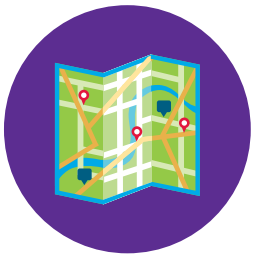
Adult Guide for Earning the Silver Award

girl scouts
san diego

Silver Award at a Glance

7 Steps to the Silver Award



Prerequisite:

Earn the Bronze Award, a Leadership Award, or a Cadette Journey.

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! Check with your council to see if they host a local ceremony or celebration, or organize one of your own!

Table of Contents

Silver Awards at a Glance 2

Part 1: The Silver Award Defined 5

How to Use This Guide 5

Benefits of Becoming a Silver Award Girl Scout 5

Silver Award Resources 6

Your Role in the Silver Award 6

Key Elements of the Silver Award Project 7

Take Action vs. Community Service 7

Highest Award Take Action Project Required Elements 8

How to Show Leadership 9

What You Need to Know About Root Cause 10

What You Need to Know About Sustainability 11

How to "Try" to Measure Impact 12

How to "Try" to Identify a National and/or Global Link 13

Silver Award Take Action Project Sample 13

Part 2: Achieving the Silver Award 14

Getting Started 14

How much time does it take? 15

When to start? 15

The Steps to Earn the Silver Award 16

Prerequisites 16

Step 1: Identify issues 17

Step 2: Build your team 19

Step 3: Explore your community 21

Step 4: Choose your Silver Award Project 23

Step 5: Make a plan 24

Step 6: Put your plan in motion 26

Step 7: Spread the word & submit your Final Report 27

What comes next? 29

Appendix 31

Girl Scout Silver Award™ Checklist 31

Take Action Project Decision Bracket 33

Mind Mapping 35

Guidance for Girl Scouts Engaging With Project Advisors 36

Part 1:

The Silver Award Defined

How to Use This Guide

The guide is designed to help you feel comfortable guiding Girl Scouts through the Silver Award Take Action project so that you'll know what the project is—and how Girl Scouts do it.

You'll also learn about Silver Award requirements, the seven steps Girl Scouts take to earn a Silver Award, and tips to help you guide Girl Scouts each step of the way. Girl Scouts use a checklist in the back of their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award* to keep track of their actions. Find the same checklist in this guide so that you can follow along (see page 29).

Benefits of Becoming a Silver Award Girl Scout

Earning the Silver Award enables Cadette Girl Scouts to...

- Make the world a better place, starting in their own communities!
- Be recognized as a community leader.
- Find support from the community in many ways. Being a Silver Award Girl Scout will help them build relationships. These valuable connections may support future projects or part-time employment opportunities/references.
- Learn to work closely with a team to accomplish a project for the community. They will practice cooperation, leadership, compromise, and teamwork—all skills that they'll use throughout their lives.
- Build leadership skills like time management, problem solving, and effective communication, all while tackling a community issue they really care about.
- Help them develop skills and abilities that will set them up to successfully earn the Gold Award. Plus, it's one of the prerequisites options for earning the Gold!

We call this the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. It's a special opportunity that gives Girl Scouts real-world skills that they'll use for a lifetime. Thank you for making the Silver Award experience possible for Girl Scouts.

The Silver Award is the highest honor a Girl Scout Cadette can earn. With your support, Girl Scouts:

Discover	• What they care about. • Their talents. • The world around them.
Connect	• With each other. • With others in their community and around the world.
Take Action	• To tackle a meaningful issue. • To make the world a better place.

Silver Award Resources

Highly recommended: Silver Award Training for Girl Scouts, troop/group volunteers, and other adults

In addition to this guide and the *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award*, the **Silver Award webpage** has links to on-demand Silver Award training.

Your role in the Silver Award Take Action project is primarily as a guide.

This is true whether you are a troop leader, assistant leader, a project volunteer, or a parent/legal guardian. When you think about your role, keep the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in mind. The Girl Scouts should:

Girl-Led
Lead age-appropriate project activities.

Learning by Doing
Make learning memorable, meaningful, and long-lasting.

Cooperative Learning
Learn by working together.

Though you won't be directly planning or leading the project, you can make suggestions and guide Girl Scouts to stay on track. You can also help them find the resources they need, like helping them connect with and visit community experts. You can encourage Girl Scouts and ensure their safety by following Girl Scout safety guidelines. And, of course, have fun! It's amazing to watch what they can do. When the Girl Scouts wrap up, plan to celebrate!

How You Can Help

You know Girl Scouts are getting the Girl Scout Leadership Experience if they can check these boxes as they work on their Silver Award Take Action project:

Girl-Led
- ☐ Choosing roles
- ☐ Making decisions
- ☐ Running activities and meetings (appropriately for their age)

Learning by Doing
- ☐ Being active
- ☐ Going places
- ☐ Being hands-on

Cooperative Learning
- ☐ Working with others
- ☐ Experience a sense of belonging
- ☐ Engage in action and reflection

Key Elements of the Silver Award Project

The Silver Award Take Action project may be different than other projects you've done with your troop or Girl Scout.

For example, many Girl Scouts do projects like collecting coats for the homeless, or pet food for an animal shelter. These helpful acts support their communities with services and are called service projects. The Silver Award is a Take Action project.

Take Action vs. Community Service

It's important and helpful for Girl Scouts to understand the difference between these projects before they begin. Here's the difference:

Take Action	Community Service
A **long-term project** with sustainable and ongoing influence that addresses an issue's root cause	A **short-term effort** that helps something or someone fulfill an immediate need
Done **WITH** the community	Done **FOR** the community
Creating a unique initiative to address an issue's root cause	**Joining an existing effort** to solve an issue
Creating and leading your own team of volunteers	Done as **part of an existing team,** usually as a volunteer
Setting the goals and leading a team to achieve them	Working toward **a goal that's set by others**

Often, a community service project idea can be developed into a Take Action project.

For example, Girl Scouts may want to collect cans of food for an overcrowded pet shelter. That's a service project, of course. But if they partner with the shelter to understand the root causes of the overcrowding and develop a solution, such as free workshops to teach the importance of spaying and neutering pets, that's a Take Action project.

It is important for leaders and adults to understand what a Take Action project is and know that you can always contact your local council to discuss a project idea to ensure your Girl Scouts are on the right track before they begin.

Highest Award Take Action Project Elements

Take Action projects have up to five elements. The Girl Scout Gold Award requires all five; the Girl Scout Silver Award requires three; and the Girl Scout Bronze Award requires two. This way, Girl Scouts learn something new and have opportunities to be challenged in different ways as they earn the Bronze, Silver, and then Gold Awards.

	Leadership	Root Cause	Sustainable	Measurable	National and/or Global Link
Bronze Juniors	◆	◆	●		
Silver Cadettes	◆	◆	◆	●	●
Gold Seniors/Ambassadors	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

Required element ◆ Introduction of new concept ●

To earn their Silver Award, Girl Scouts need to:

- Show leadership.
- Research and address a root cause of an issue in their community.
- Create a plan to make the project sustainable.
- ***Optional:*** *"Try" to make their project measurable.*
- ***Optional:*** *"Try" to make a national and/or global link.*

How to Show Leadership

There are two ways to earn the Silver Award: Girl Scouts can work with a small team (of up to three other Cadettes), or they can take on a project on their own. Both options provide opportunities to learn leadership skills.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Each Girl Scout should play an active role in choosing, planning, and developing their Take Action project.
  - Individuals on a team can share their vision to help align the group.
- It isn't a leader's job to do everything; rather, it's the leader's job to make sure everything gets done.
  - If working in a team, each individual is encouraged to be responsible for one specific aspect of the project.
  - For individuals as well as teams, active leadership is shown when involving others in their efforts. Recruiting and engaging other people from their network and around the community may be necessary to complete certain tasks.
- Plan to partner *with* community members to take action.
  - Community members might be teachers or school administrators, business or religious groups, or staff at a local community center working on the issue the Girl Scouts are interested in. They should be experts in the issue they're working on. Ideally, their project will provide the community they serve with a much-needed solution, so they will help sustain their project. Taking action to make a positive change in their community is leadership.

