

# YOUR GUIDE TO GOING SILVER



The Girl Scout Silver Award

#### SILVER AWARD AT A GLANCE

## **STEPS TO SILVER**



STEP



**Go on a Cadette Journey,** including the Journey Take Action project and attend a Silver Award workshop.





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

STEP 3



**Build your team.** Work with a team of up to four girls or on your own. Either way, plan to partner with the community.

STEP 4



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.





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

5 STEP



Make a plan to carry out your Silver Award Take Action project. Submit a Project Intent Form for approval to Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore.

STEP



Put the plan in motion.
Spend 50 hours each to
earn the award. Your
planning time counts too.
Use the log in your guide to
track your time.

STEP 8



**Spread the word** about your project when you're done so that you can inspire others! You can give a presentation at your school, to your service unit, or to another Girl Scout troop.

STEP 9



Submit a final report to Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore for approval before September 30 of your ninth grade year.

Then...celebrate! Attend the Silver Award ceremony hosted by Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore and consider organizing a celebration with your team as well.

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#### SAY "YES" TO THE SILVER AWARD!

Girl Scouts like to shake things up, try new things, flex their leadership muscles, and feel good about who they are and their role in the community. Earning the Girl Scout Silver Award is all that and more! Are you ready to make a difference in the world, have fun, and earn the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette can earn? Say "yes" to the Silver Award and read on!



For her Silver Award Project, Samantha created and implemented a plan to refurbish a playground to make it fully accessible for all. The town is using her project as a model to upgrade other parks in the community.



Many people approach dogs to pet them without thinking. For her Silver Award Project, Heather created a bandana system for dogs to identify their personality ¬– green for good, yellow for energetic and red for feisty. She distributed the bandanas at a local community fair.



Local shelters always have dogs and cats waiting for adoption. For their Silver Award project, Alexandra and Brinley promoted the benefits of adopting rescue dogs. They also spoke at a town council meeting advocating for an ordinance banning the sale of pets at retail stores.



At first, Ava thought the Silver Award was overwhelming. With encouragement from her family and Girl Scout leader she decided to work with a local beekeeper to build a new hive. She chose the project because she wanted to raise awareness about the decreasing bee population in the area.

#### **HOW DO I KNOW I'M READY?**

**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 Journey and Take Action project—that's the first step!
- ✓ You've attended a mandatory Silver Award Workshop.

## 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.

#### 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 this service project	into this Take Action project
Donate books to a local school.	Organize a "reading buddy" club that pairs older students with students who are just learning to read.
Donate food to a food pantry.	Start a community garden to feed the homeless and train others to keep it going.
Pick up trash from a public park.	Partner with the city to have recycle cans installed and hold "reduce, reuse, recycle" workshops.
Collect pet food and products for an animal shelter.	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 four 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.

Does this sound like homework? It's not! Working on your passion is fun! And it can help you discover a career path that you'll love or a way to give back that brings you happiness. So don't sweat finding the root cause. But do use the mapping tool on page 18 when you're ready to explore root causes. You'll find using this visual map helpful.

#### Why Understanding the Root Cause is Important

Imagine that you've agreed to take care of a neighbor's garden while she is on vacation. You drop by after school and notice that all the plants are drooping. You quickly grab the hose and water the plants. Whew! You solved the problem.

But the next day, the plants look worse. Why? Well, you assumed that the cause of the wilted plants was lack of water. But, the plants seem to be drooping for another reason. Maybe they have pests. Maybe they've had too much water. Maybe they aren't the kinds of plants that last. As you can see, it's important to know the real root cause before taking action.

You find the real root cause by researching and talking to experts in the community. In this case, you could research the type of plant to understand its needs. You could visit a plant nursery and ask an expert. When you ask *why* you 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:	What makes this sustainable?
<ul> <li>Hold a workshop so that people in the community can learn about your project</li> <li>Educate other Girl Scouts about your project at a troop or service unit meeting</li> <li>Post an educational video or blog</li> </ul>	Educating others makes a lasting impression!
Partner with someone who can continue the work (i.e., a club at school)	Your project continues, event after you've done your part—brilliant!

#### Sample

#### **Silver Award Take Action Project**

#### Shoe Tying Success

Girls in Girl Scout Troop 5538 were excited to earn their Girl Scout Silver Award. They agreed to be extra observant at school and in their neighborhood to discover potential issues that could be the focus of a Take Action project. They came together as a team to share ideas, and they chose several ideas to explore. Their leader helped them connect with community members who could help them learn more.

