

**girl scouts**   
of the desert southwest  
southern new mexico  
& west texas

# Girl Scout Volunteer Award Guide



# Adult Recognition

It is nice to be recognized for good things. When people recognize us, it feels like they care we are here and they value our contributions.

People volunteer for all sorts of reasons, but most volunteers want to do a good job and to make a positive difference. When volunteers know their time and energy are appreciated and that we all value them, they commit themselves to Girl Scouts. They want to know their service is helping the greater good, making the world a better place. That means our recognition is one of the most powerful ways we can retain the invaluable women and men who volunteer for Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest.

Three Keys to successfully recognizing volunteers are:



## Best Practices

Doing a "good job" and putting in many hours is certainly worth thanks, it does not necessarily indicate performance above and beyond the expectations of the position being held.

## Focus on Service

Focus refers to the areas or groups benefiting from the service. In many cases, a volunteer works with a troop, and/or coordinates Service Unit events, and/or participates on a council-wide committee or task group. To help determine which award is appropriate, review award descriptions and criteria on pages 19-23.

## Impact of Service

When you consider impact, consider both the number of years in a position and the results of a person's service. Length of time in a position, while always deserving of appreciation, does not necessarily justify an official award. The results of service are more important than length of service, but often it takes some time in a position before the person can achieve truly outstanding results or meet the requirements of the award.

# Council Award Requirements

**Nomination deadline: Tuesday, September 30, 2025**

## **Award Presentation**

Council level awards are presented at the annual Ceremony of Honors held in December of each year. Awardees are notified that they will be honored, but the awards are kept secret until the presentation at the event!

## **Who Can Submit Nominations**

Girl Scout Volunteers

Girl Scouts

Community Members

Council Staff

## **Nomination Criteria for all Awards**

- Service performed was between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025 (except for the PVSA).
- The candidate was an active, registered Girl Scout member for the year of nomination in good standing.
- The candidate can be involved at any level of volunteering, from parent helpers to service unit team members, to council volunteers.
- The candidate encourages each of our members and shows progression as a leader in their role.
- The candidate actively recognizes, understands, and practices the values of inclusivity. They live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law in word and deed.
- The service performed is above and beyond the expectations for the position held.

## **How to Submit a Nomination**

- Review all award descriptions and requirements in the Girl Scout Volunteer Award Guide.
- Fully complete and submit the Nomination Form (linked in each award description)

## **Nomination Review Process**

The Adult Recognition Committee is comprised of volunteers and staff from throughout GSDSW territory. They review each nomination and endorsement and compare the information presented about the volunteer with the criteria established for each award. They only know what is presented in the completed nominations. Upon review, they will:

- Approve the candidate for nominated award or,
- Approve the candidate for a different award or,
- Deny the award. In a case where there is no indication given that the candidate's service met the award criteria, the nomination could be denied.

The committee decisions are sent to the GSDSW Board of Directors for final approval. Upon final approval, you will be notified regarding the status of your nomination.

# How to write a Nomination

## Be Specific:

The form asks you to describe a service provided that meets the qualifications of the award, be very descriptive.

### *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 of her great ideas!

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

### *Uninformative Example*

Mary Smith is really 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 an excellent training to our volunteers.

### *Informative Example*

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

If you have any questions about nominating someone, please contact us at [info@gsdsw.org](mailto:info@gsdsw.org)

ATTN: Awards

Nomination deadline: Tuesday, September 30, 2025

## GSUSA Awards

### Volunteer of Excellence Pin



### Honor Pin



### Appreciation Pin



### Thanks Badge



### Thanks Badge II



## Numeral Guard & Years of Service Pin

The Numeral Guard is a longevity recognition for an individual for their total years of registered membership, including years as a girl and as an adult member.

The Years of Service Pin is a longevity recognition for an adult volunteer's dedication to Girl Scouting.

### Numeral Guard



### Years of Service Pin



- Years do not need to be consecutive.
- Pins are available in five-year increments.
- Individuals track their total years. GSDSW does not automatically distribute pins. Please submit a request form to receive your pin(s): <https://bit.ly/yrspins2024> 25

## GSDSW Council Awards

Cookie  
Champion

Fall Product  
Champion

Outdoor  
Enthusiast

Family  
Award

Girl Scout  
of the  
Year

Man Enough  
to be a  
Girl Scout  
Award

Girl Scout  
Support  
Award

Regional  
Leader of  
the Year

Honor  
Troop

President's  
Award

**Nomination deadline:  
Tuesday, September 30, 2025**



# GSUSA Awards



## APPRECIATION PIN

The Appreciation Pin recognizes an individual's exemplary service in support of delivering GSLE. This service, which has had measurable effect on one geographic area of service, helps reach and surpass the mission-delivery goals of the area.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/AppPin2024> 25.