Keep in mind: each Girl Scout will be required to identify and reflect on their own leadership experience in their Final Report, as well as provide names of volunteers and community partners who assisted in their projects.

Why not a big group of Cadettes?

Small Teams: Have you ever worked on a project with a large group of people and noticed that some folks talk a lot, make a lot of decisions, or call the shots—while other group members may hang in the background? When you work in a group of three people or fewer, you have the best chance of creating a space where all voices are heard and everyone gets to develop their leadership skills equally.

How You Can Help

- **Make the prospect of the Silver Award come alive** by sharing stories or videos about what other Silver Award teams have done. You might even reach out to an older troop to join your meeting to share their experiences and recommendations for a successful project. But remember, looking at other projects is just for inspiration. Girl Scouts should explore their own interests and their own communities. Taking action in this personal way makes the project more meaningful.
- **Encourage Cadettes to make community connections**. Are there other volunteers or parents/legal guardians who can help, or introduce Girl Scouts to a potential community partner? You can help brainstorm, but keep it girl-led by having the Cadettes take the lead in seeking out their experts. Help them plan their questions and practice ahead of time so they are prepared and feel more confident.

What You Need to Know About Root Cause

Researching various community issues and then deciding which to address will require Girl Scouts to complete an additional step of exploring the situations or factors that cause the issue, or the "root cause."

The extra step of identifying and then addressing a root cause will result in a successful Take Action project. This is because Girl Scouts will take steps to impact the issue's root cause, therefore making long-term improvements, or fixing the issue itself.

But why does a root cause matter, and how do you find it?
This scenario might help:

Imagine that you've agreed to take care of a neighbor's garden while she is on vacation. You drop by after dinner 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.

For the Silver Award, you will guide Girl Scouts to research and connect with community experts to find out what activates their community issue. Then, have them ask why that happens in order to find the real root causes. Often, they will have to look at the "why" in a lot of places, or ask "Why?" several times, in order to get to the root causes.

You noticed that:	You researched and asked "Why?" to uncover these root causes:	You addressed the root cause when:
The plants are drooping.	*The plant has pests that are damaging the leaves, causing wilting.*	*You developed a natural plant pest spray and sprayed the plants.*
	This plant variety should only be watered once a month.	*You made a note to tell your neighbor that their plants need water less often.*

Once Girl Scouts have identified their issue, they can also use the mind mapping diagram in their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award* as a visual tool to help them explore root causes. See the appendix in this guide for an example of the mind mapping diagram.

What You Need to Know About Sustainability

Girl Scouts will create a plan to make the project sustainable, which means the project's impact lasts even after it's over.

The goal is for the Girl Scouts to create and put a plan in place to sustain their project; however, how the community partners follow through is often outside the Girl Scouts' influence or control. For the Gold Award, they will need to ensure their plan carries on—that's the Take Action progression!

Discuss how they can make their projects sustainable. Here are three methods to consider:

Create a permanent solution that can be used after the project is complete.	Educate and inspire others in the community or within Girl Scouts to be part of the change.	Advocate to change a rule, regulation, or law, and encourage others to join!
Start a school club and get a teacher or a Girl Scout troop to commit to continue the work.	Run a stress relief awareness campaign and enact a call to action, like a pledge to track who commits to adopting new self-care habits.	Protect sea turtle habitats by getting others to take up the cause by signing a petition as part of a campaign to enact a law protecting the animal's habitats Advocacy is what matters. Bonus points if the law is passed—but if not, you still changed minds and behaviors along the way.
Create a sensory room and leave an instruction manual on how to use it.	Host a reading workshop to promote early literacy and share the curriculum with a community partner to continue literacy education.	
Start a school composting program and collect before and after surveys to understand the increase in composting know-how.	Post an educational video or blog and partner with an established organization to ensure people can find it.	

How to “Try” to Measure Impact - optional

One of the most important questions to ask before the project is started is “How will I know when I’ve succeeded?” To try to answer this question, have Girl Scouts set a goal for what can be meaningfully counted to measure the effectiveness of their project.

Some ways they may want to track their project’s impact are by counting the:

- Number of people who volunteered with the project.
- Number of people who visited the project’s website.
- Number of people who can eat vegetables produced by the new garden.
- Number of people who attended an event for the project.
- Number of bottles recycled because of new recycling cans at the playground.
- Amount of food donated for a cooking workshop at the food pantry which is supported by new recipes on the pantry’s website.
- Number of books donated for the new library section created at the preschool.

Once Girl Scouts know what to watch to track success, help them decide what tools to use to measure how the project progresses. Here are a few suggestions:

- Complete a survey or evaluation and calculate the results.
- Track numbers like attendees, hours, or donations with a log sheet.
- Track clicks, views, or shares.

Match the results against the initial goal to measure the project’s impact.

How to “Try” to Identify a National and/or Global Link - optional

Identifying a national and/or global link is connecting how the project’s issue is relevant worldwide. It’s likely the issue can be found in your own local, regional, or national community and across the globe, whether it’s hunger, poverty, illiteracy, homelessness, or pollution.

Try to identify the project’s national and/or global link by encouraging Girl Scouts to research how other people and places address their issue.

Try to figure out:

- How do other organizations or communities implement solutions?
- What can be learned?
- What can be incorporated into their project?

Girl Scouts can consider reaching out, asking for advice, ideas and even collaboration. Seeing how other people and places implement solutions might also inspire Girl Scouts. They can use what they learned to inform their project. Plus, these kinds of partnerships can be excellent ways to ensure sustainability. Encourage Girl Scouts to have sensitivity when pursuing issues that impact communities that are underrepresented or marginalized. Remember that every community holds a unique space in the world and still has plenty to offer, even through adversity.

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

SAMPLE:
Silver Award Take Action Project
Shoe-Tying Success

Ava, Zuri, and Gloria 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 their 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 students don’t tie their shoes. They researched to find the **root cause**: the students were not fully learning how to tie their shoes because they needed more hands-on practice.*

*They showed **leadership** by partnering with a preschool, and by each individual Girl Scout handling different aspects of the project. Ava took the lead on research, Zuri scheduled calls with experts to learn more, and Gloria worked with a small team of volunteers to create a hands-on tool to help students practice tying their shoes. Together, they developed workshops that they led at the preschool to put their program into action. Ava doesn’t feel comfortable speaking publicly, so she helped set up and took attendance while Zuri and Gloria presented to students and teachers.*

*They felt proud when the preschoolers gained the skill and confidence to tie their shoes. And they made their project **sustainable** by teaching preschoolers to tie their shoes, and by sharing their workshop outline and hands-on tool with the preschool, which will continue to encourage the students to practice. They made a lasting impact!*

*Their troop leader explained the concepts of **measurable** and **national and/or global link**. They knew these weren’t required for the Silver Award, but they made a goal to teach at least 50 students to tie their shoes. They decided to keep track of attendance at their presentations, just to practice for the Gold Award. They also discussed how their project links to a national and/or global issue because the increased demands on parents’ time leads to a higher demand for more hands-on life skills programs at school.*

Part 2:

Achieving the Silver Award

Every Cadette Girl Scout can earn the Silver Award if they choose.

The Silver Award process is built to accommodate different learning styles and abilities. Your council team has resources to support all Girl Scouts in planning and implementing a successful project.