One of their observations was that lots of younger kids don't tie their shoes. They researched to find the **root cause**: parents were not spending time teaching kids this skill.

They showed **leadership** by partnering with a preschool. They researched and talked to experts to find a solution. They created a program with a handson tool to help kids learn to tie shoes. And they put their program into action at the preschool.

They felt proud when the kids gained the skill and confidence to tie their shoes. And they made their project **sustainable** by having the preschool adopt their program and tools. When the girls asked if they could celebrate at the annual Silver Award ceremony their leader said yes!

#### **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 log on page 24 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.

#### WHEN IS THE AWARD DEADLINE?

If you would like to attend the current year's Silver Award ceremony, plan to submit your Silver Award final report by September 30 (if you miss this deadline, you can attend the following year). September 30 of your ninth grade year 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 WHAT TO DO AND WHEN?

Follow the nine steps in this guide to earn the Girl Scout Silver Award. If you've already done a Cadette Journey and Take Action project, you're ahead of the game—that's the first step! Read on when you're ready to learn what to do each step of the way. Your troop leader, parent, or project advisor will be there to help guide you.

If you already know your Silver Award Take Action project topic, you can start with Step 5: Choose a Project (after you've completed a Journey and attended the mandatory Silver Award Workshop). Then finish steps 2-4 to ensure that your project will address a real root cause and that you've identified experts in the community who can help.



**Tip:** Look for this Silver Award image in this guide. You'll see it any time you complete an important action. Turn to the checklist in the back of the guide to check off actions as you complete them. It's a great way to keep track and to feel good about making progress.

## Let's get started



#### Go on a Cadette Journey

**Completing a Cadette Journey and Take Action project** will help you build skills like planning and working with a team. You'll also have new experiences like meeting people in your community. You'll use these skills and experiences when you work on your Silver Award Take Action project. And you'll earn Cadette Journey leadership awards too (see the Journey for details). Need to find out more about Journey options? Check out the Award and Badge Explorer at gsfun.org/BadgeExplorer

What Cadette Journey and Take Action project did you complete?\_\_\_\_\_



Way to go! Check the Cadette Journey off your checklist.

Once you've completed your Journey, reflect! Your answers may help you tackle your Girl Scout Silver Award.

Girl	Scout Silver Award.	
Q	What did you discover about yourself?	1
??		) 
HOW!	How did you use the Girl Scout Law during your Journey?	)
3		1



#### **Identify Issues**



**Starting is easy—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 needs to change? Who do you know who needs help? Is there a way to bring your passion to the community to make the world a better place?

**Use the chart below to help you find the issues that interest you.** There are no wrong answers—no pressure. In this step, you're simply an explorer, jotting down what comes to mind.

What issues are you passionate about?	Why are these issues important to you?	How do the issues affect your community?



You're a rock star! Check I have thought about passions and issues off your checklist.



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

- You can work with a small team (up to four girls max), or
- You can work on your own (team up with community members)

No matter which option you choose, plan to partner with community members to get input and take action. Community members might be teachers or school administrators, neighbors, business owners, church leaders, or people who work in city government. They should be experts in the issue you're working on.



#### **Teamwork Makes the Dream Work!**

- Respect your teammates and their different points of view.
- Decide on team rules. Use the Girl Scout Law as your guide. Refer to these rules when you need them to keep the team on track.
- Contribute your share.
- Have a conflict? Resolve it quickly by talking things out. What compromise can you agree to?

If you've chosen a group of girls for your team, hold your first meeting. Even if you've been in a troop together or friends for years, see if you can discover something about each other you didn't know! Play a game or two to get the ball rolling. Try the game Roll with It on the next page to get started.



#### What you'll need:

Dice.

#### What to do:

Sit in a circle.
Each person has a chance to roll the dice and answer a question based on the number rolled.



If you had to be stranded on an island what three things would you bring?



You've won a million dollars. What will you do with the money?



You can eat only one food for the rest of your life. What would it be?



You win a trip to anywhere in the world. Where would you go?



You find a magic lantern. The genie inside grants you three wishes. What would you wish for?



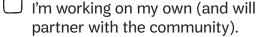
You can spend the day with anyone you choose—past or present. Who do you spend the day with?

