Girl Scout Gold Award Toolkit for Seniors and Ambassadors
Congratulations on wanting to earn the highest award in Girl Scouting, the Gold Award. For over 100 years, Girl Scouts have worked hard to fulfill the requirements to achieve this prestigious award. The Gold Award Standard is a helpful tool that will answer all your questions and set you on your path to Gold.

*The Gold Award makes you take a closer look at your community to see where you can make a difference.*

**Seven Steps to GOLD**

1. **Choose an issue:**
   Use your values and skills to identify a community issue you care about.

2. **Investigate:**
   Research everything you can about the issue.

3. **Get help:**
   Invite others to support and take action with you.

4. **Create a plan:**
   Create a project plan that achieves sustainable and measurable impact.

5. **Present your plan and get feedback:**
   Sum up your project plan for your Girl Scout council.

6. **Take action:**
   Take the lead to carry out your plan.

7. **Educate and inspire:**
   Share what you have experienced with others.
First, complete your Gold Award prerequisites:

- Be a registered Senior or Ambassador Girl Scout
- Earned the Girl Scout Silver Award as a Cadette, and complete one Senior or Ambassador Journey

OR

- Complete two Journeys at the Girl Scout Senior and/or Ambassador level
- Register to attend a Gold Award training, this is not mandatory, but highly recommended.
- Finally, you’re ready to tackle this booklet, *The Gold Standard*. This will give you all the important information you need to “Go Gold”.
- It is mandatory to sign page 16, and bring it to your Gold Award interview.

What’s My Timeline?

**EACH GIRL WILL SET HER OWN TIMELINE, BUT HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO KEEP IN MIND.**

**October 1:** High School Seniors Only—Gold Award proposals are due, last chance to earn your Gold!

**March 31:** All completed final paperwork due to GSNC to be in the current year’s ceremony.

**September 30** after high school graduation: Last opportunity to earn Gold. All final paperwork is due. You will be invited to the following year’s ceremony. You are now considered an adult Girl Scout and can no longer work to earn your Gold Award.

Senior and Ambassador Journey Options:

**Journeys (Books)**
- Girl Topia
- Sow What?
- Mission: Sisterhood
- Bliss: Live it!
- Justice
- Your Voice Your World

**Digital Journeys available on the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)**
- Think Like an Engineer
- Think Like a Programmer
- Think Like a Citizen Scientist
- Outdoor (See level options)
What is Take Action?

**Take Action projects are different from community service projects.**

A Take Action project is a chance for you to partner with others in your community to solve a problem. You learn about getting to the root causes of issues, mobilizing and engaging community members and volunteers, and striving toward creating lasting change in your world.

**Important Components:**

- Need to define your issue/problem
- Understand and address why the issue/problem exists by identifying the root cause(s)

You develop your leadership skills by exploring your community, brainstorming, planning, organizing, and putting your plan in motion—you are the CEO!

Community service makes the world better for some people “right now”. For example, collecting cans of food for the local food pantry feeds people “right now”. Gathering toys for a homeless-family shelter makes kids happy “right now”. Providing clothing and toiletries to people who have suffered a disaster helps them get through a traumatic event “right now”. These acts of kindness are important ways to help some people—right now.

**Take Action projects address the root cause of an issue, and come up with sustainable, longer-lasting solutions. These projects strive to make the world a better place for more people for a much longer time.**

What is the difference between a Journey Take Action project and a Gold Award Take Action project?

**The Journey Take Action project should be looked at as the practice run for the Gold Award Take Action project.**

The only difference is the Journey Take Action Project is topic specific, the project must relate to the Journey and what you have learned. It can be completed as a troop, but each girl needs a leadership role.

The Gold Award Take Action project must be done individually and the topic is of your choosing. You will need to identify an issue in your community that you want to improve or help solve. Tackling the root cause of this issue will help make a bigger impact on your community and help sustain the project.

You will gain leadership skills in developing the Journey Take Action project, and build upon these acquired skills to complete a quality Gold Award Take Action project.
A Gold Award Take Action Project...

...has national and/or global links
Your issue may be as local as saving the ash trees in the town park. Now step back and look around. Forests across the country are being devastated by borer beetles, which are spread when people transport firewood. Linked!