Getting Started

Before you begin, confirm that the Girl Scouts interested in earning the Silver Award have met these prerequisites:

- A registered Girl Scout Cadette (grades 6–8)
- Completed a Cadette Leadership Award or Bronze Award
- **Optional:** Completed Silver Award Training

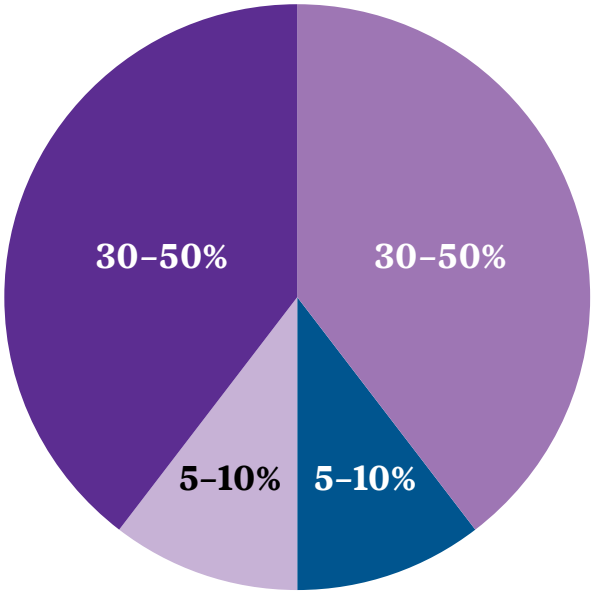
Highly recommended: Silver Award Training for Girl Scouts, troop/group leaders, and other adults

How You Can Help

- **Dedicate a few minutes of meetings to updates on Silver Award Projects:** Short check-ins during regular meetings or dedicated meetings to Silver Award issues can help Girl Scouts brainstorm general tips for moving forward, troubleshoot obstacles, give direction for resources, and discuss ways members can support one another. Step 2 on page 19, "Build Your Team," and Step 3 on page 21, "Explore Your Community," include great meeting activities for troops.

How much time does it take?

It is recommended that each individual Cadette spend approximately 50 hours working towards the Silver Award. However, the process Girl Scouts engage in and their leadership growth are much more important than the total number of hours logged. In some cases, the project is completed over the course of a summer; in others, over the course of a school year.



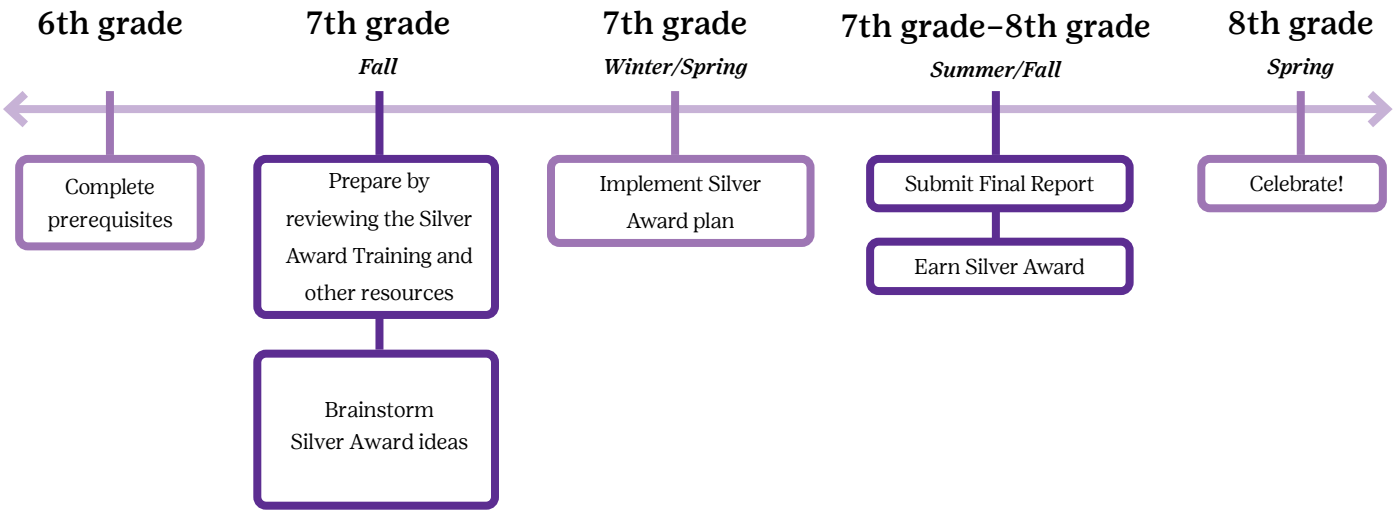
Budgeting Hours

- **Preparation (30–50%)** is the process of preparing the project plan . This includes research, contacting possible community partners, investigating activities, and finding volunteers.
- **Implementation (30–50%)** is the process of leading and executing the plan and making changes when necessary to achieve the goal. This includes training volunteers, leading the team, and more.
- **Earning money (5–10%)** is optional, and only includes time spent earning money for the Silver Award.
- **Final Report and thanks (5–10%)** includes reflecting on their project's impact, completing the Silver Award Final Report, and thanking their team.

When to start?

While Girl Scouts can earn the Silver Award anytime during their Cadette years (grades 6–8), it's recommended that they aim to earn the Silver Award by the summer following their 7th grade year. The additional year offers a buffer in case the Silver Award takes longer than anticipated. Plus, this gives Girl Scouts the entire 8th grade year to relax and do other fun activities before bridging to Seniors and turning their sights to the Gold Award.

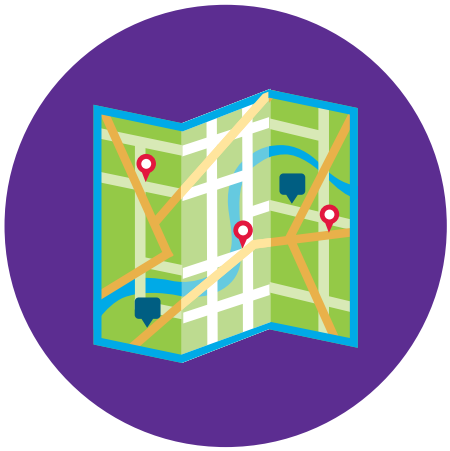
Recommended (not required!) Timeline:



Steps to Earn the Silver Award

Prerequisites

Before getting started, make sure you have completed the Bronze Award, a Cadette Journey, or a Leadership Award.



Journeys are retiring on October 1st 2026 and are being replaced by Leadership Awards but will still be honored as prerequisites if already completed. In addition, they will be asked to reflect on these questions:

- What did you do?
- What did you learn?
- What will you do better, or differently, next time?

Girl Scouts need the skills they'll develop in prerequisites—like how to identify community issues, how to plan, and how to lead or work with others—to succeed on their Silver Award. The reflection will help them begin to connect the dots between their prerequisite project and their Silver Award.

How You Can Help

- **Share Cadette prerequisite options with Girl Scouts.** Visit the **Award and Badge Explorer page**. Select "Cadette" as the grade level and search "Leadership Awards" as the topic. Print a PDF to share with Girl Scouts, who can then choose the one that they'll work on.
- **Guide Girl Scouts to reflect and discuss their completed experiences.** Using the questions above, which are also listed in their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award* give them time to discuss their answers together. Tell them to write down their individual answers and save them.

Step 1: Identify issues.

In this step, Girl Scouts spend time thinking about issues that they care about and how those issues affect their community.

This is an important step. Girl Scouts who choose a topic that they are passionate about are more interested in making an impact. They see value in what they are learning and doing. As a result, their motivation and engagement lasts throughout the project. And, they reap the benefits of taking action and growing as leaders.