#### **Do I Need a Project Advisor?**

A project advisor is a member of the community who is an expert in the issue that you've chosen. Having a project advisor on your team isn't required for the Silver Award. But a project advisor can be very helpful. An advisor can answer questions with an expert's point of view and guide you based on what they know about your issue. As you talk to people in your community and make connections, keep an eye out for a project advisor. Don't be afraid to ask. Lots of people—even busy ones—are happy to play a part in helping a Girl Scout make the world a better place.

#### What did you decide about your team?

I've formed a team of up to four
girls (and will partner with the
community).





Check I've formed a team or decided to work on my own off your checklist when you're done!



**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. As you explore, think about these questions:



**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?

Your map doesn't have to be a work of art. But if you want to break out the colored pencils, channel Leonardo Da Vinci, or add a doodle or two when you're done, feel free. Use a separate piece of paper if you want to make more than one map or go large with a poster board. Find an example community map on the following page.



## **My Community Map**



You go girl! Check **community mapping** off your checklist when you're done.

## 2

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

Name and contact info	Organization	How they might help?



Done with contacts? Awesome! Check the list of **community contacts** off your checklist.

## 3

Find out what others know of community issues.

**Chat with the people you know** and find out what they know about issues in the community. It's another way of discovering 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.

#### **Safety First!**

- Think safety when talking to new people.
- Discuss safety with your troop leader or family adult. And take a friend or team member (or two or three) with you.
- Be safe online too. Review the Internet Safety Pledge at gsfun.org/SafetyPledge and remember the number one rule: never give out your address or other personal info when you're online.

**Before you speak with others, plan your questions and practice** with your team, family, or friends ahead of time. You'll be prepared and feel more confident. Ask questions like these:

"What are some of the issues affecting our community?"

"Do you know how people have tried to address these issues in the past? What worked? What didn't?"

"Can you suggest a project I could do to address one of these issues?"

"What causes this issue?"

Who I talked to	Issue they suggested	What causes the issue?	What worked in the past?	What didn't work?

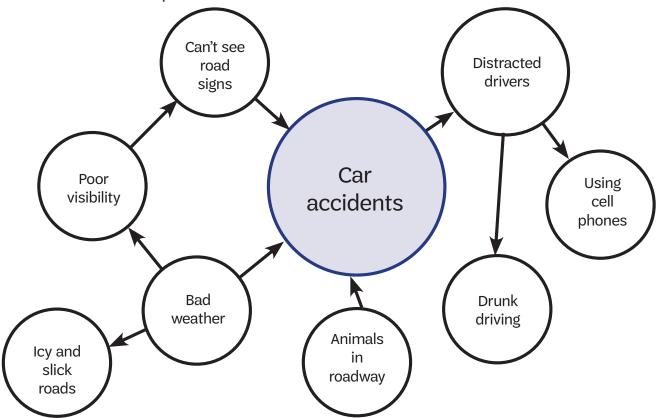


Done with interviewing community members? You're on a roll! Check **interview community members** off your list.



#### Research root causes by asking what triggers an issue and why.

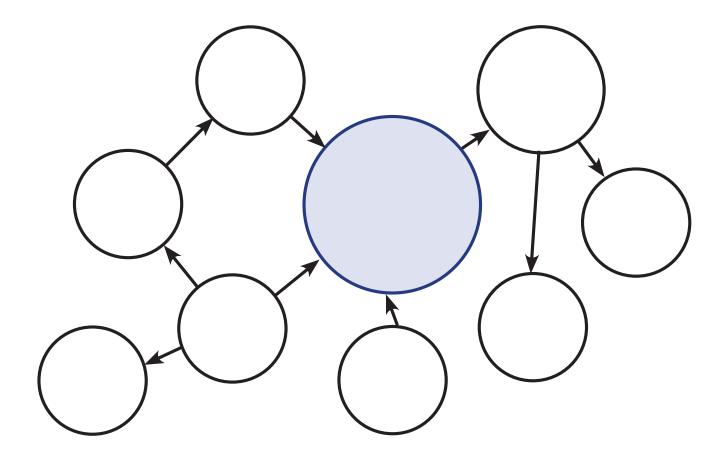
You've learned that understanding the root cause of an issue is an important part of the Silver Award Take Action project (see page 5 to review). Use mind mapping to understand root causes. Here's an example:



**What's happening here?** The community issue, car accidents, is placed in the large, center circle of the mind map. The events that trigger the community issue—like bad weather and distracted drivers—are placed in the circles closest to the community issue. When you explore further by asking *why*, you find root causes. In this example, the root causes are placed in the outer circles. For distracted drivers, the root causes are using *cell phones and drunk driving*. And the root causes for accidents caused by bad weather are *icy and slick roads*, *poor visibility, and can't see road signs*.