When your project is completed, share it with the world to inspire others.

...is sustainable
How will your project stay alive even when you're done? Will someone else be able to pick up where you've left off?
Can you involve school clubs? Change the curriculum? Start a nonprofit? Partner with your community or an organization? Advocate for change in local government or beyond?

...takes approximately 80 hours
Eighty hours of your own time starts with Girl Scout Gold Award step one, choosing an issue, before you even submit your proposal, so keep a detailed "Hour Log".

Keep in mind, that 12-20 of those hours must be making an impact with your audience.

...addresses an issue that you care about

...has an awesome project advisor
This person should have specialized knowledge that relates to the topic of your Gold Award project. You can ask someone from your community, organization, or school. It cannot be your Girl Scout leader or a relative.

Not sure about your idea? Check out our Strike Gold Clinics:
Once you have been to a Take Action for the Gold Award seminar and have come up with a Gold Award project idea, you are invited to attend this clinic to develop your project.

Strike Gold Clinics aren't mandatory, but are a great way to see if your Gold Award project is up to the Gold Standard. During these clinics, you can brainstorm with your sister Girl Scouts as well as a volunteer from the Gold Award committee. Remember, this is NOT a training—it is a clinic to help with your actual project idea, so you can walk away with confidence to submit a Golden proposal.

Here are some of the components a Strike Gold Clinic can help you with:
- Explain the difference between a Take Action project vs. community service
- Who can be your Project Advisor?
- Building your team
- What’s the global connection
- How to sustain your project
- Will it reach 80 hours?
- How to measure the impact of your project
Why so many rules, you ask?

Because a Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action project is about creating the greatest impact possible, so you make the world a better place!

Avoiding these simple traps will help you do just that.

What NOT to do:

⚠️ Collection Projects…
   . . . because collecting items for an organization does not elicit the creativity or leadership required by the Gold Award. Collections are also a short-term fix for a problem, which does not tackle the “root cause.”

⚠️ Fundraising Projects…
   . . . because Girl Scouts, whether girls or adults, are not allowed to raise money for other organizations.

⚠️ Canned Projects…
   . . . because a canned project is pre-designed and demands only that you implement someone else’s project (i.e. a blood drive or annual clean-up). A Gold Award Take Action project requires you to act in a leadership position from the get-go, designing a sustainable program, system, or advocacy project on an issue that you have carefully researched.

Being a Leader

Leading a team allows you to make a bigger impact than you would on your own.

Form a team of volunteers to help you.

The Gold Award process is girl-led. That means that you are responsible for writing your proposal, turning in your paperwork, attending your interview and contacting your Gold Award Mentor with any questions. Follow these tips, and you’ll be unstoppable!
GO GOLD

gogold.girlscouts.org

This is the site GSUSA created to help you formulate your Gold Award project idea.

First step is to create your account with your personal email address and please write down your password!

When you register you will need to give basic information: address, phone, birth date, high school, current grade, year of graduation, Girl Scout Council-select Nassau County, troop number, troop leader’s phone and email address. Then you will answer questions about your prerequisites. All this info will live in your profile.

Once that is complete, the real work of developing your project begins!

- You will see “My Dashboard” where you can check your “Gold Award Progress.”
- This will guide you through the seven steps to going Gold.

DISCOVER: Hone in on a community issue.

**Step 1: Choose an Issue** - What do you care about and why
**Step 2: Investigate** - Find the root cause, create a mind map

CONNECT: Develop your plan for creating sustainable, measurable impact.

*These steps are required, and will result in your proposal.*

**Step 3: Get Help** - Build your team, choose a project advisor
**Step 4: Create Your Plan** - The nitty gritty of the what, why, who, when, and where—plus your global, measurable, and sustainable components
**Step 5: Present Your Plan** - Look over proposal, upload any additional files, get verified, submit!

(Answer in detail so when it populates your proposal, we see a clear vision of your plan.)

