage for even broader impact.
- Spreading the word encourages girls to think about what they have learned and helps them inspire others to make things better.
- As girls share and demonstrate their project achievements, helping them see how what they have learned sets the stage for even broader impact.

Coaching tips:

- Guide girls as they use the insight they gained from answering the reflection questions in their award guidelines to spread the word and inspire others to act.
- Discuss the impact the experience had on girls, their team, and their community.
- Help girls share their experience/effort with a wider audience. Girls can log on to the following Web sites to share their stories. Remind girls about the Girl Scouts' Internet safety pledge.
    - **WAGGGS world:** www.wagggs.org/en/projects
    - **Taking it Global:** www.tigweb.org
    - **Global Youth Service Day:** www.globalyouthserviceday.org
- Make the sharing experience fun, and honor the achievement by encouraging the girls to be creative in how they capture others' imaginations (girls can make a video, write an essay or article, or organize a fun event where they can present what they have learned and what their project is about to the community).
- Use the Leadership Outcomes/Possible Indicators chart to help girls reflect on their experience.

Your hard work and dedication has helped an individual Girl Scout Cadette or a group of Girl Scout Cadettes become leaders who used their talents to positively impact their community. Congratulations! Celebrate the accomplishment!

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

In Girl Scouting, Discover + Connect + Take Action = Leadership. The entire Girl Scout program, regardless of the exact topic, is designed to lead to leadership outcomes (or benefits) that stem from these three keys.

- **Discover:** Girls will understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world
- **Connect:** Girls care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.
- **Take Action:** Girls act to make the world a better place.

It's not only about the activities girls do, however, but the processes they use to do them that builds leadership. The Girl Scout processes promote the fun and friendship that have always been so integral to Girl Scouting.

- **Girl-led:** Girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how, and why of their activities.
- **Learning by doing:** Girls use a hands-on learning process that engages them in continuous cycles of action and reflection that result in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills.
- **Cooperative learning:** Through cooperative learning, girls work together toward goals that can be accomplished only with the help of others, in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration.

When Discover, Connect, and Take Action activities are girl-led and involve learning by doing and cooperative learning, girls achieve the desired and expected short-term outcomes. This ultimately results in Girl Scouting achieving its mission of building "girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place."

Through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, girls gain specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, and values in Girl Scouting. Help girls reflect on the experience, the impact they have had and how the experience has helped to strengthen their leadership skills. Use the fifteen outcomes on the next page as a springboard.

For more about The Girl Scout Leadership Experience including the leadership outcomes on the next page, go to www.girlscouts.org/gsle.

This chart helps you guide the girls as they reflect on what they have learned and how they used their leadership skills to make a difference in the world. The leadership outcomes will show girls how they developed, while the possible indicators will show you how those outcomes are exhibited.

Leadership Outcomes Following are the 15 Girl Scout leadership outcomes that stem from the three leadership keys	**Possible Indicators** When the outcome is achieved…
DISCOVER Outcomes • Girls develop a strong sense of self. • Girls develop positive values. • Girls gain practical life skills—girls practice healthy living • Girls seek challenges in the world. • Girls develop critical thinking.	**DISCOVER Outcome Indicators** • Girls make use of strategies to resist peer pressure. • Girls report greater appreciation for the diversity of values based on individual and/or cultural differences. • Girls report increase interest in learning more about how exercise, diet, relaxation, and other activities can give balance to their lives. • Girls can identify and distinguish between positive and negative risk. • Girls are able to debate or discuss various perspectives on an issue they are concerned about.
CONNECT Outcomes • Girls develop healthy relationships. • Girls promote cooperation and team building. • Girls can resolve conflicts. • Girls advance diversity in a multicultural world. • Girls feel connected to their communities, locally and globally.	**CONNECT Outcome Indicators** • Girls are able to give examples of behaviors they use to promote mutual respect, trust, and understanding. • Girls are better able to describe obstacles to group work and suggest possible solutions. • Girls can describe how they manage their emotions to diffuse conflicts. • Girls identify main challenges and privileges that various groups experience in today's world. • Girls describe how their participation in larger communities supported their personal and leadership goals.
TAKE ACTION Outcomes • Girls can identify community needs. • Girls are resourceful problem solvers. • Girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally. • Girls educate and inspire others to act. • Girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world.	**TAKE ACTION Outcome Indicators** • Girls report using a variety of tools to identify needs, assets, and potential impact of their planned projects. • Girls demonstrate independence in thinking through the required components of their action plans. • Girls can give examples of how youth can influence and/or participate in community decision-making. • Girls report knowing how to tailor their messages to various audiences. • Girls express pride that their Take Action project improved the functioning of some aspect of their communities.