

Volunteer Appreciation Award Information Packet



Volunteer Appreciation Awards has a long and rich history with Girl Scouts and plays an important role in recognizing volunteers for their outstanding work with and for girls. This packet contains the information you need to recognize that amazing volunteer making Girl Scouts a better place!

Volunteer can be endorsed for an award using the forms at gsw.org.

Endorsements are due February 1 each year.

888.350.5090 | gsw.org
customercare@gsw.org



In Partnership With:













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Meet the Awards of Girl Scouts of Western Ohio and Girl Scouts of USA!

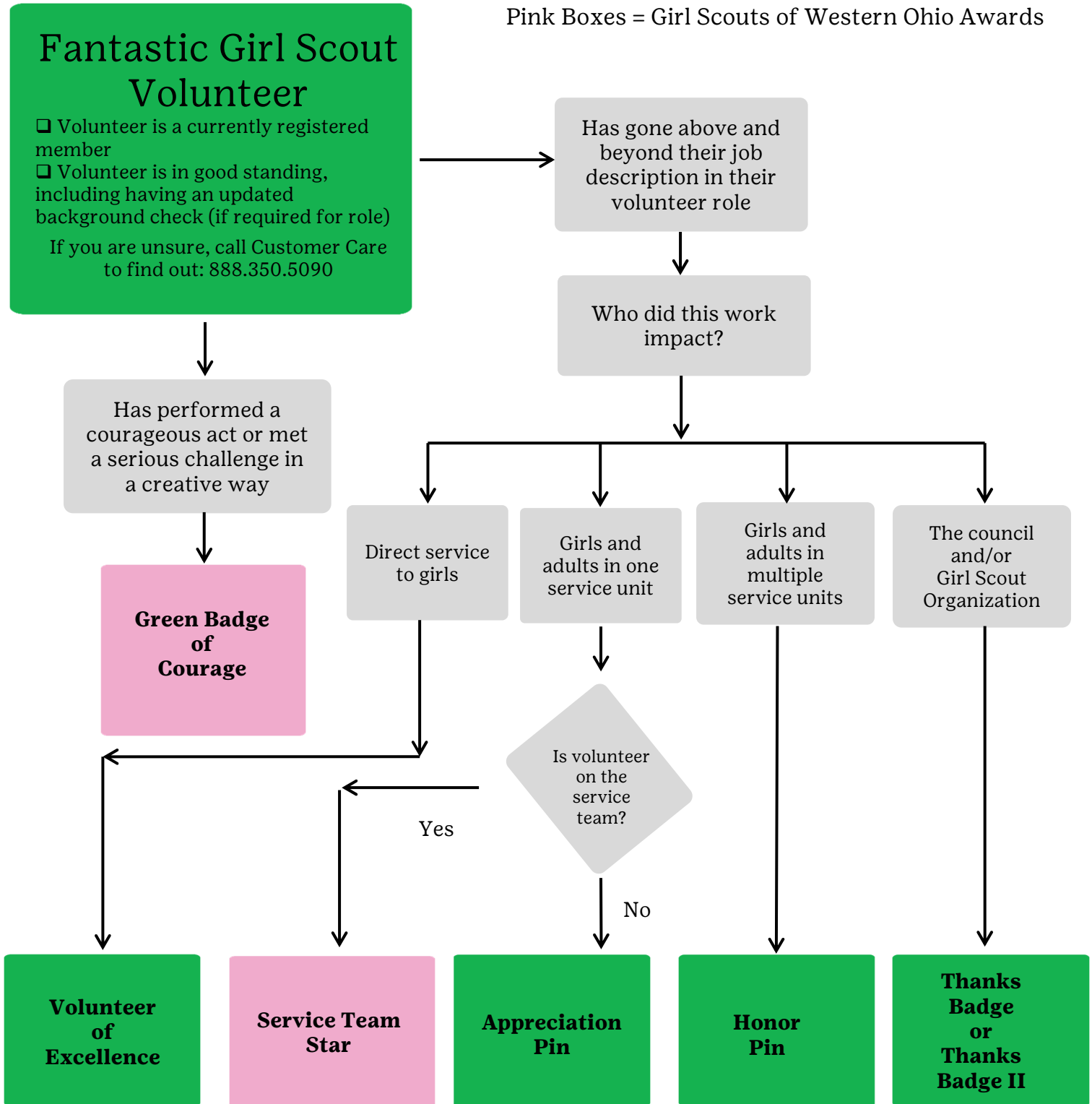
Award	Award Purpose	Award Requirement
Green Badge of Courage 	Recognizes a volunteer who has performed a courageous act or met a challenge in a creative way within their role as a Girl Scout volunteer. <i>Candidate: A volunteer who continued service to Girl Scouts that has overcome a personal challenge or major personal obstacle.</i>	Required – 2 Endorsement Forms Optional – Additional Documentation
Service Team Star 	Recognizes a volunteer who is or has been a service unit team member or appointed administrative volunteer who has gone above and beyond their appointed role and has helped a service unit achieve one of their core responsibilities: recruit and retain members, direct support to leaders & girls, educating community about Girl Scouting, act as a communication center for Girl Scout volunteers, provide activities that reflect the Girl Scout Leadership Experience or providing on-going coaching and education to volunteers. <i>Potential Candidate: Any service team member going above and beyond their role.</i>	Required – 2 Endorsement Forms Optional – Additional Documentation
Volunteer of Excellence 	For outstanding service while partnering directly with girls to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience through the use of Girl Scout Journeys, the Girls Guide to Girl Scouting, The Volunteer Toolkit or any other GSUSA resource. <i>Potential Candidates: Troop Leader, Troop Assistant, day camp volunteer, service team member and many more.</i>	Required – 2 Endorsement Forms Optional – Additional Documentation
