girl scouts
greater los angeles

GSUSA National & Council Volunteer Awards Recognition Handbook

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

2025 - Revised

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Introduction of Awards

To Our Volunteers:

Thank you for helping the council recognize the many outstanding volunteers that contribute to our success. There are many ways to show your appreciation and say thank you; one of which is through the formal council-level awards. *Anyone*, including parents, troop leaders, staff members, and service unit team members can nominate a volunteer for an award. Honorees are recognized at the Annual Meeting and Volunteer Recognition Ceremony.

At the national level, volunteers can be nominated for:

- Appreciation Pin
- Honor Pin
- Thanks Badge
- Thanks Badge II

At the council level, volunteers can be nominated for:

- Platinum Service Award
- Heart in Hand Pin

Additional national council volunteer awards:

- Numeral Guard – 30 years+
- Years of Service – 25 years+

All nomination forms are available as eForms on the GSGLA website on the Volunteer Recognitions page when the nomination period is open from October through December.

The Nomination Process is as easy as 1-2-3.

1. **Decide which award is appropriate for the service.**
    - Refer to the reference sheet to determine impact of service.
    - Include specific information that relates to the service and its scope of impact.
    - Gather candidate's contact information including address, phone number, email, and service unit.
    - Submit nomination only through council's eForm.

2. **Gather the contact information for supporting endorsements.**
    - Notify the contacts that you have submitted their information to support the nomination.
    - Provide their contact information such as name, email address, and phone number.
    - Supporting endorsements vary by award. Please enter appropriate number of contacts to fulfill this requirement.
    - **Supporting endorsements must be from someone other than the person submitting the nomination.**

3. **Submit the nomination via the eForm.**
    - Deadline to submit is the first Friday in December.
    - Supporting endorsements will receive an email to submit by second Friday in December via eForm.

Helpful Tips

1. The Adult Recognitions Committee can only consider information included in the eForm and the accompanying supporting endorsements. Keep in mind the nomination is being reviewed by a committee that may not know the individual.

2. Each nomination is considered on its own merit and is not rated against other nominations. The best nominations and endorsements include as much supporting information as possible. Facts and figures help the Committee see the nominee in the best light**.** **IMPORTANT**: The facts should be relevant to the award being nominated.

3. It is recommended that there are at least three years between nominations of an individual.

4. Although we want to recognize our volunteers frequently, we also want to make the awards truly meaningful. The awards are not meant as steppingstones to another award. Volunteers should be recognized for their service and then nominated for additional awards for additional bodies of work.

What are GSGLA's Goals?

The awards mentioned in this booklet state a requirement of "Has significantly contributed to meeting one or more council goals in membership growth and retention, fund development, or increased community visibility." Here are some ideas and examples of what each of those mean:

Retention of membership –Here are examples of meeting this council goal:

- A Service Unit offers a successful series of mini workshops on how to run a Brownie troop which resulted in Daisy leaders and their troops staying interested in the program and continuing to the next level.
- A successful event such as a Service Unit Skatebash kept a troop interested in continuing next year.

Community visibility – This can be anything that has Girl Scouts out in the community in a significant way:

- A volunteer who holds a Girl Scout summer camp at a local park where Girl Scouts are seen daily.
- A volunteer who organizes and conducts a community service project with her troop and several other troops would be examples of community visibility.

Fund Development – This can be anything that has raised money for Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles

- A volunteer who hosted an event to benefit GSGLA.
- A volunteer who is on the service unit team and increased the service unit's giving 25% over the previous year.