You'll find a blank mind map on the following page. Make copies if you want to mind map more than one issue.

**Try it!** Place your community issue in the center circle. Ask yourself: What triggers this issue? Write your answers in the circles closest to the center circle (add more if you need to). Then explore further. Ask why do these triggers happen? Place these answers in the smaller, outside circles—like in our example. Add as many other smaller circles as you like. These are your root causes. Select one or two root causes and you have the foundation of a strong Silver Award Take Action project!





Done with understanding root causes? You've got this!—Check **researched and understand the real root causes** off your list.

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. The moment you've been waiting for has arrived: It's time to choose a project!

#### Make it official by writing it down!

make it official by writing it down:	
What is your project?	
Why does it matter?	
Who does it help?	



This is getting exciting! You're well on your way. Check I have chosen a topic off your checklist.

**Still not sure?** 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 info 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 pro's and con's. Use the Pros and Cons chart on the following page.



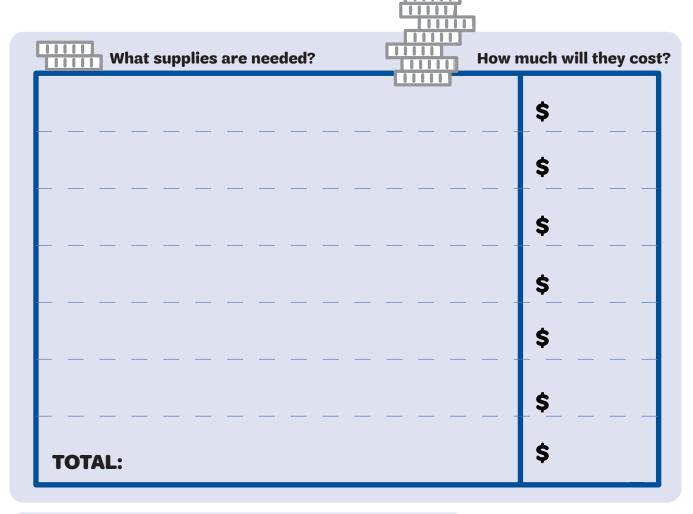
**Feeling overwhelmed?** Some issues are complicated. It's hard to make an impact on big issues like these. But you might be able to narrow your focus. Can you break the issue down and take action on one piece?

**Try it!** If you're still unsure about a project idea, list the pros and cons of the ideas you're considering. Make a copy of this page for each idea you want to explore.

# **Project idea Pros** Cons

**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 these questions to get your brain ready to take action. If your plan changes over time—that's OK.

Do you know enough to get started? If not, where can you get more info?	What community experts can you work with?	What steps do you need to take to reach the project goal?
How will you make your project sustains (See "How Do I Make My Project Sustains)		How much time will you need to finish the project?  Is this time frame realistic?  Yes No
How can you get other people involve	ed?	



Check with your troop leader, advisor, or the parent who's guiding you if you are planning to:

☐ Ask for donations

☐ Do a money-earning project

Follow all Girl Scout guidelines for these. Learn more in *Volunteer Essentials*, chapter 5, "Troop Finances."

Will you use troop funds?



If yes, have all the girls in the troop sign a letter that it's OK to use funds in this way.

**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?

You are now ready to submit your Silver Award Intent form to the council. Go to gsfun.org/silver to complete the form. The Silver and Gold Committee will review all forms once a month. The committee will grant approval for you to continue working on your project. You will be notified of your approval status after the meeting by email. If edits are needed to your Intent form, you will be asked to resubmit. Intent forms must be submitted at least one week prior to the next committee meeting. Dates are posted online and in the Shore Things Activity Book.



Whoo-hoo! Check I have made a plan and a budget off your check-list.





Oh yeah! Check **my project is sustainable** off your checklist when you put this part of your plan in motion.

#### Who doesn't like extra credit?

#### Can you make your project measurable?

As you work on your project, think about how you could measure your success. What could you count to show the impact you've made on your community issue? You can show:

- the number of people the project helped
- the number of people who got involved, or
- a number that show the change in a community's need (survey before and after)

#### Can you make a global link?

Your project has a global link when you take it outside of your local community and inspire others to take action. You can:

- take your project to local youth groups, community centers, or school districts.
- investigate how people in other communities or other parts of the world address your issue. 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?