Highly recommended: Once Girl Scouts begin this step, they should start tracking hours. Girl Scouts are encouraged to track time as they go along, so they don't get stuck trying to recreate it at the end. Use the Time Log found in the template section of the *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award*, a spreadsheet, or a piece of paper—just don't lose it!

How You Can Help

Encourage each Girl Scout to explore, to think about their own experiences, and imagine what they could change in their community.

- A great tool for narrowing down their options is the Take Action Brainstorming Decision Bracket, which can be found in their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award* and in this guide's appendix. The decision bracket will help Girl Scouts match their talents and skills with the issues they want to solve and people they want to help.

Guide Girl Scouts to use the Issue Chart in their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award* and also on the next page.

Get the conversation started:

- Ask: "What are some places we can look for ideas?"
- Suggest options such as newspapers, friends, or social media.
- Challenge them to think more deeply.

Create an open, comfortable environment where Girl Scouts (whether one or a group) can share their thoughts and ideas.

Break out into small groups to explore issues more deeply—this may result in spontaneous team formation.

Issue Chart:

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

Step 2: Build your team.

To meet the Silver Award leadership requirement, Cadettes will need to build a team, and they have options:

- **Small team model:** They can work with a team of up to three other Cadettes. Their 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:** They can create and implement a project on their own. Recruiting and engaging youth and/or adult volunteers from their network and around their community will be necessary to complete certain tasks.

Highly recommended: Form teams based on shared interest, not friend groups.

No matter what option they choose, they should plan to partner with community members to learn about an issue, discover root causes, make a plan, and take action.

These partners should be experts in the issue they are working on.

Note: The Silver Award Final Report asks Girl Scouts to identify and reflect on their leadership role, responsibilities, and experience.

If your troop has more than four Girl Scouts interested in the Silver Award, it's possible that you'll be guiding more than one team. You may also have a group of Girl Scouts who want to work together and one or two who want to work on their own. That's OK because it means that they are branching out in order to take action in a way that's personally meaningful. Just remember, each team should develop a unique project based on their own interests. Multiple teams may NOT collaborate on the same Silver Award project.

Adult roles:

Required: Each Silver Award project should have the support of **at least one registered, background-checked adult Girl Scout volunteer** who is responsible for safety and Silver Award procedures. If your troop is working on several Silver Award Take Action projects, you might find it helpful to ask parents/legal guardians or other troop volunteers to guide one of the teams or an individual. Any volunteer can take training and have access to Silver Award materials.

Try it: Encourage teams and individuals to seek out a **project advisor.** A project advisor is an adult who has some level of knowledge, skills, expertise, or access to resources that can help with their project. The project advisor does not design the project, but can offer valuable insight, advice, and guidance. While parents/legal guardians and troop leaders can be project advisors, you can encourage Girl Scouts to expand outside their familiar circles and grow their networks. **Note:** This role is different than the registered, background-checked Girl Scout volunteer and is optional, but strongly encouraged. See *Highest Awards Guidance for Girl Scouts Engaging with Project Advisors* in this guide's appendix.

Then, get started!

Girl Scouts who have formed a team of two or more should plan a first Silver Award meeting. The focus of the first meeting should be to encourage team bonding and problem solving—even if they have been in a troop together for years. Encourage each Girl Scout to use this experience to utilize their strengths while also gaining new skills.

How You Can Help

Design a "kick-off" meeting that includes one or more of the activities below to help Girl Scouts build their teams. Include all Girl Scouts in these activities—even those working on their own. This meeting should be a celebration where everyone feels good about making the world a better place.

Activity 1: Help the Girl Scouts choose and plan games and activities for this meeting that will help them discover something they didn't know about one another and ideally work toward a common goal. They will find one activity in their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award*.

Activity 2: Guide Girl Scouts to create team rules before the first meeting ends. Have them come up with rules that help the team work together. Start the list by talking about the values in the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Examples include being on time, or listening to each other without interrupting. Post the rules at each team meeting and refer to them as a reminder if needed.

Traits of a Good Team	Coaching Tips
Respect different points of view and ways of work.	• Promote an inclusive environment as Girl Scouts work on their project. Values you might suggest include: ensuring each team member is invited to express their thoughts and opinions, encouraging active listening and asking questions. • Discuss ways that team members can respect each other and the diverse background, viewpoints, and life experiences of their team. • **Note:** Girl Scouts should not be expected to be the spokespeople for communities they are a part of; sharing lived experience is a choice. Reach out to community partners for their expert knowledge.
Contribute to the project.	• Encourage Girl Scouts to make a task list for each member and then discuss how they can put those tasks into motion.
Accept constructive suggestions.	• Talk to Girl Scouts about the differences between constructive suggestions, criticizing, and attacking. For example, if an idea is criticized, ask the individual who gave the feedback whether they have any suggestions that might help make the idea better. • Encourage Girl Scouts to be courteous, considerate, and respectful of fellow teammates by living the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
Work together to create and develop a plan.	• Encourage Girl Scouts 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.
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.

Step 3: Explore your community.

When Girl Scouts explore the world around them, they connect to their communities, build empathy, and expand their view. While they may already have a Take Action project idea in mind, actually being out in their communities may bring new ideas and information to light.

For Girl Scouts who are unsure, exploring their communities can help them discover a focus for their Take Action project. They may decide to explore on their own, with their families, or together with their team.

This activity also assists Cadettes in identifying organizations and experts who can assist them in their project and help them gather information on the root cause (the situation/factor that causes the issue) they are interested in addressing.

How You Can Help

1. **Guide Girl Scouts to map the communities they see.** Step 3 in the *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award* recommends drawing a community map. It might help Girl Scouts to know that community can be more than just a physical place. Sure, they can explore their neighborhood. But a community is also a group of people, like an athletic team, faith-based group, Girl Scouts, and groups with a common characteristic, as shown in the Juliette Gordon Low Community Map (both examples are in the *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award*). Even a younger sibling's preschool is a community that they might know something about and want to explore for a project. For more ideas, see the **Girl Scout Activity Zone's Cadette Getting Started with the Silver Award Activity**, which explains how to make a community map.

How You Can Help, cont.

If your Girl Scouts decide to physically explore the community:

- Have Girl Scouts keep an eye out for things that could be improved, fixed, or otherwise benefit from their special talents and skills.
- Stress safety. Follow the guidelines outlined in Step 6's "Think safety" section.

2. **After exploring their community and making a community map,** have Girl Scouts list contact information for any organizations within Girl Scouts or the wider community that they'd like to explore, or that might be able to help them.

3. **Then, guide Girl Scouts to find experts in the community who can help them understand the root cause of the project issue.**
   - Remind Girl Scouts to wear their uniform, if they have one, when meeting with community members or engaging with others during their Silver Award Take Action project.
   - Practice communication skills with Girl Scouts before they talk to others about community issues. They can practice by taking turns explaining the Silver Award, sharing their ideas, and asking questions of their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award*.

4. **Help Girl Scouts to uncover root causes, which is a required element of the Silver Award.** Once they have explored their community and identified issues, they'll need to research and talk to experts to understand what causes the issues before choosing a project and taking action.
   - Uncovering root causes may seem hard, but it can be surprisingly easy. Brainstorm with your team—keep asking "Why?" Use colorful sticky notes to track your ideas, or use the mind mapping diagram in the appendix and in the *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award* to help them uncover what they've learned about the root causes of their issue.

Examples of how observation and research become a project that addresses a real root cause:

A Silver Award team noticed that:	They researched and asked "why" to uncover this root cause:	To address the root cause:
Preschoolers are tripping on the playground because they aren't tying their shoes.	*Students aren't learning how to tie their shoes.*	*They created an in-school workshop with a hands-on tool to help students practice tying their shoes.*
Children are afraid and confused when a family member develops Alzheimer's disease.	*Information about Alzheimer's disease written by children for children isn't readily available.*	*They created an Alzheimer's disease brochure for children and partnered with an Alzheimer's organization for distribution and continued support.*
There are fewer ducks at a local park.	*Mold growing on bread left out for the ducks has made some ducks sick. Others are overweight from too much bread.*	*They created a campaign to educate the public about not feeding bread to ducks and provided samples of appropriate duck food at a special event.*

Step 4: Choose your Silver Award Project.