Appreciation Pin 	Recognizes a volunteer for outstanding service to one service unit or geographic area. <i>Potential Candidates: Day camp volunteer, Troop Leader or series facilitator who has gone above and beyond their role.</i>	Required – 2 Endorsement Forms Optional – Additional Documentation
Honor Pin 	Recognizes a volunteer for outstanding service to two or more service units or geographic areas. <i>Potential Candidates: Learning facilitator, volunteer serving on council or regional task group, board member who has gone above and beyond their role.</i>	Required – 3 Endorsement Forms Optional – Additional Documentation
Thanks Badge 	Recognizes a volunteer for outstanding service that has benefited the entire council or Girl Scout Movement. <i>Potential Candidates: Council task group chair, board member, a volunteer who increased program opportunities for girls, council learning facilitator who developed new resources.</i>	Required – 4 Endorsement Forms Optional – Additional Documentation
Thanks Badge II 	Recognizes a volunteer for outstanding service that has benefited the entire council or Girl Scout Movement who has already received the Thanks Badge. <i>Potential Candidates: Council task group chair, board member, a volunteer who increased program opportunities for girls, council trainer who developed new resources.</i>	Required – 4 Endorsement Forms Optional – Additional Documentation
President's Award 	Recognizes a service unit team who surpasses team goals and results in significant, measurable impact toward reaching the council's overall goals. Service team striving to achieve this recognition should discuss this with their community development manager. <i>Potential Candidates: Service teams who have led their service unit in achieving all goals outlined for the award.</i>	Discuss with community development manager for requirements.
Membership Year Pin 	This pin indicates the total number of years as a registered member of Girl Scouts, including girl and adult years. The pin comes in 5-year increments: 5, 10, 15, etc.	Volunteer completes Membership Year Pin Request Form
Years of Service Pin 	Recognizes a registered adult member for the numbers of active service as a volunteer. The council will purchase pins for 20 years and above. The pin comes in 5-year increments: 20, 25, 30, etc.	Volunteer completes Volunteer Years of Service Pin Request Form

Pink indicates Girl Scouts of Western Ohio awards; **Green** indicates GSUSA awards.