Why take these steps? They help you prepare for the Girl Scout Gold Award.



#### **Put the Plan in Motion**

**Ready to take action! It's time to put your plan in motion.** Once the council has approved your Intent Form, it's time to start working on your project! Make a list of things you need to do on page 25. If you're working in a team, decide what tasks each member will do. Then decide when each item on the to-do list needs to be completed.

Keep track of the time *you* spend on the project in the log below:

Task	Time spent

Task		Time spent
	Total hours:	



As you work on your project, take photos or videos to document the work you do. You can use these in Step 8, Spread the word.

Be sure to wear your Girl Scout Uniform when taking action in your community.





Two for one! Check I have tracked the time I have spent and I have taken photos or video off your checklist.

#### **Silver Award Take Action Project: To-Do List**

Task	Who will do it?	How?	Date task needs to be completed

**Congratulations! You've completed your Silver Award Take Action project.** Two final steps and you're ready to celebrate! Get started on step 8 by reflecting on your experience. Think about and answer these questions:

What did you discover about yourself?

What do you know now that you didn't know before? What did you learn from others about your community issue that you didn't know?

What skills did you gain and how will these skills help you in the future?

How did you live the Girl Scout Promise and Law during your project? What impact did your project have on the community?

Then, spread the word by sharing the story of your project. Why? Because when you share your project you inspire others. Telling your story is one of the best ways to celebrate all that you have accomplished!

#### Here are some ways you can share your project:



Create a website or blog to share the story of your project. Or share your story at these sites: www.waggs.org/en/projects, www.tigweb.org, or www.globalyouthserviceday.org.



Write an essay or article about your project for your local or school newspaper.



Give a presentation about your project to a group in your community, at a school assembly, at your service unit, or to younger Girl Scouts.



Fantastic! Check I have spread the word off your checklist.

## STEP 9



#### **Turn in Your Final Report**



Wrap up your project by submitting a final report. If you worked in a team, submit your own report with your own unique answers.

You can submit your report online. Visit gsfun.org/silver to find the form.

Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore is excited to learn about all you've accomplished. Make sure your troop leader knows when you are submitting your final report.



Last step—be proud! Check I have submitted a final report off your checklist.

#### WHAT COMES NEXT?



**Give thanks.** Be sure to thank everyone who has helped you along the way. A hand-written note or an email with a project photo means a lot.



**Celebrate Girl Scout-style.** Attend the Silver Award ceremony! Visit gsfun.org/silver to learn more.



#### Set your sights on the Girl Scout Gold Award!

You can earn the Girl Scout Gold Award when you're in grades 9-12. Read on for more—then imagine all you can do!

Gold Award Girl Scouts are widely recognized as leaders who make the word a better place! The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest achievement in Girl Scouting. This top-tier credential can help you stand out in the college admissions process or skip a rank if you enlist in the military. Gold Award Girl Scouts can also apply for scholarships designed just for those who've earned this highest award.

Find out more at gsfun.org/gold.



## 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.	p. 3
I've completed a Cadette Journey, including the Take Action project.	p. 8
I have attended a mandatory Silver Award Workshop	p. 8
I have thought about the passions and issues that interest me.	p. 9
I have formed a Silver Award team or decided to work on my own.	p. 10
I have mapped my community and researched community issues.	pp. 12-14
I have made a list of community contacts who I can work with.	p. 15
I have interviewed community members who I can work with.	pp. 15-16
I have researched and understand the real root causes of the community issue that interests me.	pp. 17-18
I have chosen a topic for my Silver Award Take Action project.	p. 19
I have made a plan and a budget and submitted my Intent Form to Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore.	pp. 21-22
I have made my project sustainable. It has a lasting impact.	pp. 21
I have tracked the time I have spent on my Silver Award Take Action project.	p. 24
I have taken photos and/or video to document my project.	p. 24
I have "spread the word" about my project by sharing it with my service unit, school, other Girl Scouts, the community, or online.	p. 26
I have submitted a final report before Sept. 30 of my ninth grade year (eligible girls who submit after this date will be honored the following year).	p. 27
I have submitted my final report to Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore	p. 27
Celebrate! (check the dates of the Silver Award ceremony)	p. 28