In this step, Girl Scouts will choose their Silver Award Take Action project from the options they identified in previous steps and make it official by writing it down.

How You Can Help

Help Girl Scouts who still aren't sure about their project.

- They may have two (or more!) ideas they love. Help them narrow down their options by reviewing the information they've collected. They can create a pros and cons list if they can't decide between two or more project ideas. They could also narrow down a project that feels like it's too much. Contact your local council if you are feeling stuck.
- A team may be split between two project ideas may be split between two project ideas. Help them come to consensus or compromise by fist-to-five voting. Here's how: Everyone shows their level of agreement by holding up a number of fingers, so each person can convey their opinion without speaking and ensuring no one's view is ignored. A fist means "No interest;" one finger means "I'll just barely go along but am not blocking the project idea;" two fingers mean "I don't like it, but will go along;" three fingers mean "I'm in the middle;" four fingers mean "This idea is fine;" and five fingers mean "I like the project idea a lot." Anyone showing fewer than three fingers is given an opportunity to state their objection, and the team addresses their concerns. The team continues the fist-to-five process until they achieve consensus (a minimum of three fingers or higher for all team members).

Have Girl Scouts write down what they'll do for their project, why their project matters, who it helps (target audience), and how it addresses the root cause of their issue in their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award*. Writing down the answers to these questions will help solidify their plans.

- The target audience is the clearly identified members of the community affected by the issue. For example: pet owners, children in grades 3–5, refugees, their classmates at school, Girl Scouts in their service unit, or the elderly in their neighborhood.

Step 5: Make a plan.

By now, Girl Scouts have chosen a Silver Award Take Action project and are ready to make a plan to get it done.

They should review the questions in Step 4 of the *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award* to help them outline their plan before sharing it with you for review and approval. If Cadettes are working in a group, they should fill out the workbook together.

Review the Silver Award Checklist in the appendix with each team. Together, you can decide if the project plan is complete, or if more planning is needed first.

How You Can Help

Help Girl Scouts plan with their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award*. Ask them if their plan is realistic and suggest that they brainstorm new directions if needed.

Review the Silver Award Project Checklist with Girl Scouts to anticipate any questions that could come up while completing the project proposal. Provide any further explanations for the project's required elements. Offer to proofread their project proposal.

Ask what supplies they think they will need. They can list these and make an estimated budget in their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award.* Then, have them think about how they'll fund their project.

Check with your local council for guidelines related to donations, money-earning activities, or the use of troop funds that Girl Scouts should keep in mind for their projects. Keep these two notes in mind as well:

- Girl Scouts cannot raise funds to give to another organization as part of their Silver Award Take Action project. Check with your local council for guidelines related to donations, money-earning activities or the use of troop funds that Girl Scouts should keep in mind for their projects.
- Silver Award Take Action project requirements are often met using education and advocacy—not by spending large amounts of money. If the project has been designed and the budget is unattainable, suggest that they re-evaluate. Ask: Is the project truly a Take Action project?

Step 6: Put your plan in motion.

Help Girl Scouts work together to accomplish their project. Remember: Each Girl Scout should spend around 50 hours each on the Silver Award Take Action project.

How You Can Help

Help Girl Scouts organize trips in the community that will help them carry out their project.

Remind them to wear their uniform, if they have one, when meeting with community members or engaging with others during their Silver Award Take Action project.

Encourage Girl Scouts to record the time they spend on the project in the Time Log of their *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award*. Review the pie chart in the "How Much Time Does it Take?" section of this guide and remind them that time spent researching, planning, and taking action can be included.

Encourage them to take photos or shoot video of their project along the way. They'll use these items to tell their Silver Award Story in Step 7: Spread the Word and share them in their Silver Award Final Report.

Important: When the Silver Award project winds down, the outcome may not be exactly as they planned. That's OK! Girl Scouts earn the Silver Award as long as award requirements have been met. What they learn in the process about themselves and the world around them is what's most valuable. Look at any unexpected twists as a learning opportunity.

Think safety. Check with your local council for safety policies that Girl Scouts should keep in mind for their projects. This may include driving and travel safety, recommended use of Girl Scouts' Safety Activity Checkpoints, activity accident insurance, and COVID-19 guidance when applicable.

Step 7: Spread the word and submit your Final Report.

Each Silver Award project is a story of inspiration, teamwork, and change for the better. Girl Scouts should proudly share their work via their Silver Award Final Reports and with their wider communities.

Final Report: Each project team will submit a Final Report about their project to their council. The report will contain individual sections for each Girl Scout to share their role and reflect. Because the award experience is different for each Girl Scout, guide them to answer the questions on their own—a shared "cut and paste" won't do!

When your Girl Scouts' *Silver Award Final Report* is submitted, they are officially Silver Award Girl Scouts!

How You Can Help

Have Girl Scouts reflect on their Silver Award Take Action project by completing their Final Report. This will help the Girl Scouts learn by reflecting on the experience in new ways. Of course, the most important outcomes are the ones Girl Scouts gain for themselves, like improved confidence, better organization, and stronger teamwork. If the garden doesn't look as neat as they anticipated or if the project had fewer volunteers than desired, that's OK as long as they discovered things along the way. Ensure that each Girl Scout has the opportunity to reflect on and share their answers.

Encourage Girl Scouts to make and keep a copy of the Final Report and submit before September 30 after completing 8th grade.

Ask Girl Scouts how they'd like to share their story. There are lots of possibilities! They can give a presentation to another Girl Scout troop, their local Girl Scout community, or students at their school. They can even create a display for a local library or community center, or submit an article to their local news or school website.

Remember to review the Internet Safety Pledge with Girl Scouts and have them sign it first!

Final Report Review and Approval Process

The Girl Scout Silver Award™, the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette can earn, gives you the chance to do big things and make your community better in the process. This Final Report is to be used by you (and/or your team)—a registered Girl Scout Cadette in grades 6 to 8—with the assistance of your troop/ group leader for approval of your Silver Award project.

Submit this final report: Before April 1 if you plan to attend this year's Silver Award Ceremony, or before September 30 the year you enter ninth grade (it's the absolute final deadline).

Use the answers you provided in Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award to help you complete your Silver Award final report.

A few friendly reminders:

- *When the Silver Award project winds down, the outcome may not be exactly as planned. That's OK! Girl Scouts earn the Silver Award as long as award requirements have been met. 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 project and more about what you discover along the way!*

- *Finish your Silver Award Take Action™ project and Final Report by September 30 of the year you or your oldest team member completes 8th grade!*

- *Keep a copy of this Final Report for your records.*

Contact highestawards@sdgirlscouts.org with any questions.

What comes next?

Suggest giving thanks.

Encourage Girl Scouts to thank everyone who has helped along the way. A hand-written note or an email with a project photo means a lot.

Celebrate, Girl Scout–Style!

Check with your council to see if/how they recognize the Silver Award. And remember, you can always plan a celebration with your troop!

Here are a few ideas:

- Host a special troop pinning party. Be sure to invite friends, families, younger troops, and local dignitaries.
- If your troop is bridging to Seniors, pin your Silver Award Girl Scouts as part of your ceremony.
- Share the news with your local newspaper by submitting photos and an article on all the projects completed.
- Tell your story via social media outlets.
- Mark this accomplishment with additional Silver Award mementos, available at your local Girl Scout store or online at **girlscoutshop.com**.

