

“A badge is a symbol that you have done the thing it stands for often enough, thoroughly enough, and well enough to BE PREPARED to give service in it.”

–Juliette Gordon Low

No matter the category, awards demonstrate achievement and mean so much more when a girl can clearly articulate what she has achieved. This is true throughout our hierarchy of awards: Our Highest Awards of Bronze, Silver and Gold; Journey Summit Awards; Journey Awards; and then National Proficiency Badges.

Girls develop their leadership skills through activities woven throughout our National Leadership Journeys and earn Journey Awards. Some girls earn special opportunity awards such as the Cookie Activity Pin or Global Action Award while others earn My Promise, My Faith Awards, Teen Mentoring Awards, or Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. Some are awarded Meritorious or Lifesaving Awards. And, of course, some will earn Council's Own. Whether she has developed a new skill through a “Make Your Own” badge, saved a human life, or learned something unique that can only be experienced in her council, a girl feels proud of accomplishing something significant.

Tomorrow's leaders need real skills, which cannot be learned in a day. How does it serve girls when a badge is “earned” in a day and patch is given for every activity and field trip? Every award must be meaningful to a girl and if not, then awards mean nothing. Help girls achieve that sense of pride and satisfaction recognized by awards through the focus of “Educate, Don't Decorate.”

The Council's Own badge is a national award that provides a unique, local opportunity that girls cannot experience anywhere else. And, when Council's Own badges are based in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, developed to the same set of consistent nationwide guidelines, girls' efforts can be recognized by a nationally consistent award.

It's long been a tradition for councils to offer badges focused on unique and special places in their areas. With the advent of our national core program and the goal of a consistent experience and outcomes for girls nationwide, Girl Scouts-Arizona Cactus Pine Council welcomes the opportunity to augment current earned recognitions by offering council's own earned recognitions.

Following are the guidelines for development of locally earned recognitions for girls.

## Get Ready!

The best time, and only time, to develop a Council's Own badge is when it fits into the council's membership and program plans. Girls already have a lot of activities in the Journey books and badges to explore in *The Girls Guide to Girl Scouting*. Before jumping in, ask:

- » What role will this Council's Own badge fill?
- » How will this Council's Own badge help grow or retain membership?
- » Does this Council's Own leverage opportunities for girls based on the GSLE and our council goals?

Develop the Council's Own badge when it is determined to be an important addition and significant for girls to earn.

## Get Set!

If you've decided the timing is right to offer a Council's Own badge, consider gathering a committee of volunteers, council staff, and members of the community to help with development. Remember to include girls as members of the committee or by gathering their input in some manner.

## Go!

Once you've determined your topic and program level(s), creating the content of the Council's Own badge is easy! Follow the format of the current National Proficiency badges.

When writing the badge, start with a purpose statement and follow with any needed tips. Offer girls five steps and three activities per step. This way, girls have girl-led choices to guide their learning on the topic. Offer ideas of "More to Explore" for those who want even more. Share how this topic links to a Journey. Include ideas on how girls can use their new skills in service to others.

Once the content is complete and approved by the council, it's time to design the physical badge. Badges are the same shapes and sizes (different for each grade level) as the National Proficiency badges. When ready to design the patch, please contact the program department to ensure vendor/logo usage agreements.

Your Council's Own badge and badge design will then be forwarded to the Program team at GSUSA for final approval. Note: The badge design must be included with your submission form. A jpeg file or clearly scanned paper drawing are acceptable. Girl Scouts Marketing will approve your graphic design once it's submitted.

## TIPS

### Involve Girls in the Process

- » Consider involving girls in the development of Council's Own badges in age-appropriate ways.
- » Girl service may count towards appropriate community "Service to Girl Scouting" bars if approved by the council or Overseas Committee, but should not be seen as a Take Action project.
- » Girls may not create a Council's Own badge as a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award project. Nor can they use the Council's Own badge as a substitute for a [Make Your Own](#) badge.

### Badge Content and Design

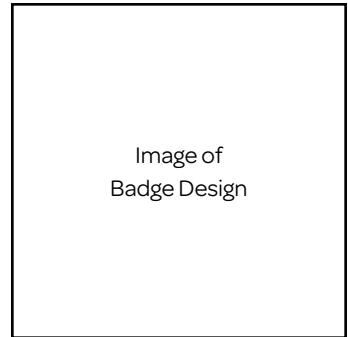
- » If the topic of the badge is about a specific location, consider a site visit to gather ideas that will inspire girls to visit the location.
- » Internet use may be valuable for travel preparation or other pre-activity work to support girls actually visiting the site doing activities. When earning the badge, girls might use the Internet to research or investigate the area or activities represented in the Council's Own badge. The badge, however, cannot be earned online.
- » Badges are standard GSUSA program level shapes and sizes and cannot accommodate complex designs.
- » As you consider badge topics, please be cognizant of social issues implications and stay away from topics that might generate negative feedback.

**For Further Information** – Margaret Spicer, Program Manager, at [margaretspicer@girlscoutsaz.org](mailto:margaretspicer@girlscoutsaz.org).

**TITLE OF BADGE** \_\_\_\_\_

**INTRODUCTION STATEMENT**

Write a lively description. Include one or two sentences to interest girls in the topic!



**PURPOSE**

**When I've earned this badge, I will know...**

Complete this sentence based on what girls will learn while earning this badge. For example, "I will know about the history, construction and preservation of the Torre Pendente (Leaning Tower) in Pisa, Italy."

**TIPS BEFORE TAKEOFF**

List any important safety information or overall hints girls should know before beginning the badge. This section may be omitted if there is nothing out of the ordinary to share.

**STEPS**

Like national proficiency badges in *The Girls Guide to Girl Scouting*, each Councils Own Badge asks girls to complete five steps. These steps must represent five distinct topics related to the overall badge topic. Girls complete at least one activity or experience in each of the five steps to earn the badge. As you develop the content for each step, think about unique aspects you'd like the badge to cover to give girls a well-rounded view of the badge topic.

**STEP 1** \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 2** \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 3** \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 4** \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 5** \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITIES

- » Under each step, list three activities from which girls can choose. Note that girls only have to do one activity per step, but, of course, they can do more than one!
- » One option may be for girls to do their own explorations around the suggested activity. Just as each step has at least three activities, each activity can also have a number of options.
- » Do not use online exploration as a way for girls to complete badge activities. The point is for girls to learn what's special by traveling to this unique site. On-line research can be part of the badge preparation or "More to Explore", but is not encouraged as an actual activity step.

### STEP 1

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 2

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 3

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 4

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 5

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### MORE TO EXPLORE

Suggest a few additional activities for girls who are really interested in this topic. You may include additional places to visit, things to do, or people to meet.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### ADD THE BADGE TO YOUR JOURNEYS

Suggest a Journey that will also provide girls with opportunities for further exploration and a chance to develop a Take Action project around the topic.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

### NOW THAT I'VE EARNED THIS BADGE, I CAN GIVE SERVICE BY...

Suggest three different ideas or ways girls can share this new information with others.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### EVALUATION

Create an easy evaluation method to gather girls' progress towards outcomes and feedback. Address/incorporate outcome when developing the COB.

### SUBMISSION

Please return completed document to [margaretpicer@girlscoutsaz.org](mailto:margaretpicer@girlscoutsaz.org). Place *Council's Own Badge* in the subject line.

**Note:** this document (and all backup documentation) will be forwarded to the **Girl Scouts of the USA** for review. Therefore, it may be several weeks before we are able to update on status.