

Volunteer Recognition Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if I should nominate someone for a formal volunteer recognition award?

Do you want to acknowledge the individual because they *work hard, have a great attitude, and/or have been volunteering a long time*? You may want to consider informal recognition such as flowers or a card or (e-card!) Check out tips for appreciating volunteers [here](#).

Do you want to acknowledge *specific measurable contributions above and beyond the responsibilities of their position*? A formal award nomination may be appropriate!

What are the general criteria for volunteer award recognitions?

A nominee must have an active membership with Girl Scouts of North East Ohio and owe no council debt at time of nomination. Criteria for specific awards are outlined on our webpage, gsneo.org/recognition

Which formal awards were developed by GSUSA, and which are unique to GSNEO?

GSUSA: Appreciation Pin, Honor Pin, Thanks Badge, Thanks Badge II, President's Award (given to entire service unit for outstanding performance), Volunteer of Excellence (presented locally)

GSNEO: Forever Green Award, GSNEO Award, Outstanding Leader Award (presented locally)

Is there a prerequisite for the awards or an order in which awards must be received?

The only awards which must be earned in order are Thanks Badge, Thanks Badge II, and Forever Green Award. There is no specific order for other awards to be earned. A member can earn any award as long as they fulfill the requirements.

How long do you have to be involved in Girl Scouting before you can earn an award?

There is no longevity requirement for most awards to be earned – a member doesn't have to be in Girl Scouts for any specific amount of time in order to earn one. Both Volunteer of Excellence and Outstanding Leader (given at the service unit level) require a minimum of 1 full membership year of service.

Can volunteers earn the same formal award more than once?

As a movement, we have volunteers who continue to contribute for many years, however they can only earn each formal award once.* Members receive these specific high awards for the contribution that they made (exemplary service) and not as a way to recognize the longevity of their service. There are other ways you can also continue to [thank and recognize](#) a member who may have already earned the most appropriate award for their service.

**The GSNEO Award CAN be earned multiple times, if receiving as part of multiple committees/groups, or as both an individual and part of a committee/group.*

Who can nominate someone for an award?

Anyone who has knowledge of the service performed may nominate someone for an award. Adult volunteers are the most common nominators, but we accept nominations from girls, staff, parent/caregivers, or someone who works with the member in other capacities (such as at a community organization). The same requirements for the nomination process exist, no matter who does the nominating.

How long will it take to complete the nomination and endorsement forms?

A nomination or endorsement will usually take an average of 30 minutes to complete.

Can I submit paper nominations and endorsements?

Paper nominations and endorsements are no longer accepted. If you are experiencing difficulties with the Jotform system, please contact [Customer Care](#) for assistance.

Once I start a nomination or endorsement can I save my spot and continue later?

No, once you begin to complete a Jotform you must finish in one session and click “submit” for it to be submitted. We recommend typing your answers in a separate location, such as a Microsoft Word document, and then copy/pasting into the Jotform to avoid any potential loss of information before submission is complete.

Are nominations and endorsements saved online for me to review?

No, online responses are not visible to you after submission. You will receive a copy of your answers to the email address that you provided. For that reason, PLEASE save your answers in a separate document and copy them into the text box on the survey.

Can staff be nominated for awards?

No. These awards are for volunteer service of adult members of Girl Scouts of North East Ohio. If you would like to recognize a staff member, a letter to their supervisor or the CEO is always appreciated.

Can I self-nominate?

No. Nominations and endorsements cannot be written for oneself.

If I submitted a nomination for someone, can I also write an endorsement?

To ensure quality nominations, each award requires a specified number of nominations per person as one of the criteria. Multiple endorsements are required to help ensure quality nominations and the integrity of the formal awards process.

Having these diverse perspectives on the nominees’ service helps the committee to determine which, if any, award is the most appropriate.

How many nominations and/or endorsements can I submit?

There are no limits. You may nominate and endorse as many registered adult volunteers as you wish.

Am I able to cancel or withdraw a nomination or endorsement after I submit?

You cannot withdraw a nomination online after it has been submitted. If you wish to cancel a nomination, contact Volunteer Relations Manager, Shayna Bartlett, at sbartlett@gsneo.org for further steps.

Who should write endorsements?

Anyone who can speak to the contributions and service of the nominee. This can be troop or Service Unit volunteers, girls, parents/caregivers, community members, or staff members. The same [endorsement form](#) is used for all awards.

What should the endorsement letters say?

Be sure to share exactly what the volunteer has done, why it is outstanding, and how it meets the criteria of the award. Remember that this may be the reviewer's only knowledge of the service and the nominee. Many volunteers have had numerous jobs within the service unit, region, or council. Give relevant details that support the specific award being considered. There is a 100-word minimum for nominations and endorsements, and the more information and examples that are provided, the better. Specific stories highlighting their impact and measurable outcomes, such as number of girls served, are particularly helpful.

Can my candidate have extra endorsements?

Yes, there is a required minimum number of endorsements for each award, but there is not a maximum.

What if you accidentally receive multiple nominations for the same volunteer?

The first nomination received will be considered the official nomination, and any subsequent nominations will be counted as endorsements. Be sure to share the correct [endorsement form](#) with anyone you are asking to provide an endorsement to avoid confusion. The same endorsement form is used for all awards.

Why wouldn't someone earn an award if they were nominated? My nominee received the required number of endorsements, why didn't they earn an award?

Some of the potential reasons for someone not receiving an award are:

- not having the required number of endorsements
- not enough specific detail in the nomination/endorsements
- nominee has already received the award and does not qualify for any others
- nominee hasn't met the basic requirements (e.g. membership is not current)
- nominee's impact does not extend beyond their troop.

How are nominators/endorsers notified if their candidate is selected for an award? Can I track my nomination once submitted?

Nominators/endorsers will receive a confirmation email when their submission is received. Nominators will receive occasional reminders prior to the August 1 deadline if their candidate has not yet received the required number of endorsements for the award.

Nominators whose candidate is selected to receive an award will receive an email notification. Endorsers will not receive an official notification, but can view the list of awardees at gsneo.org/recognition and on social media. Nominators whose candidate was not selected to receive an award will receive a phone call explaining the reason for the committee's decision.

How are awardees notified if they are selected for an award?

GSNEO will mail/email invitations to the ceremony to awardees who are selected.

What is the Volunteer Recognition Committee?

The Volunteer Recognition Committee is a group of eight to twelve outstanding Girl Scouts of North East Ohio volunteers who review, discuss, and approve nominations for council and national level awards to be presented at the annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration in November. For specific questions or to connect with a member of the Volunteer Recognition Committee, please contact Volunteer Relations Manager, Shayna Bartlett, at sbartlett@gsneo.org.

What is the timeline for the formal volunteer awards selection process?

Nominations and endorsements are accepted year-round, and each year there is a cut-off date of *August 1* for the annual ceremony held in *November*. Nominations/endorsements received after August 1 will be kept on file and eligible for consideration for the following year's ceremony. As such, please submit endorsements in a timely manner to ensure presentation at the desired event. After the August 1 deadline, nominees who have the required number of endorsements will be reviewed by the Volunteer Recognition Committee, and then submitted to the GSNEO Board of Directors for approval. Once the Board approves, the awardees will be announced in *mid-September*.

Where and when are awards presented?

The Appreciation Pin, Honor Pin, Thanks Badge, Thanks Badge II, Forever Green Award, and GSNEO Award are presented annually in November at the Volunteer Recognition Celebration.

Outstanding Leader and Volunteer of Excellence awards are presented locally, at the date and location of the service unit's choosing.

The President's Award is presented at the Mid-Year Meeting for service unit teams in January.