Check with your local council for how they recommend celebrating this accomplishment!

Encourage Girl Scouts to set their sights on the Gold Award! Ask them to imagine all they can do by continuing to make positive, sustainable change in their community and the world.

Girl Scouts Gold Award:

- Eligibility: Senior or Ambassador Girl Scouts (grades 9–12)

Learn more at https://www.sdgirlscouts.org/en/members/for-girl-scouts/highest-awards/gold-award.html.

Let Cadettes know the Gold Award is the highest award in Girl Scouting and the preeminent leadership award for high school Girl Scouts. Gold Award Girl Scouts have unique, impactful experiences and stories to share with the world. Earning a Gold Award prepares them to excel in whatever comes next: as a student in college, a working professional, and a proactive member of their community. Plus, in recognition of their significant leadership skills, Gold Award Girl Scouts can earn college scholarships, and they skip a paygrade when enlisting in the military.

Did You Know?
Gold Award Girl Scouts are widely recognized as leaders who make the world a better place.

A special thank you to Girl Scouts San Diego for creating the guide that inspired this national template, and to Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles for the recommended timeline. Thanks especially to the following councils of our 2022 Silver Award Working Group for informing the updated Silver Award Guidelines for our movement at every step:

Girl Scouts of Connecticut, Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland, Girl Scouts of Nassau County, Girl Scouts - North Carolina Coastal Pines, Girl Scouts Northeast Kansas and Northwest Missouri, Girl Scouts of Northern California, Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio, Girl Scouts of Southern Appalachians, Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania, and Girl Scouts of Western Washington.

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Appendix

Girl Scout Silver Award Checklist

Check items off your list once you have completed them. When you've checked off all the items from each section and received approval from your troop leader or council, you're ready for the next section!

Prerequisite

- ☐ I am a registered Girl Scout Cadette (in grades 6–8).
- ☐ I have finished a Bronze Award, Leadership Award, or Cadette Journey (Journeys are retiring October 1st, 2026).
- ☐ I know that I need to finish my project and submit paperwork by Sept 30th after 8th grade is completed.
- ☐ I know the Silver Award **Take Action** project's required elements are 1. Practicing **leadership**; 2. Addressing a **root cause** of a community issue I care about; and 3. Creating a plan to make my project **sustainable**.
- ☐ I have reviewed the *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award*.
- ☐ I am excited to get started!

Project Planning

- ☐ I developed a title for my project.
- ☐ I provided information about myself (solo model) or myself and up to three other Cadettes (small team model) and additional adult resources.
- ☐ I decided my project's expected start date and expected completion date.
- ☐ I researched an issue I am passionate about and identified at least one **root cause** that is based on a need in my community.
- ☐ I have identified my target audience (who is going to benefit).
- ☐ I have identified and engaged experts and others in my community who might be able to help with my project or have knowledge of how my project issue affects my community.

- ☐ I have described my plan to address my issue's root cause and make my project **sustainable** by using one of these three methods:
  - ○ Create a permanent solution that can be used after the project is complete.
  - ○ Educate and inspire others in the community or within Girl Scouts to be part of the change.
  - ○ Advocate to change a rule, regulation, or law and encourage others to join.
- ☐ I have worked with my team (if applicable) to identify all team members' **leadership** roles, which are all different and will each take approximately 50 hours of work.
- ☐ I have reviewed my plan and confirm my project is Take Action and not Community Service.
- ☐ I have listed potential supplies needed and estimated costs.
- ☐ I am aware of my local council's requirements for any of my project's donations, money-earning activities, or the use of troop funds.
- ☐ I am aware that each individual team member should spend approximately 50 hours on the project and maintain a Time Log.
- ☐ *Optional: I've identified how I would try to make my project measurable by making a goal to measure the project's success.*
- ☐ *Optional: I've identified how I would try to make a national and/or global link.*
- ☐ I have worked with my team (if applicable) to complete all fields on this form, including all questions, lines, and signatures.

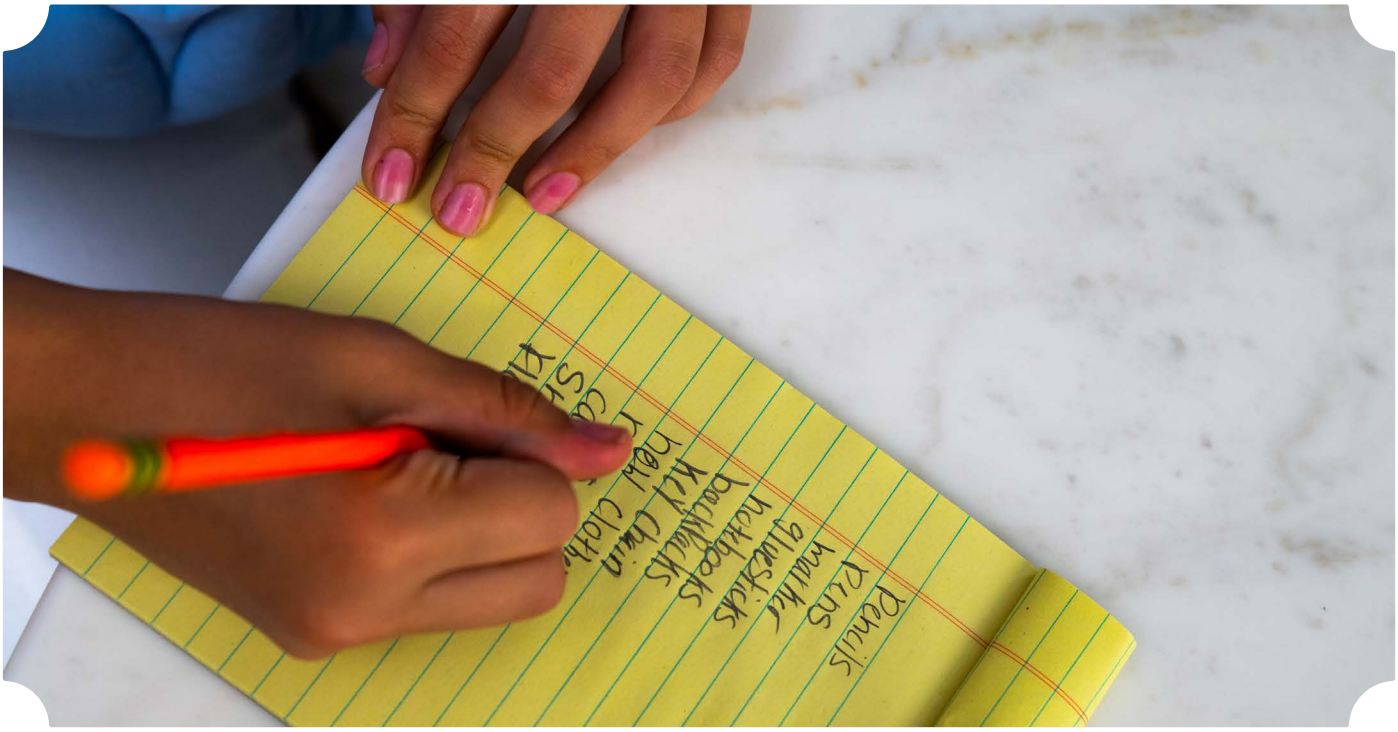
Girl Scout Silver Award Checklist

Check items off your list once you have completed them. When you've checked off all the items from each section and received approval from your troop leader, you're ready for the next section!