Which Award is the Right Award?

Do you know of a great volunteer that you would like to nominate for an award? Use the chart below to help you find the right award for the service that they have provided to girls, the community or a service unit.

Green Boxes = Girl Scouts of the USA Awards
 Pink Boxes = Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Awards



Questions on Endorsement Forms

Be Prepared! This is not just the Girl Scout motto. When writing an award endorsement for a fabulous volunteer, preparing in advance is key. The Volunteer Selection Committee loves to read about the details, impact and girl stories and the specifics about how our volunteers are changing girls' lives. To help you provide specific and measurable information, the chart below will provide you with the questions asked on the online endorsement forms.

All endorsements will ask:

- For the information (name, troop number, service unit number) of the volunteer you wish to recognize,
- For what volunteer role you are recognizing this person,
- How the volunteer has modeled the Girl Scout Promise and Law related to the requirements of the award,
- Additional documentation- this is optional (pictures, event programs, girl testimonies, etc.) You may submit up to five additional items to the community development manager at your regional Girl Scout Center. If you do not know who this is, please contact our Customer Care Team at 888.350.5090.

Award & Required Number Endorsements	Questions on Award Endorsement Forms
Green Badge of Courage Required - 2 Endorsement Forms	<p>Please describe the courageous act or challenge the volunteer faced during their Girl Scout volunteer service.</p> <p>Who has benefited from the volunteer's service while they were dealing with the challenge outlined above? What examples do you have of this impact?</p>
Service Team Star Required - 2 Endorsement Forms	<p>How has this volunteer's service gone above and beyond their appointed role's responsibilities as a service team member or administrative volunteer? Please address their work related to the boxes checked above.</p> <p>Who has benefited from the volunteer's service? (Please provide at least one specific example)</p>
Volunteer of Excellence Award Required - 2 Endorsement Forms	<p>How has this volunteer's service gone above and beyond their role's responsibilities in their partnership with girls?</p> <p>Describe how the volunteer used GSUSA resources in their volunteer's work with girls (Girl Scout Journeys, Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting, Volunteer Toolkit, or other GSUSA resource).</p> <p>How have girls benefited from the volunteer's service? What examples do you have of this impact?</p>
Appreciation Pin Required - 2 Endorsement Forms	<p>How has this volunteer's service gone above and beyond their role's responsibilities to serve at least one service unit?</p> <p>Who has benefited from the volunteer's service? What examples do you have of this impact? (Please provide at least one specific example.)</p>
Honor Pin Required - 3 Endorsement Forms	<p>How has this volunteer's service gone above and beyond their role's responsibilities to serve to at least two or more service units or program delivery audiences?</p> <p>Who has benefited from the volunteer's service? What examples do you have of this impact? (Please provide at least one example, from a minimum of two service units/program delivery audiences.)</p>
Thanks Badge & Thanks Badge II Required - 4 Endorsement Forms	<p>How has this volunteer's service been outstanding (above and beyond his/her role) and how has she/he benefited the entire council or Girl Scout Movement?</p> <p>Who has benefited from the volunteer's service? What examples do you have of this impact? (Please provide at least one example)</p>

***PINK** indicates Girl Scouts of Western Ohio awards

***GREEN** indicates GSUSA awards

The volunteer you are recognizing needs to be a current member in good standing with the organization and an approved and appointed volunteer with a current background check and a member during time of service addressed in the endorsement. If you are unsure, please call the Customer Care Team at 888.350.5090

Writing a Strong Endorsement

Volunteers are truly the heart of a Girl Scouts and are the reason girls are changing the world. Volunteers in Girl Scouts of Western Ohio work hard every day to provide a quality program to the girls. The GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Western Ohio award programs are designed to focus on what matters in Girl Scouting: The girls! It is an honor for a volunteer to be recognized among his/her peers and to receive one of the seven GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Western Ohio awards through the endorsement process.

