COMMUNITY SERVICE & TAKE ACTION PROJECTS

Follow these simple steps in order to plan a meaningful Take Action project with girls.

Step 1: Take Action Project vs. Community Service Project

Before a troop discusses which needs in their community they'd like to address with a Take Action Project it is important to know the difference between a community service project and a Take Action Project. While some community service projects address the immediate needs in the community, they only help for a short period of time. Take Action projects are lasting service projects that make long-term, measurable change.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT	TAKE ACTION PROJECT
• Addresses an immediate need	• Addresses a need, immediate or not
• Addresses a problem by working with or for a community partner	• Addresses the root cause of a problem by working with (not for) community partner(s)
• Makes community better for some people, right now	• Creates a lasting impact in the community
• Contribution to the community is usually, but not always, measurable	• Contribution to the community is always measurable
• Not usually long-lasting or continuous	• Discussions around sustainability long after girls' involvement in the project has ended

A Take Action Project _might_ be:

Measurable: The success of the project can be determined based on the number of people the project helped, the number of people who were involved, any reduction in the community's need and other concrete numbers.

Sustainable: Girls should discuss if their project creates lasting change. Girls can do this by collaborating with community leaders and/or organizations, building alliances with mentors, and inspiring others to keep change going. The Gold Award Project is the ONLY project to make arrangements for sustainability.

Community service projects are an important way for Girl Scouts to serve their community. However, Take Action projects make a lasting difference in the community and give girls even more opportunities to make their world a better place! If a troop chooses to do a Take Action project they can still participate in community service projects.

Issue	Community Service Project *(one-time effort has short-term impact)*	Take Action Project *(long-term benefits and sustainable support)*
Local food pantry needs help	Collect nonperishable food through a food drive at school	Collect food and also develop a recipe book of nutritious foods using simple ingredients — find local printing company to print several copies and give original to the food pantry to make more when needed
Local animal shelter needs supplies and volunteers	Hold food and toy drive in community	Create a marketing campaign — posters, radio spots, flyers, etc. — encouraging community to donate supplies and time to the shelter. Hold drive. Give all marketing materials to the shelter for use in future drives
An uninsured family's home is destroyed by a fire	Collect clothes, household goods and food for the family	Work with a local Habitat for Humanity and organize a work group to rebuild the family's home

Step 2: Use community mapping to help choose the Take Action Project

A community map is a drawing or list that shows a community's needs and resources, including contacts that might help girls when working on a Take Action Project.

Have girls draw a picture of their community—include resources such as the library, animal shelters, parks department, and more.

Next have the girls think about issues or problems in their community. Suggest that girls ask their parents, watch the local news, or simply take a good look around their community. These issues or problems may be small or large. Some examples may include: an old or unsafe playground at the local park, many stray cats that don't have a home, nothing for teens to do on the weekend, bullies at school, etc.

Make a list of the issues or problems the girls discovered in their community. Narrow this list to a few issues that the girls are interested in.

Research the issues further and discuss the resources girls can use to help them fill the community's need.

Have girls choose their Take Action Project.

Important: One key to a successful Take Action Project is to determine what the community needs are **before** creating the Take Action Project. There is nothing worse than creating a project, then finding out that it was not needed.

Step 3: Plan and go for it

Sit down with girls and determine what steps need to be taken to complete their Take Action Project. Discuss who will do each step of the project. Remember, this is a girl-led project, so step back as much as possible and only help when needed. Take time to write down each step and who is in charge, keep the project plan close at hand for easy reference. Look back to your list of community resources to see who may be able to help the group during the project.

Stuck at a certain step? Take a break and come back to it another day to see the project in a new way.

Step 4: Celebrate!

Once your project is complete, take time to celebrate. Plan a party or ceremony to talk about what the girls have achieved. Think about inviting community partners or family members. Your group may also want to post a video of your project on the council's Facebook page or tell your story via **girlscoutsoc.org/stories**.

The benefits of Take Action projects go far beyond the reach of the project itself. Not only does the community see sustainable changes, girls will develop strong leadership skills that will help them throughout their lifetimes. As the community sees how girls are changing the world through Girl Scouts, they will want to get involved as volunteers, and may even want to serve as project advisors on other Take Action projects.

Questions?
Need more information?

Contact Customer Care at **customercare@girlscoutsoc.org** or call 949-461-8800.

Don't know where to start? Need some inspiration?

Access the Organizations That Help list on our website for a listing of organizations that troops have partnered with for their projects.

Animals
- Local humane societies
- Local farms
- Dog rescues
- Kindred Kitties
- Local Zoos
- OC Animal Care
- Orange County Humane Society
- Wolf Haven International

Arts
- Bowers Museum
- Muckenthaller cultural Center
- Orange County Historical Society
- Segerstrom Center for the Arts

Community
- Habitat for Humanity
- OneOC

Education
- California Department of Education
- Local libraries
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving
- THINK Together

Human interest
- Local food pantries
- Local churches
- Local veteran's home
- Local parks
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- Families Forward
- Make a Wish Foundation
- Goodwill
- Orange County Office on Aging
- The Salvation Army

Family/children
- Local nursing homes
- Local YMCA
- Local women's centers
- Orange County Rescue Mission
- Ronald McDonald House

Environmental
- County parks
- Local parks and recreation departments
- Local nature centers

Health
- Local hospitals
- American Cancer Society/Relay for Life
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- American Red Cross
- OC Health Care Agency
- Laura's House
- Human Options

STEM
- BioNerds
- Discovery Cube Orange County
- Society of Women Engineers