*The Verification step reads as follows on GoGold …*

Get your troop leader to verify that you completed your prerequisites, and obtain project advisor support of your proposal before submitting it. You will click boxes to send a pre-generated email to your troop leader and project advisor. After they affirm your efforts through email, you can move to the next screen and submit your proposal to your council.
When submitting your Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal through GoGold, make sure to:

- Use the latest version of Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari for the smoothest experience.
- If you have Grammarly on your computer, turn it off while you are working on GoGold, and use Chrome Incognito. Grammarly creates a problem with saving your work.
- Copy and paste all written answers into a Word doc just in case it doesn’t save your work.
- If you leave anything blank, you cannot move along. You can backtrack and see the red highlighted areas where you need to complete.
- Keep an “Hour Log” of the time you spend on GoGold. It counts toward your 80 hours.
- The three lines on the top left of any page is called a “hamburger”, it is a dropdown menu to get to your Dashboard: Profile, Help & FAQ, Track My Work, and more!
- **IMPORTANT:** Use Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to assist with challenges!

GSNC will no longer accept hard copies of Gold Award proposals after August 1, 2020, because GSUSA only uses GoGold to select the National Gold Award Girl Scouts. See page 15 for details.

**Timing**

Please think through your timeline—you MUST submit your Gold Award Project Proposal 4 to 6 weeks prior to your estimated start date. There is a review process that your proposal goes through, and then your Gold Award interview will be scheduled.

GSNC receives Gold Award proposals daily, so there may be a wait for an interview.
When GSNC receives your Gold Award proposal, you will get an email letting you know it is beginning the review process, which can take two weeks. When the review is completed you will be emailed by the Senior Program Manager with the status of your project proposal.

**DON’T DESPAIR!** Your proposal status does not judge you as a person. It’s just GSNC’s way of making sure that you will be successful!
Gold Award Committee
This committee is comprised of volunteers who help girls on their “Road to Gold.”

Gold Award Mentor
A Gold Award mentor will be assigned to you at your Gold Award interview.
- Your mentor will approve your project in the beginning and also upon completion.
- Key to a successful project is communication—It is important that you check-in with your mentor on a regular basis during your project. If not, your project will not be approved.
- Your mentor is knowledgeable in the Gold Award process and must approve any flyers or money-earning that you do.
- Your mentor is also there to cheer you on or help with any bumps in the road. You may invite her to attend a portion of your project.

Troop Volunteer
Your troop volunteer is your troop leader. If you are a Girl Scout Juliette (an independently registered Girl Scout) your parent/caregiver can act as your troop leader. They will help you as you complete your prerequisites and can help guide you through the Gold Award proposal submission process. Then they become your cheerleader!

Awards Coach
The Awards coach is a local resource in most Service Units who can answer questions about the Gold Award. Ask your leader to help you connect with her.

Gold Award Project Advisor
You need to seek out a project advisor from your community, school, or an organization who is knowledgeable in your Gold Award project topic. They cannot be your troop leader or your parent/relative, and must be outside of your Girl Scout community. Their signature is required on both your proposal and final report.

Your Gold Award Project Advisor can help you with:
- identifying your ideal target audience
- providing content expertise for your project’s topic
- identifying relevant community issues
- planning and executing sustainability for your project
- providing support during the project
- relating your project topic to a global or national link
- redesigning your project plan
- identifying areas where you can expand your project

Gold Award Counselors
You can be assigned a Gold Award counselor if your project needs some additional work to bring it up to the Gold Award standard. The counselor can help you with:
- brainstorming on a missing component
- solidifying your idea or issue into words
- ideas on how to expand your project
- brainstorming on sustainability
- ways to measure your project’s impact
- finding your global or national link
- ideas for sharing your Gold Award
- revising your proposal

Program Manager
The Program Manager is the GSNC Council staff member who is responsible for overseeing the Gold Award process and committee.

Specific questions related to your project, from approval to implementation, must be asked by you. If an adult has general questions about the process, they may contact the Program Manager.
GSNC interviews girls once a month year-round. Your interview date is determined by the date that your proposal was submitted and the number of submissions received. We cannot bump you ahead of other girls waiting—so timing is important. Once your Gold Award proposal is reviewed and accepted, you will be invited to your Gold Award interview via the email address on your proposal. Make sure it is your email, not your parent or guardian’s!

Here is the lowdown on what to expect and do!

Please RSVP promptly—if you cannot attend, we will invite the next girls in the queue and you will be placed in the next group.