All award endorsements (with the exception of the **Volunteer of Excellence award*) are reviewed by a volunteer selections committee. This committee is comprised of volunteers from across the council. They review each award endorsement and compare the information presented about the volunteer with the criteria established for each award. The information presented on the endorsement form is vital to the decision-making process of the volunteer selection committee. They only know what is presented in the award endorsement.

To help present strong, measurable and impactful information in the endorsement use the chart below to turn frequently used general statements into strong endorsement statements. The more detailed statements will inform the volunteer selection committee about the great work of the deserving volunteer and increase the likelihood of the award being approved.

General statement:	Think about this:	Stronger endorsement statement:
“She has been a leader for a long time and is committed to girls.”	How many years? What grade levels has she worked with? What has she done that shows her commitment to the girls?	“For 8 years, she led a mixed troop of both Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors. In those 8 years she has welcomed girls from three different schools. Her philosophy is “the girls need Girl Scouts, all the girls from grades 2 to 5 are welcomed in Troop 55555.”
“He is a great leader.”	What kind of leadership qualities has he exhibited with the girls? What makes him stand out?	“He believes in girl-led and continually brings leadership opportunities to girls. Each of the girls in his troop have an opportunity to be a leader throughout the year. They each take a month where they are responsible for leading the troop meeting, including organizing all aspects. The girls learn how to plan, speak in front of others, create an agenda, and lead a meeting.”
“She always goes above and beyond.”	How? Be specific. Tell a story that shows how she has gone above and beyond.	“Her troop was working on their Silver Award. She recognized that she did not have all the skills and knowledge to guide the girls successfully through the details. She recruited parents, service unit volunteers, leaders, and several local business owners from our community that all helped the girls work through the details of their Silver Award Take Action Project. The girls project resulted in the local park having a nature trail with 10 new bird houses, 4 miles of safe trails, and new maps for visitors to follow. The mayor attended the grand opening of the new park along with 500 community members “

The examples above show how the volunteer selection committee looks for details including impact and results. This takes a little more work; however, the details will give the volunteer selection committee what they need to make a good decision. The results will be that more volunteers will be appreciated!

In summary, strong endorsements:

- Provide detail and examples
- Give tangible numbers or results
- Demonstrate how they met criteria for the award
- Based exclusively on their work within the Girl Scout organization

***Because of the high volume of Volunteer of Excellence endorsements, the community development teams review and determine the recipients of the Volunteer of Excellence award. Selections are done fairly and based solely on the information provided in the endorsements.**

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who can endorse a volunteer for an award?

Anyone can! That's right, caregivers, girls, volunteers, and even a community member may endorse a volunteer for an award. The person who endorses a volunteer needs to know how the volunteer has impacted Girl Scouts or the community, the award criteria, and identify required number of award endorsements and persons to submit them.

Q. When and where are awards given to volunteers?

Volunteers are recognized with both the GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Western Ohio awards in front of their peers at service unit and circle appreciation events. These events are planned and implemented by volunteers and paid staff working together and usually take place in April and May. Volunteers receiving the Honor Pin, Thanks Badge and Thanks Badge II are invited to a dinner with the council CEO.

Q. Why does the volunteer need to be a registered member of Girl Scouts?

Girl Scouts is a membership organization, this means that to be considered an eligible volunteer for any volunteer role, being a currently registered member is required. In the *GSUSA Blue Book of Basic Documents*, it states "to participate in Girl Scouts you must be a member." Volunteers are participants; therefore, they must be a currently registered member and member during the time for which they are being recognized to qualify for any award or earned recognition.

Q. The award criteria states that the volunteer must be a member in good standing. What does this mean?

Any volunteer receiving an award must be following the council's policies and guidelines. As an award recipient, they are being held up as a role model. Good standing status means:

- The volunteer has met all eligibility for being an appointed volunteer including being a registered member and having a current background check (if their role requires one).
- The volunteer has no outstanding cases or concerns related to their service.