## VOLUNTEER OF EXCELLENCE

Volunteer of Excellence Award recognizes a volunteer who has contributed outstanding service while partnering directly with girls in any pathway and who has contributed outstanding service in support of the council's mission delivery to girl and adult members with membership development, community relations, volunteer support, governance, or fund development.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/VolEx2024> 25.



## HONOR PIN

The Honor Pin recognizes an individual's exemplary service in support of delivering GSLE, which has had measurable effect on two or more geographic areas of service, allowing the council to reach and surpass its mission-delivery goals.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/HonPin2024> 25.



## THANKS BADGE

The Thanks Badge recognizes an individual's exemplary service in support of delivering GSLE, which has had measurable effect on meeting the mission-delivery goals and priorities of the entire council or the entire Girl Scout Movement.

Service performed is so significantly above expectations that no other award is appropriate.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/Thx2024> 25.



## THANKS BADGE II

The Thanks Badge II honors a previous Thanks Badge award recipient who has continued to provide exemplary service in a leadership role, resulting in a measurable effect that benefits the entire Girl Scout Movement.

Service performed is so significantly above expectations that no other award is appropriate.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/ThxII2024> 25.

# GSDSW Council Awards



## COOKIE CHAMPION AWARD

The Cookie Champion award recognizes an adult member who has continued to provide exemplary service in the Troop Cookie Coordinator or Service Unit Cookie Chair role, resulting in a measurable effect that benefited the troop, service unit and the council. Candidate must have served in the Troop Cookie Coordinator or Service Unit Cookie Chair role for at least two Girl Scout membership years.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/CookieChamp2024-25>.



## FALL PRODUCT CHAMPION AWARD

The Fall Product Champion award recognizes an adult member who has continued to provide exemplary service in the Troop Fall Product Coordinator or Service Unit Fall Product Chair role, resulting in a measurable effect that benefited the troop, service unit, and the council. Candidate must have served in the Troop Fall Product Coordinator or Service Unit Fall Product Chair role for at least two Girl Scout membership years.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/FallProd2024-25>.



## OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST

The Outdoor Enthusiast recognizes an adult member who has delivered outstanding outdoor education to at least one Service Unit or program delivery audience. Candidate has delivered outdoor educational opportunities that span at least two Girl Scout membership years.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/OutEnth2024-25>.



## FAMILY AWARD

The Family Award is presented to a family that supports Girl Scouts with outstanding volunteer service. The service given must be beyond normal expectations, members of the family have provided continuous service for at least two years with GSDSW, and benefits two or more service units with the council.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/Fam2024-25>.



# GSDSW Council Awards



## GIRL SCOUT SUPPORT AWARD

The Girl Scout Support award is presented to a parent, grandparent, or caregiver (not troop leader or co-leader) who has gone above and beyond in their service to a troop or to an individually registered member.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/GSSup2024-25>.



## REGIONAL LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Regional Leader of the Year is presented to a leader who provides girls with exceptional leadership opportunities through exemplary implementation of the girl-led model. The leader must have served in a troop leadership position for at least five consecutive years.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/RegLeadYr2024-25>.



## MAN ENOUGH TO BE A GIRL SCOUT AWARD

This award recognizes our male volunteers that have gone above and beyond in service of Girl Scouts, whether a dad, grandfather, uncle, older sibling, or guardian.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: <https://bit.ly/ManEnuf2024-25>.



## GIRL SCOUT OF THE YEAR

Awarded to a registered Senior or Ambassador Girl Scout. Exemplifies through both words and actions the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism, and service. She upholds the mission of Girl Scouts and has held leadership positions in both Girl Scouts and the community.

Nomination: Submit nomination form here: [https://bit.ly/GSYr2024\\_25](https://bit.ly/GSYr2024_25).



# Service Unit & Troop Awards

## PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The President's award recognizes the efforts of a service unit team or committee whose exemplary service in support of delivering GSLE surpassed team goals and resulted in significant and measurable impact toward reaching the council's overall goals.