Final Report

- ☐ I have updated my project planning responses, sharing my project results—including what I did, how my project went, and what my team did (if applicable) —with my troop leader.
- ☐ I have filled out a Budget Worksheet,* which has a record of the funds raised (donations, money earned, and troop funds) and spent, including how they were spent.
- ☐ I have identified how I let others know about my project and the impact it had (Section 2).
- ☐ I have provided copies of photos, videos, flyers, or other evidence that documents what was accomplished (Section 2).
- ☐ I have submitted a Time Log* of my hours. Each Cadette should spend approximately 50 hours working towards the Silver Award (Section 3).
- ☐ I have included my reflection on this experience and how it has prepared me to pursue the Gold Award (Section 3).
- ☐ I have worked with my team (if applicable) to complete all fields on this form, including all questions, lines, and signatures.
- ☐ I have worked with my team (if applicable) to submit one Final Report, which includes individual sections that each team member completed on their own.
- ☐ I have submitted the Final Report no later than September 30 after finishing 8th grade.

*Other formats are acceptable for Time Log and Budget Worksheet

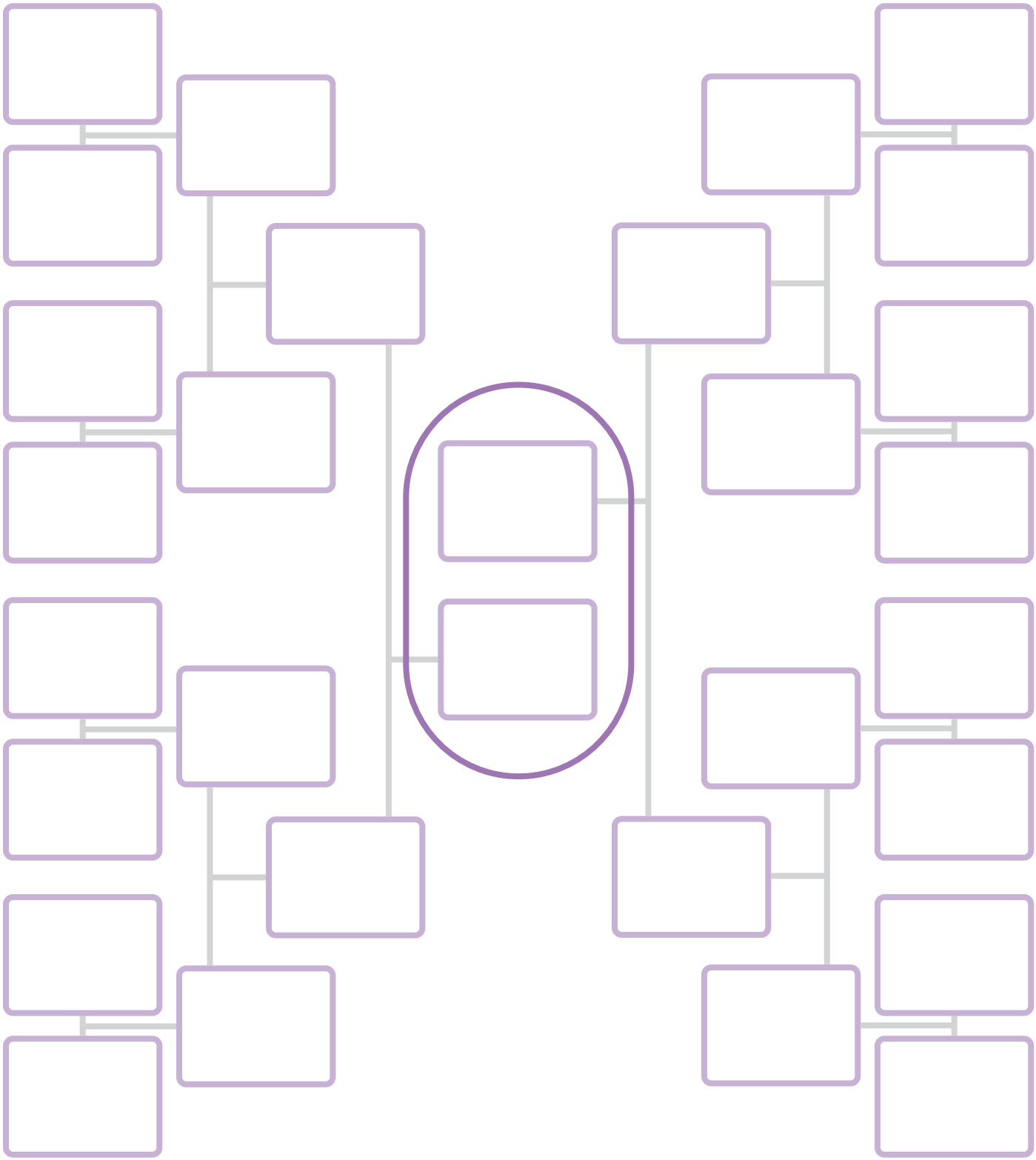


Take Action Project Decision Bracket

What are your talents and skills?
What did you do for fun?

Combine the final pair to create your Take Action project!

What bothers you?
What issues do you want to solve?
Who do you want to help?



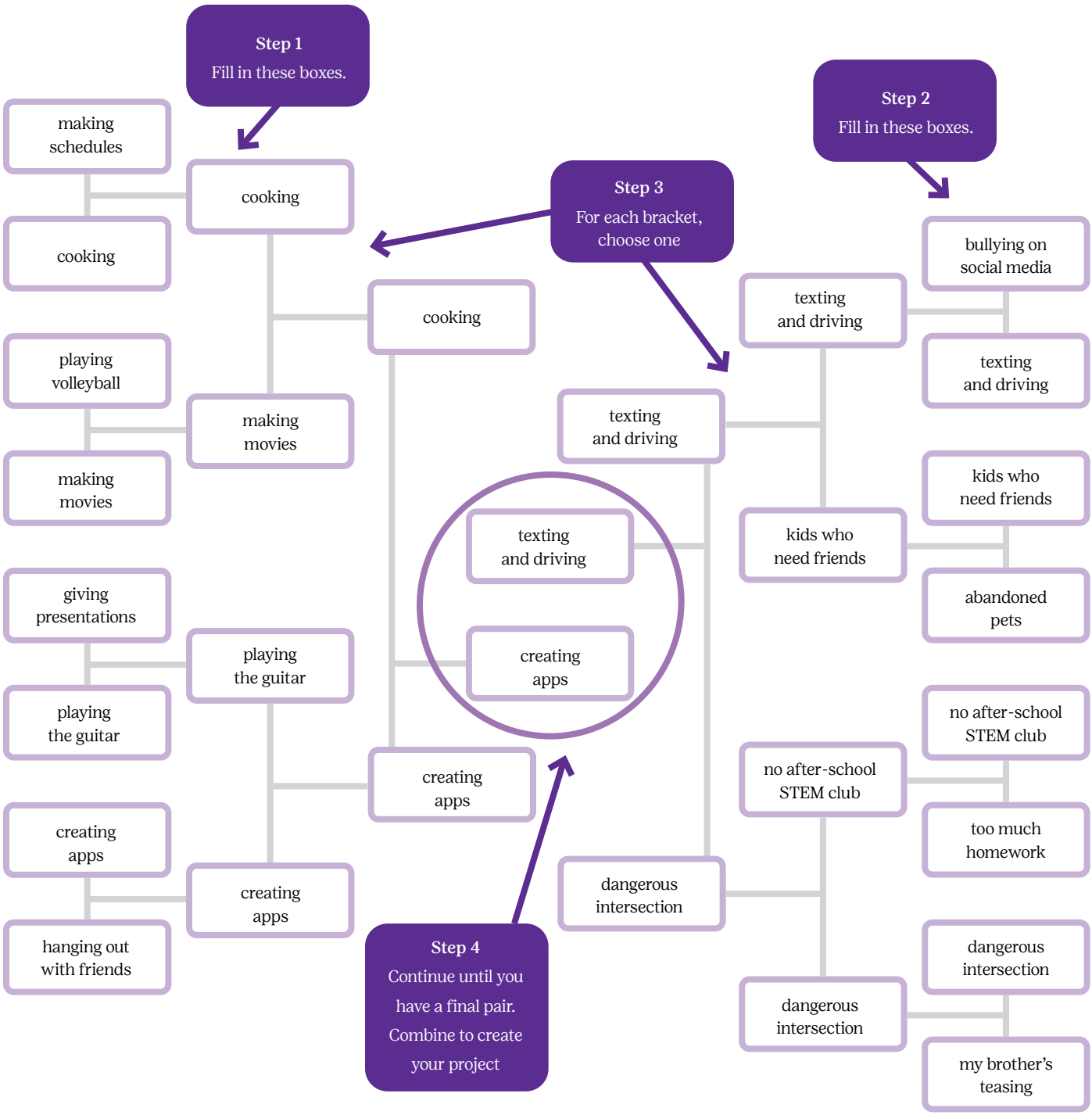
Take Action Project Decision Bracket

In this example, your Take Action project might be to create an app that locks your phone before you drive, then sends a unique code to someone who's not in the car. You can't use your phone until the person with the code unlocks it.

