



## Girl Scout Volunteer Take Action Guide

### What's the difference between a community service project and a Take Action project?

**Community Service** makes the world better by addressing a problem “right now.” For example, collecting cans of food for a food pantry feeds people “right now.” Gathering toys for a homeless family shelter makes kids happy “right now.” Providing clothing and toiletries to people after a fire or flood helps them “right now.” These acts of kindness are important ways to help people—right now.

**Take Action** encourages girls to develop a project that is sustainable. That means that the problem *continues* to be addressed, even after the project is over. Sustainability simply means coming up with a solution that lasts.

For example, girls might want to do something about trash in a local park. If they go to the park and pick up trash, they've solved the problem for today—but there will be more trash to pick up tomorrow.

Instead, girls could explore *why* there's so much trash. Here's what they might discover:

1. There aren't enough trash cans in the park.
2. The trash cans are hard to find.
3. People have to walk out of their way to throw away trash because of where the cans are placed.
4. People don't realize the importance of putting trash in the trashcans.

Here's how girls might address these issues:

Issues 1–3: Make a presentation to the city council to report on their findings and make suggestions for improvement, such as adding more trash cans or moving them to more visible or convenient positions.

Issue 4: Create a public awareness campaign that encourages people to use the trash cans instead of littering.

### What are the steps of a Take Action project?

Girls team up to:

- Identify a problem
- Come up with a sustainable solution
- Develop a team plan
- Put the plan into action
- Reflect on what they learned



**Keep it girl-led:** Girls should actively participate in each step in order for this to be girl-led. Younger girls will need more guidance, but they can and should decide as a team what problem they want to address.

### How do girls make their project sustainable?

**Here are three ways to create sustainable change:**

1. Make your solution permanent.
2. Educate and inspire others to be part of the change.
3. Change a rule, regulation or law.

Here are some specific examples you can use to help girls understand what sustainable Take Action projects look like.

**Keep it girl-led:** These examples are intended to give a sense of what a Take Action project could look like at different grade levels. Please do **not** choose a project from this list for girls to do! If girls are told what to do, they won't learn key leadership skills, such as decision-making, compromise, conflict resolution, and teamwork.

**Issue:** We could conserve water if more people collected rainwater and used it to water plants.

**Solution 1:** *Make it permanent.*

Make rain collection devices for family or friends that can be installed in their yards. Give them a list of different ways to use rainwater and how they're helping the Earth.

**Solution 2:** *Educate and inspire others.*

Create a handout, video tutorial, or show-and-tell presentation about how to make a rain collection device and how to use rainwater—and how that helps the Earth.

**Issue:** Parents often run their engines outside the school as they wait to pick up or drop off their children, which pollutes the air.

**Solution:** *Change a rule, regulation or law.*

Make a presentation to the school board or administrators about why this is a problem and suggest a new rule that makes the pick-up/drop-off area a "no idling" zone.

**Issue:** There's no sidewalk along a street near the elementary school, which makes it dangerous for children to walk home.

**Solution:** *Make it permanent.*

Make a presentation to the city council about the problem and suggest that they build a sidewalk.

**Note:** Even if the council doesn't vote to create a sidewalk, the girls have earned their Take Action award because they came up with a sustainable solution and took action through their presentation.

**Extra Inspiration:** Do an online search for "Girl Scout Brownies Convince City Hall to Build Sidewalk."



**Issue:** There have been several accidents at a busy intersection that doesn't have a stoplight.

**Solution:** *Make it permanent.*

Research the number of accidents and make a presentation to the city council, asking that they have a stoplight installed.

**Issue:** The local park doesn't have a swing for children with disabilities.

**Solution:** *Make it permanent.*

Make a presentation to the city council explaining the problem and offering to use troop money from the cookie sale to help pay for the swing.

**Extra Inspiration:** Do an online search for "How One Brownie Troop Became Social Entrepreneurs."

**Issue:** We should recognize women who have helped their communities and made the world a better place in all kinds of ways.

**Solution:** *Educate and inspire others.*

Research the "hidden figures" in your community (unsung women who've done great things). Create a display about their accomplishments for a library or community center.

**Issue:** The local shelter is having a hard time getting rescue animals adopted.

**Solution:** *Educate and inspire others.*

Use your photography skills to create pet portraits for the shelter's website. Use your writing skills to craft heart-warming bios for each portrait.

### 33 Ways to Take Action

1. Make and install something outside (benches, bird houses, dog run, ropes course, sensory trail, Little Library, etc.)
2. Plant something (butterfly garden, tree, wind chime garden, etc.)
3. Make something inside (Maker Space, reading room, etc.)
4. Create a collection (children's books children's hospital or family shelter, oral histories for town museum, etc.)
5. Advocate for building a permanent community improvement (sidewalk, bridge, park, streetlights, stoplight, walking trail, etc.)
6. Do a show-and-tell
7. Create a poster campaign
8. Perform a skit
9. Make a "how to" handout
10. Draw a comic
11. Give a speech
12. Write and perform a song
13. Make an animated movie



14. Make a live-action movie
15. Make a presentation
16. Create a workshop (perhaps in partnership with a local business or organization) to teach a skill such as coding, camping, canoeing, robotics, sewing, car care, healthy eating, gardening, home repair, budgeting, etc.
17. Create a workshop to teach others about healthy living (exercise, nutrition, mental health, etc.)
18. Create a social media campaign
19. Make video tutorials to teach a skill
20. Organize an email campaign
21. Organize a petition
22. Organize an event (concert, play, poetry slam, art exhibit, sporting event, field day) to raise awareness about an issue
23. Make a “playbook” to help others follow your lead (how to mentor robotics teams, organize a workshop or event, advocate with city council, create an online petition, change a law, etc.)
24. Make an app that helps people take action on an issue
25. Create a website
26. Write an op-ed or letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine
27. Start a blog
28. Make a presentation to your school principal
29. Make a presentation to your school board
30. Make a presentation to your city council
31. Speak up at your representative’s town hall meeting
32. Create an online petition
33. Advocate for a law with your state government

### **Need other ideas?**

Check out “Girls Changing the World” on the GSUSA website [<http://www.girlscouts.org/en/for-girls/girls-changing-the-world.html>]. Girls post their Take Action and Bronze/Silver/Gold Award projects on this site. You can search by project topic or grade level. (And after the troop has done their project, please post it so they can inspire other girls!)