Awards at a Glance

Name of Award	Description	When is due and what is required?
Numeral Guard	Recognizes the number of combined years as a girl and adult member. Presented at the council level for 30 years or more as a registered Girl Scout. Pin is in five-year increments up to 85 years.	Fill out nomination eForm before first Friday in December.
Years of Service	Recognizes the number of years as an adult Girl Scout volunteer. Presented at the council for 25 years or more. Pin is in five-year increments up to 40 years. Increments of 10 years after 40 years and up to 60 years.	Fill out eForm before first Friday in December.
Appreciation Pin	Recognizes outstanding service to at least one Service Unit or Program Delivery.	Fill out eForm before first Friday in December. Requires two Supporting Endorsements.
Honor Pin	Recognizes outstanding service to two or more Service Units or geographic areas of service.	Fill out eForm before first Friday in December. Requires three Supporting Endorsements.
Platinum Service Award	Recognizes outstanding service to a Service Unit, a region, or the Council for at least three years since receiving the Appreciation Pin and either Honor Pin or Thanks Badge.	Fill out eForm before first Friday in December. Requires three Supporting Endorsements.
Thanks Badge	Highest honor in Girl Scouts. Recognizes outstanding service in a leadership role to the Council or entire Girl Scout Movement over the last four years.	Fill out eForm before first Friday in December. Requires four Supporting Endorsements.
Thanks Badge II	Recognizes a previous Thanks Badge award recipient who has continued to provide outstanding service to the Council or National Girl Scout organization for at least three years after receiving the Thanks Badge.	Fill out eForm before first Friday in December. Requires four Supporting Endorsements.

Award Descriptions

Appreciation Pin

- Candidate has significantly contributed to meeting one or more council goals in membership growth and retention, fund development, or increased community visibility **in one geographic area such as a service unit.**
- Actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.
- Two Supporting Endorsements must be submitted to complete the nomination.

Examples of nominees:

1. *A service unit manager whose management of a service unit or a geographic area has resulted in an increase in membership and/or retention over several years.*
2. *A volunteer that has served for several years on a service unit team and has exceeded the expectations of the position.*
3. *A manager of a successful product sale.*

Additional example of candidate:

At an event, a Troop Leader noticed that the diversity of the girls did not match the diversity of the community. She talked with her council staff and found that they had identified a potential for membership increase among the communities in her area. She partnered with the staff recruitment specialist to create and implement recruitment strategies to reach both girls and adults and new ways of working to support new members. As a result, girl membership rose by 14 percent and adult membership by 15 percent last year. While those new members participated in series and camps, 78 percent of them participated in troops.

Honor Pin

- Candidate has significantly contributed to meeting one or more council goals in membership growth and retention, fund development, or increased community visibility **in two or more service units.**
- Actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.
- Three Supporting Endorsements must be submitted to complete the nomination.

Examples of nominees:

1. *A volunteer who has collaborated with local businesses to implement a program that assists underserved Girl Scouts.*
2. *A volunteer that implements a series of events and activities, bringing together girls from neighboring areas.*
3. *A volunteer who holds a successful area-wide summer day camp*
4. *An Adult Educator who consistently provides outstanding enrichment and leadership development sessions to volunteers working directly with girls in two or more pathways.*

Additional example of candidate:

A Facilitator realized that although the council created online courses and resources on the GSLE, at volunteer meetings she heard comments indicating that many volunteers still were hesitant to use the Volunteer Toolkit to help them deliver program to Girl Scouts. She worked with the Membership department to develop a GSLE Coach role, which would support all direct-service volunteers as they implemented what they learned in the courses and put into action. This role was piloted in four service units where, after the first year, badge criteria downloaded via the Volunteer Toolkit increased by 60 percent; Girl Scouts shared the impact of 14 new take-action projects via the council's website; and the volunteer-satisfactions scores increased by 12 percent.

Platinum Service Award (GSGLA Council specific)

- Candidate has significantly contributed to meeting one or more council goals in membership growth and retention, fund development, or increased community visibility **serving their Service Unit or a region or the entire council for at least three years since receiving the Appreciation Pin and either Honor Pin or Thanks Badge.**
- Actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.
- Three Supporting Endorsements must be submitted to complete the nomination.

Examples of nominees:

1. *A volunteer who has been a highly evaluated Council Adult Educator for several years.*
2. *A volunteer who chairs an annual Service Unit event that is well-evaluated over the last several years*
3. *A Service Unit Manager who, year after year, organizes for their region a successful fundraising event to benefit the entire council.*

Thanks Badge

- Highest honor in Girl Scouts.
- Has provided outstanding service that benefits the total council or entire Girl Scout movement.
- Has taken a leadership role at the council level in one or more of the following areas **during the previous four years**:
  - Increasing membership growth and retention.
  - Increasing the percentage of adult-generated funding in the total council income.
  - Increasing innovative program opportunities council wide.
  - Developing broad participation in policy-influencing through the democratic process.
  - Ensuring that inclusive behavior is recognized, understood, and practiced at all levels.
- The service is so significantly beyond expectations that no other award is appropriate.
- Four Supporting Endorsements must be submitted to complete the nomination.