### Additional Criteria:

- All members of the service unit team were active, registered Girl Scout members, in good standing, for the year of nomination and completed appropriate trainings for their positions.
- Delivered Girl Scout program to the membership resulting in the retention of at least 75% of the troops and troop leaders from the previous year.
- Overall girl membership for the service unit reached or surpassed the council goals.
- Service Unit maintains ongoing communications with each troop leader using methods that serve the needs of each leader as well as with individually registered girls within the service unit.
- Cultivated contacts in the community through scheduled talks to civic groups, sponsorship agreements, approved media coverage and community profile updates.
- Council required reports are submitted on time.
- Service Unit encourages adult participation in fund development and has increased annual giving support to the council.
- Composition of the adult Girl Scout members reflects the diversity of the community.

Nomination: Submit nomination form and supporting documentation here:  
[https://bit.ly/PresAward2024\\_25](https://bit.ly/PresAward2024_25)

## HONOR TROOP

The Honor Troop is a guide for troops to ensure a well-rounded year of Girl Scouting. Use this as a tool to lead your troop successfully and ensure girls are exposed to diverse girl-led leadership opportunities. There is a series of mandatory requirements along with the troop's choice from a set of additional troop requirements.

Nomination: The Honor Troop Application completed and submitted, along with supporting documentation needed to [info@gsdsw.org](mailto:info@gsdsw.org).

# President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA)

Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest is proud to be a certifying organization of the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA). The PVSA recognizes United States citizens and lawfully admitted, permanent residents of the United States who have achieved the required number of hours of service over a 12-month time period or cumulative hours over the course of a lifetime.

In 2003, the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation founded the President's Volunteer Service Award to recognize the important role of volunteers in America's strength and national identity. This award honors individuals whose service positively impacts communities in every corner of the nation and inspires those around them to take action, too. It is a national award led by AmeriCorps and managed in partnership with Points of Light. <https://presidentalserviceawards.gov/>

## Volunteer Eligibility

- United States citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States.
- Must be at least five years old.
- Completes eligible service within a 12-month period (for annual Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards) and over a lifetime (for Lifetime Achievement Awards).

Eligible Service: Unpaid acts of volunteer service benefiting others.

## Eligible Service Does Not Include:

- Donating funds
- Political lobbying (Non-partisan voter registration is an eligible activity)
- Religious instruction or proselytizing
- Conducting worship service
- Volunteer service performed as part of court-ordered community service
- Serving only family members

Nomination: Submit a spreadsheet listing hours completed to [info@gsdsw.org](mailto:info@gsdsw.org)

## Hours Required to Earn Awards in Each Age Group

Age Group	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Lifetime Achievement
Kids (5-10)	26-49 hours	50-74 hours	75+ hours	4,000+ hours
Teens (11-15)	50-74 hours	75-99 hours	100+ hours	4,000+ hours
Young Adults (16-25)	100-174 hours	175-249 hours	250+ hours	4,000+ hours
Adults (26+)	100-249 hours	250-499 hours	500+ hours	4,000+ hours

## FAQ's

**Q: We worry that if we give out too many recognitions, their significance will be "watered down." How do we Maintain Quality?**

A: We should celebrate having growing numbers of people who deserve recognition. Take pride in having many to recognize. Girl Scout adult recognitions are not a competition. There should be no limit to the number of awards given.

**Q: What about recognizing people more than once. Should you give the same recognition to a person more than once?**

A: It is great to celebrate people whose continuing service and commitment make a difference in Girl Scouting. Rather than giving a duplicate award, consider personalizing a certificate, gift or service. This would be appropriate when someone deserves repeated recognition at the same level, for example, as an Appreciation or Honor Pin recipient.

**Q: How does a person decide which recognition to wear?**

A: If an adult has received more than one special recognition (e.g., Volunteer of Excellence & Appreciation pins), typically the highest award received is the one worn on the uniform. People with numerous pins usually retire the remaining ones with honor, either placing them in a scrapbook, framing together with other mementos.

**Q: Is there a hierarchy for the awards?**

A: We recognize that volunteers do amazing work and should be recognized when that work occurs. A volunteer can earn any award at any time during their Girl Scout volunteering career\*, as long as they meet the criteria outlined for the award. However, we recommend that the awards are built upon, like we scaffold for the girls. For example, we might suggest the Appreciation Pin and then the Volunteer of Excellence. (\*The only exception is the Thanks Badge II, which requires the candidate to have previously earned the Thanks Badge.)

**Q: What happens if I miss the nomination deadline?**

A: The deadline is a hard deadline due to the timing of approvals and the Ceremony of Honors. Unfortunately, that volunteer will not be recognized.