If you are unsure about whether or not the volunteer you want to nominate is in good standing, please call the council's Customer Care number: 888.350.5090.

Q. How are award recipients chosen?

A volunteer selection committee with representation from all regions across the council reviews the endorsement and makes a decision based on how the information presented fits the criteria for the award. If you would like to serve on this short-term volunteer committee, please call Customer Care at 888.350.5090.

Q. Volunteer endorsements are online only. What if I don't have access to the online forms?

We recognize that not everyone has easy access to the council website. If you need help in completing an endorsement form, there are a number of things you may do:

1. Go to any local Girl Scout center during business hours and use a computer provided by the center.
2. Coordinate an Endorsement Night for your circle or service unit. You will need internet access, a laptop, and information about each volunteer you wish to nominate. Make it fun, have everyone bring a snack to share.
3. Pair up with another volunteer who has access to the internet and complete the endorsement form together.
4. You may call our customer care team at 888.350.5090 and a member of the paid staff team may assist in the completion of an endorsement.

Q. What is the difference between a Girl Scout Membership Pin and the Years of Service Pin?

These two appreciations are earned recognitions by volunteers. They do not require an endorsement. The volunteer wishing to receive any of these two pins needs to complete the online request form.

Membership Year Pin—this is a numeral guard that is worn with the Girl Scout pin and recognizes the total amount of years as a girl and adult member. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio purchases this pin and distributes this to volunteers through the service unit.

Years of Service Pin—this is a pin that recognizes years of service as a volunteer. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio will purchase and distribute this pin for volunteer's who have served for 20 years or more. Pins for 5-15 years can be purchased at the council shop.

Q. What is the difference between the Service Team Star and the Appreciation pin?

The two awards recognize volunteers for outstanding service to a service unit.

Appreciation Pin—recognizes a volunteer for outstanding service to one service unit or geographic area. These volunteers can be a troop leader who planned a service unit wide event, a member of the service team who is outstanding in their role or even day camp volunteer. They are not required to have an appointed service team or administrative volunteer position.

Service Team Star—recognizes a volunteer who is currently or has been a service unit team member or appointed administrative volunteer, who has gone above and beyond their service unit's role to achieve one of their service unit's core responsibilities.

The major difference is that a volunteer who receives a Service Team Star must hold a service team position and a volunteer who receives the Appreciation Pin is not required to hold a service team position. Both recognize volunteers who have **gone above and beyond** their role while supporting the work of a service unit.

Q. Can a volunteer win the same award more than once?

Yes! Just like Meryl Streep and the Oscars, a volunteer can be nominated and win the same award more than once. However, the award must be for a new area or piece of work for which they were not previously nominated and received an award. For instance, if a volunteer received the Appreciation Pin for orchestrating an event for the service unit in 2017, she/he cannot be re-nominated for the work she/he did in 2017—the nomination should speak to new or different work.

Q. Can a staff member endorse a volunteer for an award?

The philosophy of the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Award process is that the volunteer appreciation award process should be driven by volunteers and all decisions related to the selections of awards is made by volunteers. This means that volunteers are endorsed by volunteers or community members and the review of endorsements and the decision for the awarding of recognitions is done by volunteers. We understand there are times when a volunteer's service was done in such a way that it would be difficult to complete the award requirements without a GSWO staff endorsement. In the event staff support is needed to complete the award requirements, an endorsement may be provided by staff. For example, the Appreciation Pin requires two endorsements; one may be provided by a paid staff member and the other must be provided by a volunteer or community member.

Q. Where do I find the online award endorsements?

Go to gswo.org then click on VOLUNTEERS>[VOLUNTEER AWARDS & RECOGNITION](#) and then click any of the drop down green arrows to find the award you are looking for.

All Award Endorsements and Pin Requests are Due February 1.