Examples of possible nominees:

1. *The director of a successful council-wide initiative that results in increased retention of girls and/or adults. This opportunity also resulted in significant positive publicity for the council and the entire Girl Scout movement.*
2. *A volunteer that helps establish a successful collaboration with a local business and/or youth serving agency that results in increased program opportunities for girls in all parts of the council.*
3. *A volunteer who establishes a new or revised component for the council's fund development initiatives which surpasses expectations and goals.*
4. *A volunteer who plays a policy decision-making role at a consistently high level and attracts broad participation in policy-influencing through the democratic process.*
5. *A volunteer who has provided expansion of council training teams and opportunities that resulted in a significant increase in training effectiveness and participation council wide.*

Additional example of candidate:

A volunteer saw an opportunity to use the new outdoor badges to increase membership in one of the council's target markets through the camp pathway. She helped the council partner with local companies and groups to provide in-kind, financial, and volunteer support to build a Take-Action Tree House at each camp. She led a task group of girls to design and develop progressive programming, based on girl-led processes and badge content, which culminated in take-action projects. The three-year project brought in 300 new Girl Scouts, a 5 percent overall increase in camp registrations the following year, 90 new volunteers, and new partnerships with 11 local organizations.

Thanks Badge II

- Since the receipt of the Thanks Badge, the candidate has continued to take a leadership role at the GSGLA council level. This distinguished service has been demonstrated by continuing to perform at the same high level, increasing the sphere of influence, or using skills and talents to move into another field of endeavor **during the previous three years**.
- The service benefits the total council or entire Girl Scout movement. The service is outstanding and significantly beyond expectations that no other award is appropriate.
- Four Supporting Endorsements must be submitted to complete the nomination.

Examples of possible nominees:

1. *A council Adult Educator who, after directing council-wide adult enrichment events successfully, implements a state-wide or Southern California training event.*
2. *A program consultant who, after developing math and science activities for girls' council-wide serves as a director for a math and science event with multiple councils.*
3. *A board member whose continuous, strong leadership in fund development has resulted in greater financial stability for GSGLA.*

Additional example of candidate:

After receiving the Thanks Badge, the volunteer from the Thanks Badge example above was motivated by the success of the Take-Action Tree House project and submitted this best practice at a GSUSA conference. She then served on a national task group for two years to help educate and support all 111 other councils to create long-term plans that integrate all council departments to implement the camp pathway to grow membership and deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. (GSLE)

Heart in Hand Pin (GSGLA Council specific)

- Candidate or organization has significantly contributed outstanding service that benefits the council or multiple service units.
- The award may be given to an adult member, non-member, or community organization.
- Service must have been provided in a role other than a leader or co-leader and benefited the council or more than one service unit.
- Nominee is skilled in their expertise.
- Nominee has not received this award in the past three years.
- Requires submitting a letter describing the nature of the nominee's service.

Examples of possible nominees:

1. *A volunteer who has dedicated a significant amount of time and energy to Girl Scouts impacting the mission-delivery goals and priorities for the council and the Girl Scout Movement.*
2. *An organization who partners with GSGLA to implement and deliver innovative badge-focused programs.*

How to Write a Nomination

Be Specific:

The form asks you to describe the service rendered and who benefited. Include how the candidate actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.

Uninformative Example:
Sally Jones should receive the award because she is always organized and is great with parent volunteers. We are all very fond of her and are willing to be under her leadership.

Informative Example:
Sally Jones should receive the award because she is a great example of adult volunteer leadership to both girls and adults. Under her leadership, ten parents are actively volunteering with troop functions. She recently delegated event preparation details to us while she was out of town for a few weeks. Because she sends regular troop volunteer emails about the bank account status, upcoming adventures, year-to-date troop goals progress, and continuing volunteer needs, we feel informed and organized to step up to the leadership challenge! Sally is always showing thanks for our support to the troop. When she came back from her trip, she showed thanks to us at the Service Unit meeting by organizing a potluck in recognition of her troop volunteers who provide her with endless support. Other troop leaders at the meeting were taking notes on all her great ideas!