What are your talents and skills?
What did you do for fun?

Combine the final pair to create your Take Action project!

What bothers you?
What issues do you want to solve?
Who do you want to help?



Mind Mapping Diagram

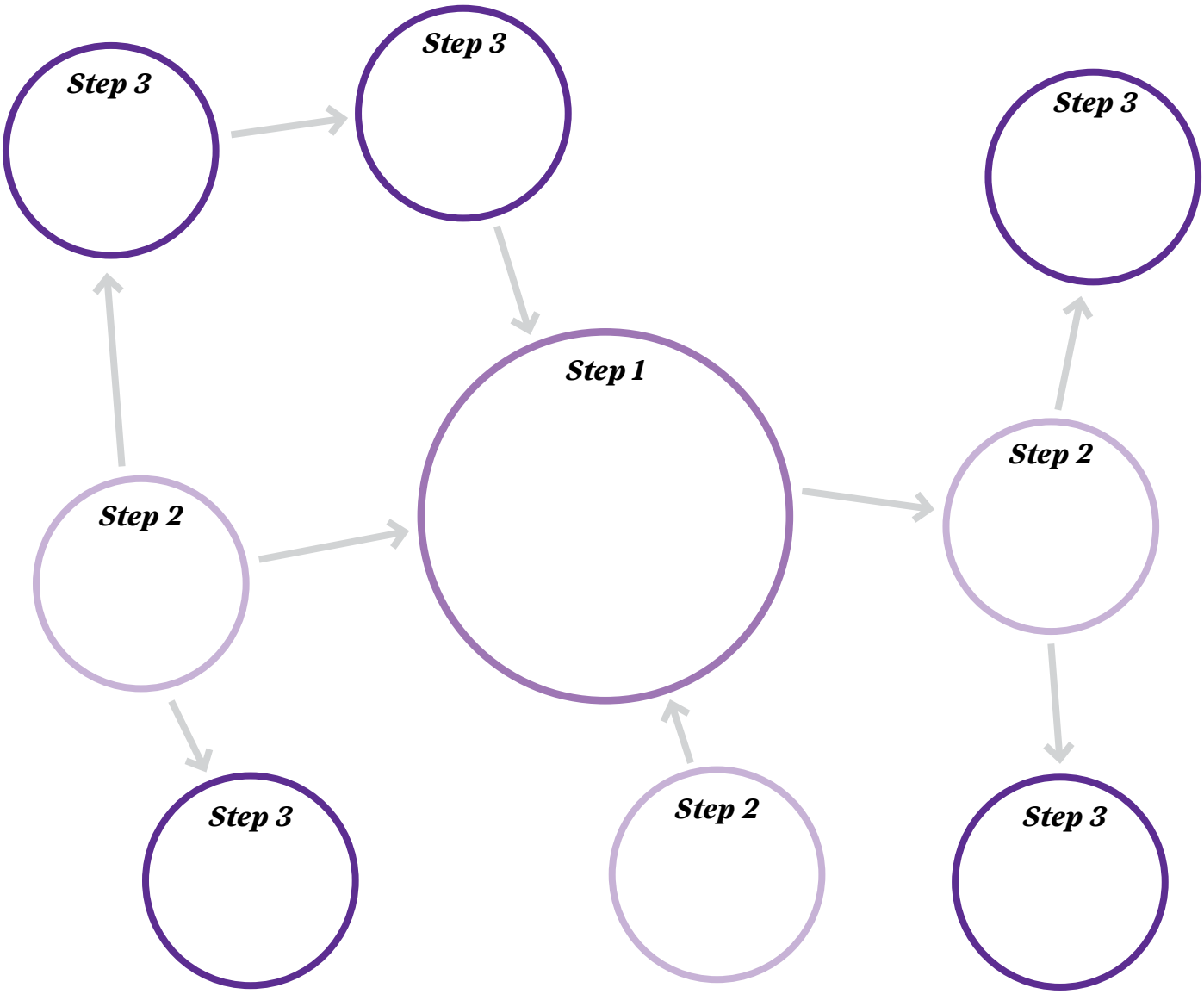
Step 1:
Write your community issue.
(Place the answer in the inner circle.)

Step 2:
Ask: "What activates the issue?" Then, explore further.
(Place answers in circles just outside the community issue.)

Step 3:
To find the root cause, ask: "Why does this happen?"
(Place answers in outer circles.)

Try it!

Write your community issue in the center circle. Ask yourself: What activates the issue? Write your answers in the circles closest to the center circle (add more if you need to). Then, explore further. Ask: "Why does this happen?" Place these answers in the smaller outer circles. Add as many of these 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! See an example in the *Cadette Workbook for Earning Your Silver Award*.



Guidance for Girl Scouts Engaging with Project Advisors

At Girl Scouts, there is nothing we take more seriously than the safety and well-being of our Girl Scouts. The structure of the national Highest Awards is designed to give Girl Scouts the framework and platform to address a community need and expand their network in appropriate ways for each respective grade level.

As part of each of the Highest Awards, Girl Scouts may identify, connect with, and request support from a project advisor. A project advisor is an adult who has some level of knowledge, demonstrated skills, expertise, or access to resources that can help Girl Scouts with their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award projects. A project advisor is optional for the Bronze and Silver Award and required for the Gold Award.

The Highest Awards structure encourages Girl Scouts to expand their network beyond their familiar circles, learn to describe their passions and plans to others, and grow their networks. To help Girl Scout members do so safely, please consider the following guidance and recommendations:

Silver Award (Cadette Girl Scouts):

- It's highly recommended that all project advisors successfully pass a criminal background check performed by the Girl Scout Council or other credible entity, such as a public school system.
- At least one registered background-checked adult Girl Scout volunteer should be present at all in-person meetings between Girl Scouts and project advisors.
- Meetings among Girl Scouts and project advisors should take place in open public spaces (such as libraries, parks, or cafés); meetings should not be held in private homes.
- Parents/legal guardians and troop leaders are recommended to help, guide, and closely support Cadette Girl Scouts as they consider who to approach to become a project advisor. They are also recommended to join any phone calls and be included (i.e. CC'd) on written and electronic communication.
- We recommend that a separate and dedicated email is created and used with project advisors or any other adult project team members, and that one designated adult troop volunteer receives emails to eliminate direct communication with Girl Scouts. An example email address is troop12345highawardproject@example.com. This is a versatile address that can be used for Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award projects! We recommend retiring the email address once the projects are complete.
- There should be no exchange of personal phone numbers belonging to Girl Scouts between the project advisor and Girl Scout members. We recommend the project advisor be provided with a phone number for one designated adult troop volunteer; all other communication should be conducted in person, virtually (e.g., Zoom), or via email.