



Community Service vs. Take Action Project

The **Girl Scout Silver Award** is a **Take Action Project**. An easy way to remember the difference between Community Service projects and Take Action projects is determined by whether the project is being done *for* the community or *with* the community. If you are doing something **for** the community, you are most likely working on a Community Service project or volunteering. If you are doing something **with** the community, you are most likely working on a Take Action project.

So, what does this really mean? A **Community Service project** is a project that addresses an immediate, short-term need in the community. This can include volunteering your time with an organization or doing a one-time act or good deed (*like a hosting a one-time supplies drive, cleaning up litter at a local park, painting a room in your community center, etc.*).

A **Silver Award (Take Action) Project** is a project that addresses the root cause, or problem, of a community issue and has a long-term impact.

Take Action projects have you educate, publicize and involve people in the community, sharing why they should be encouraged to come out and support your cause. You can even take it one step further by getting community leaders involved! When you pursue your **Silver (Take Action) project**, you take time to identify and understand the root cause of the issue you are addressing so you can share your knowledge and get others involved to enact change within your community.

Community Service Project	Take Action Project
Making kitty blankets to donate to the local animal shelter.	Teach classes about animals and the issues facing shelters at local schools, clubs, and organizations. Start a local campaign to get pets spayed and neutered. Work with the shelter to keep the classes and campaign going.
Picking up trash at the local park.	Install more trash cans and signs about picking up litter and host a local anti-littering education campaign. Set up a volunteer system for regular clean ups and recruit organizations, businesses, and clubs to get involved.
Donating new or gently used clothes to a local nonprofit.	Reach out to a local non-profit to find out what kind of clothing is most needed. Organize a specialized clothing drive (<i>do they need coats, baby and toddler items, hygiene items, etc.</i>). Work with various organizations, clubs and businesses to publicize your drive and educate the community on your issue. Work with the nonprofit to set up an annual drive.

***One-time collections or drives are not Take Action projects; these are Community Service projects.**

- **Root Cause of an Issue or Need**

With Take Action projects—such as the **Silver Award**—you are addressing the *root cause* of an issue. The *root cause* of an issue is why a problem occurs. For example: when you see stray cats and dogs in your neighborhood, the root cause—or *why*—could be that there is not enough awareness around the importance of spaying and neutering animals. Not spaying and neutering animals can lead to the

overpopulation of stay cats and dogs filling up the local animal shelters. This discovery can then lead to an opportunity to share the importance of, or need for, spaying and neutering pets (the root cause) with others. Your team will connect with your community so you can take action and help find a long-term solution to this problem.

- **Active Leadership**

Active leadership means involving other people in your efforts and directing them to help you meet the goals of your project. Think of yourself as the CEO of a company; you will be asking your “employees” (*friends, neighbors, students, community members, etc.*) to carry out the work of your company (*or project*). Another way to think of *active leadership* to involve others in your efforts. Girls must recruit, coordinate, educate and/or inspire others to move their cause forward.

Tasks that <u>DO NOT</u> demonstrate active leadership	Tasks that <u>DO</u> demonstrate active leadership
Making posters yourselves to display around town.	Organizing and directing volunteers to make posters in order to share the root cause of your issue and educate others within the community.
Writing a blog listing environmental activities for elementary students.	Recruiting a group of volunteers to lead environmental activities that address the importance of your project with elementary students.
Making fleece tie blankets by yourselves.	Teaching a class on how to make blankets to a group of students and/or organizing groups of friends (<i>outside of your team</i>) to make blankets and explain the need.
Cleaning up a park by yourselves.	Organizing a group of volunteers (<i>outside of your team</i>) to clean up a park and sharing the environmental impact littering has on our planet.

- **Sustainability-Making it Last**

You will invest a lot of yourself into your project, don't you want all that time and energy spent to pay off? All Silver Award Projects must be sustainable. This means that your project will be continued even after you are done with it.

Root Cause or Need	Community Partner	Active Leadership	Active Leadership	Sustainability
Kids at your school need more interesting activities to do.	You speak with School Counselor to develop a plan.	You get together with 4 th graders and plan team games that they can do with the 2 nd graders.	You host a class to train others on the games, and how to host future classes.	Student Council agrees to keep these games going throughout the year.

Remember to keep it simple. A clear, focused, and thoughtful project can often be more sustainable than taking on a huge project.