Avoid using only "feel good" statements: Provide concrete facts rather than opinions.

Uninformative Example:
Mary Smith is good with cookies with her Cadette troop. When she took over as Service Unit Cookie Chair when the previous volunteer resigned, it was a successful sale.

Informative Example
When the Service Unit Cookie Chair resigned, Mary Smith volunteered to help. She has worked with the cookies for several years and was able to adapt to the service unit level. She processed 19,000 packages of cookies without any errors. Through skillful management techniques, her service unit achieved 100% troop participation, and increased cookie sales by 40%.

Show Results: How is the service measurable?

Uninformative Example:
Brenda Garcia provided excellent training to our volunteers.

Informative Example:
Brenda Garcia not only provided excellent First Aid training to the volunteers in the area, she was called upon at the last minute when the assigned trainer became ill. Because of her volunteer service, 20 new recruits became certified in First Aid and CPR.

Questions on the Nomination eForm

Appreciation and Honor

1. Describe the service rendered and who benefited. Include how the candidate actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.
2. How did this service significantly contribute to one or more council goals in membership growth and retention, fund development (including but not limited to alumnae, product sales, etc...) or increased community visibility.
3. Give the reasons this service was beyond expectations of the position held (outstanding service).

Platinum Service Award

1. Describe service rendered and how it benefited the Service Unit; include position title(s) and dates.
2. Describe service rendered and in what way it benefited the Region or entire Council, include position title(s) and dates.
3. Give the reasons this service was beyond expectations of the position held to provide outstanding service.
4. In what way did this service set a positive example for others of what it means to be a Girl Scout adult.

Thanks Badge and Thanks Badge II

1. Describe the service rendered and how the entire Council or Girl Scout Movement benefited. Include how the candidate has taken a leadership role at the council level during the previous four years in one or more of the following areas: membership, adult-generated funding, innovative programs, influencing policy, and inclusive behavior.
2. Give the reasons this service was beyond expectations of the position held to provide outstanding service.

Questions on the Supporting Endorsement eForm

1. Share how long you have known the candidate and how you both became connected with Girl Scouts.
2. Describe how the candidate has met the level of service for the recognition they are being nominated for. Include examples of the candidate's performance showing they went beyond what others in the position have done.
3. Explain how the candidate's contributions have benefited Girl Scouting.
4. Please add any additional comments that are relevant to the scope of work or recognition that could be helpful.

Frequently Asked Questions

How often are adult recognitions presented?

Formal presentation of National and Council Awards are presented each year at the Annual Meeting and Volunteer Recognition Ceremony that takes place in-person in April. Information provided on the Volunteer Recognitions page.

Who can nominate for a National and Council level award?

Nominations for awards can be made by any person who has knowledge of the service performed. This includes volunteers, parents, community members, and staff. Please look at the descriptions of each type of award above for more information on the criteria for each award.

What is the difference between the Numeral Guard and Years of Service?

The Numeral Guard is for the number of years a person has been a member of the Girl Scout organization, including years as a girl member. The Years of Service Award is given for the number of years of volunteer service as an active, registered adult member.

Can I submit the eForm to receive the Numeral Guard or Years of Service Pins?

Yes. You may submit the eForm with the required information to be awarded the national pins. No nomination or endorsements are needed for these awards. Council presents the Numeral Guard at 30+years and Years of Service at 25+ years.

When do I need to have the nomination submitted?

Nomination period opens in October and closes the first Friday in December. Supporting endorsements are due on the second Friday in December.

When does the candidate receive the news?

Honorees will be notified with a congratulatory call by committee members. If for some reason the award criteria were not met, the nominator will be notified of an alternate award or other recommendations. The candidate will not be notified they were nominated.

Is there a tribute book that displays honorees?

Yes. There is a Volunteer Recognition Tribute Book highlighting volunteers' contributions.

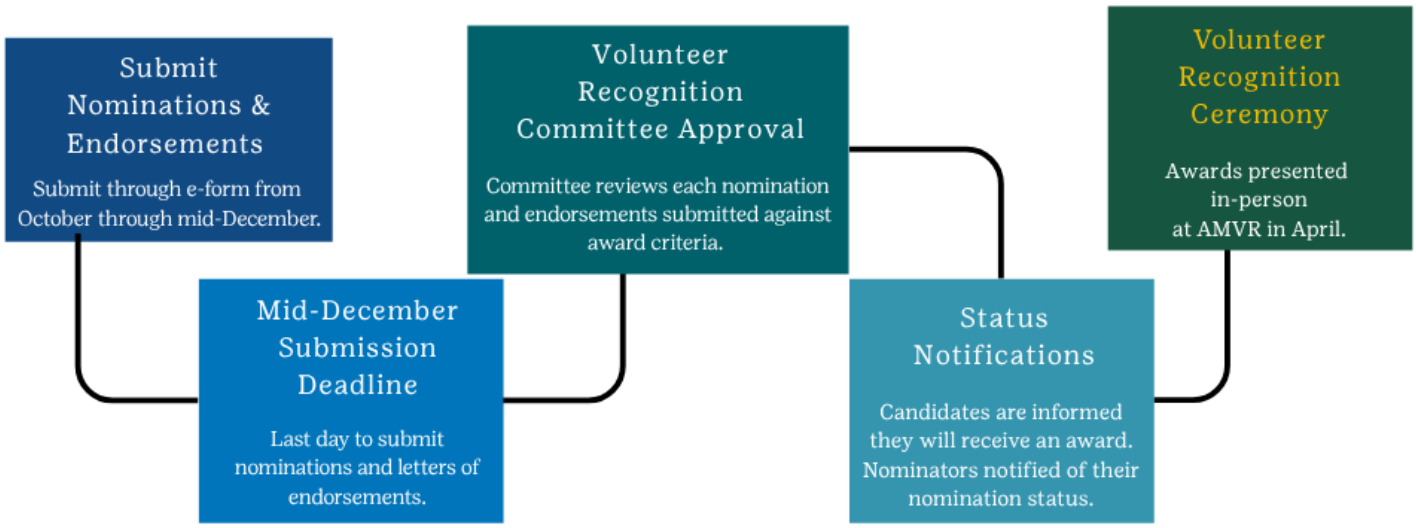
Can staff be nominated for an award?

No. These awards are for volunteer members only.

National & Council Awards Timeline

Key Dates:

- October - Nomination period opens.
- December - Nomination/Endorsement period closes.
- January - Adult Recognitions Committee Review.
- February - Candidates & Nominators notified.
- March - Awardee Invitations are sent.
- April - Recognition Ceremony

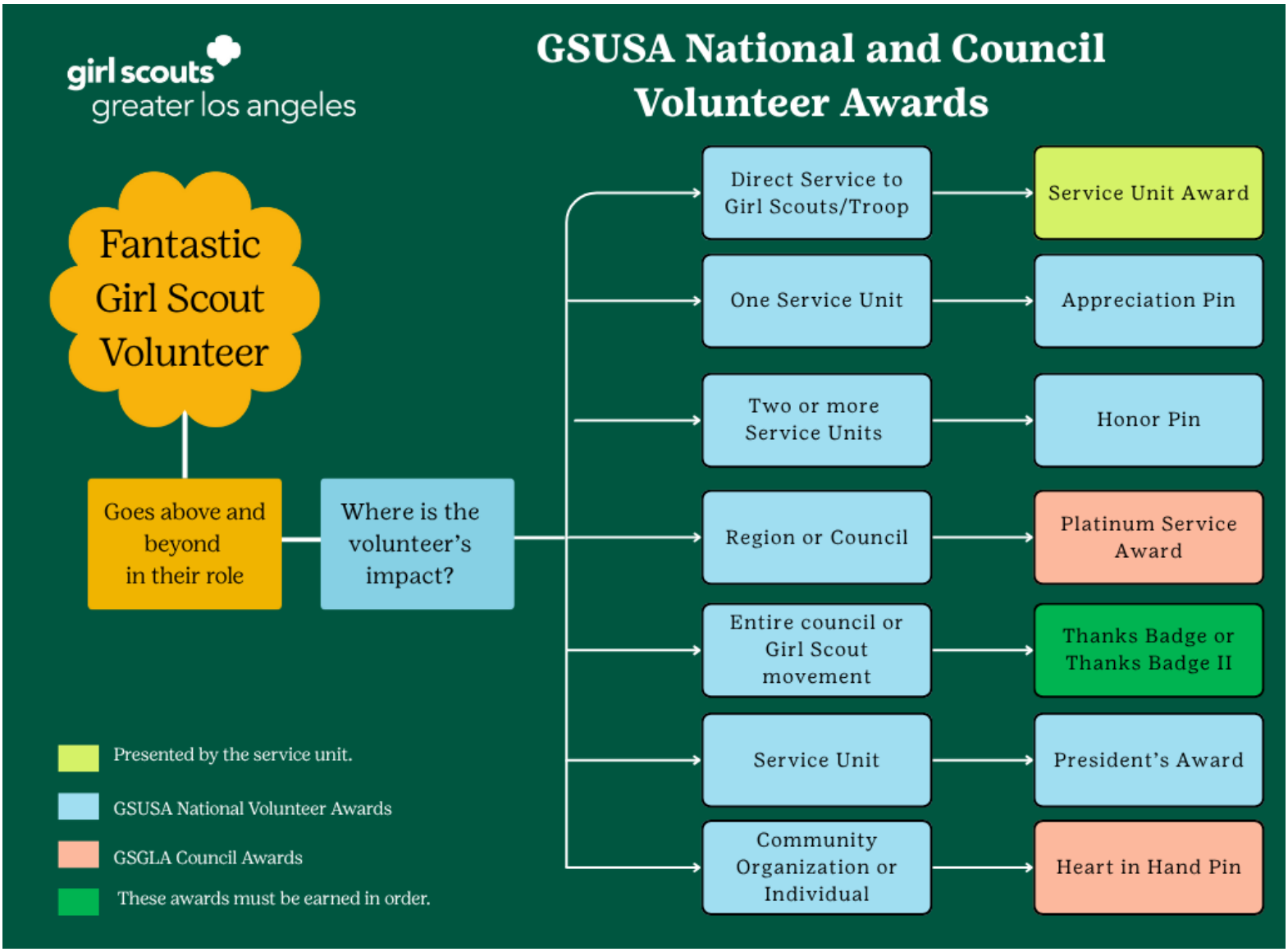


How and when can I submit a nomination?

Nomination forms must be submitted via the nomination e-form and received by the first Friday in December. Endorsements must be received by the second Friday in December.

For more information, review the Adult Recognitions Handbook at girlscoutsla.org or contact adultrecognitions@girlscoutsla.org.

Volunteer Awards Reference Guide



GSUSA National Volunteer Awards

The **Appreciation Pin** recognizes a registered Girl Scout volunteer's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This service, which has had measurable impact on one service unit or geographic areas of service, helps reach and surpass the mission-delivery goals of the area.

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer whose service is above and beyond the expectations for the position held.
- The nominee has made an impact on one geographic area within the council's jurisdiction.
- Requires one nomination and two letters of endorsement.

The **Honor Pin** recognizes a registered Girl Scout volunteer's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This service, which has had measurable impact on two or more service units or geographic areas of service, allowing the council to reach and surpass its mission-delivery goals.

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer whose service is above and beyond the expectations for the position(s) held.
- The nominee has made an impact on two or more geographic areas within the council's jurisdiction.
- Requires one nomination and three letters of endorsement.

The **Thanks Badge** is the highest honor in Girl Scouts. It honors a registered Girl Scout volunteer whose ongoing commitment, leadership, and service have had an exceptional, measurable impact on meeting the mission-delivery goals and priorities of the entire council or entire Girl Scout movement.

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer.
- The outstanding service performed by the nominee resulted in outcomes that benefited the total council or the entire Girl Scout organization and is so significantly above and beyond the call of duty that no other award would be appropriate.
- This award is based on taking a leadership role during the previous four years.
- Requires one nomination and four letters of endorsement.

The **Thanks Badge II** recognizes a previous Thanks Badge award recipient who has continued to provide exemplary service in a leadership role significantly above and beyond the call of duty, resulting in a measurable impact that benefits the entire Girl Scout movement.

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer.
- The nominee has received the Thanks Badge.
- This award is based on taking a leadership role during the previous three years.
- Requires one nomination and four letters of endorsement.

The **President's Award** (certificate) recognizes the efforts of a service unit or service-delivery team whose exemplary service to enhance Girl Scouting in its community during a membership year. This achievement requires teamwork, dedication, and focus from every member of the service unit or service-delivery team, as well as the troop leaders.

- All team members are registered Girl Scout volunteers and have met all requirements and expectations of the positions held.
- The service unit has significantly contributed to one or more of the council's mission-delivery goals.
- The service unit recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusive behavior.
- Requires meeting the criteria listed in the President's Award worksheet online.

GSGLA Council Level Recognition Awards

The **Platinum Service Award** (council level) recognizes a registered Girl Scout volunteer's exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This service, which has had measurable impact on a service unit, region, or council, allowing the council to reach and surpass its mission-delivery goals.

- The nominee is an active, registered Girl Scout volunteer whose service is above and beyond the expectations for the position(s) held.
- The nominee has made an impact on a service unit, a region, or council for at least three years since receiving the Appreciation Pin and either Honor Pin or Thanks Badge within the council's jurisdiction.
- Requires one nomination and three letters of endorsement.

The **Heart in Hand Pin** (council level) recognizes outstanding service that benefits the council or multiple service units. The award may be given to an adult Girl Scout member, non-member, or community organization that has given meaningful and outstanding service to Girl Scouts.

- Service must have been provided in a role other than a leader or co-leader and benefited the council or more than one service unit.
- Nominee is skilled in their expertise.
- Nominee has not received this award in the past three years.
- Requires submitting a letter describing the exemplary nature of the nominee's service.

Additional National Council Volunteer Awards

Numeral Guard & Years of Service Pin

The **Numeral Guard Pin** recognizes the number of combined years as a girl and adult member.

- Council presents the Numeral Guard Pin for 30 years or more.
- Pin is in 5 year increments up to 85 years.
- Requires submitting the nomination e-form. No endorsement is necessary.

The **Years of Service Pin** recognizes the number of years as an adult Girl Scout volunteer.

- Council presents the Years of Service Pin for 25 years or more.
- Pin is in 5 year increments up to 40 years. Increments of 10 years after 40 years and up to 60 years.
- Requires submitting the nomination e-form. No endorsement is necessary.

How to Write a Strong Nomination

We want to know how fabulous your award nominees are so we can recognize them! This page shows how a statement, with a little thought, can become a stronger nomination statement for the Adult Recognition Committee's review.

Make sure to include:

- How the nominee met the award criteria.
- Describe specific accomplishments.
- Show the impact the nominee has had in the service unit, region, and/or council.
- How the nominee has exceeded expectations for their role.
- Growth - describe nominee's new accomplishments and service since they received their last award.

Initial Statement:	Thoughtfully Consider:	Strong Nomination Statement:
"She is a great leader."	What kind of leadership qualities does she bring? What makes her stand out?	"She continually brings leadership opportunities to Girl Scouts. She encourages a girl-led approach by allowing Girl Scouts to vote on and implement their activities."
"She always goes above and beyond."	Be specific! Tell a story about the great benefits those around her receive due to her efforts.	Her troop voted to start the Outdoor Art Badges. Because she has never considered herself a "creative soul" when it came to artistic endeavors, she recruited parents and artists for her troop to draw from. As a result, the Girl Scouts have had a great time meeting community experts and discovering parent talent in their own troop. Now they have several opportunities for Take Action Projects.
She has been the best day camp administrator we have ever had.	Be specific! Tell a story about the support given to the troops, volunteers, and how the service unit benefited.	For the past ten years this fabulous volunteer has headed up a day camp that supports 200-300 Girl Scouts. At point the camp was in danger of being canceled until this volunteer stepped in and started an email and phone campaign to recruit the needed volunteers to hold the camp.