- Be sure to read the entire email, so you are prepared for your interview
- Uniforms are appropriate attire—Girl Scout vest and a nice outfit, if you don’t have the entire uniform
- The interview lasts for one hour, parents/guardians are not invited into your interview
- You will be interviewed by 2-3 Gold Award mentors
- You will be asked about your prerequisites: Journey(s)—what the Take Action project was and your role in it and/or Silver Award
- Be prepared. Know your project’s issue, root cause, audience, plan, team, partners and be confident, passionate, excited, and not too nervous—we are here to help you!
- Do a practice run—speak out loud about your Gold Award project idea and plan
  This can help you feel confident at your interview

Bring:

- Page 16 of this booklet (The Gold Standard) SIGNED
- Hour Log—all time spent coming up with and developing your project counts
- Any other paperwork that pertains to your Journey(s) and/or Silver Award to help you discuss these with the Gold Award Committee—it’s an open book!

To help your interview go smoothly, please be prepared to answer any questions that were sent to you prior to your interview. These would have come from the Senior Program Manager in the status of your Gold Award proposal review.
Money and Safety

The Dirt on the Green:

As a Girl Scout, the council Entrepreneurial Programs, Cookies and Mags&Munchies, should be the first way to fund your Gold Award project.

- If you need additional funds, you must get approval from your Gold Award mentor for any money-earning activities and monetary funding. Forms will be provided at your Gold Award interview.
- Girl Scouts may ask for in-kind donations of goods, supplies, and monetary funding. This time counts toward your project hours, because you are presenting your project idea to others.
- All other money-earning activities do not count toward project hours. Example: the hours spent organizing and running a car wash do not count toward project hours because they are not specific to the project.
- Travel time to and from events, shopping, etc. does not count toward project hours.

IMPORTANT:

Read the [GSNC FAQ for Funding a Gold Award Project](#) for complete details on funding your project.

Safety First:

During your Gold Award Take Action project, keeping yourself, your team, and your participants safe is key! Make sure to ask yourself these questions:

- Do I have any volunteers or participants under the age of 18? If so, I definitely need to have permission slips for them.
- Have I thought about having any snacks or meals? What food allergies do my participants have? This is a great question to ask on permission slips. Once I read my permission slips, what allergens might I need to avoid?
- Are the activities I’ll be doing during my project, or activities like them, listed in the online Safety Activity Checkpoints? If so, what do I need to do to ensure the safety of my project participants?

Do all Girl Scout meetings and activities need a first aider?

No, but a first aider is required for:

- Physically demanding activities
- Activities involving potential injury such as but not limited to hiking, camping, backpacking, bicycling, caving, climbing, horseback riding, skating, skiing, swimming, and boating
- An activity of 24 hours or more
Dear ____________ ,

(Intro Paragraph)
My name is ____________, I am currently working on the highest award in Girl Scouts, the Gold Award.

I am a Senior or Ambassador Girl Scout, completing my ____________ year at _________________ High School.

(Write a description of your project and why it is important).
For my project, I am creating a multiuse outdoor classroom at _________________ Elementary School in Town______________. Research shows that spending time outdoors in nature improves creative reasoning, decreases children’s anxiety and improves their ability to learn new tasks.

(The Ask).
Would you be willing to make either a monetary or in-kind donation for my Gold Award project? I could use the following items:

- ______
- ______
- ______

Should you need additional information, please feel free to contact me at (516) xxx-xxxx.

Donations can be sent to:
Name
Address
Town, NY Zip code

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

__________________________
Signature
The Final Paperwork

What to Do When You Complete Your Gold Award Project

First, have your “Hour Log” approved by your Gold Award mentor. This should be easy if you stayed in contact throughout your project. **If you have not been in contact with your mentor, you must present your project to a panel at GSNC for approval.**

Then, your Gold Award mentor will alert Council of your approval. You will receive an email from the Program Manager with information on all final paperwork, including your Final Report, Bio Sheet, portrait info and media release.

Don’t forget, to go over the forms and reflect on your experiences with your troop/group volunteer and your Gold Award Project Advisor.

Finally, when Girl Scouts of Nassau County receives your GoGold Final Report, your Gold Award mentor will review it and Council will then approve you on GoGold.

Once everyone has read and signed your Final Report, you have earned your Gold Award. You will receive a letter from the GSNC CEO stating that you are officially a Gold Award Girl Scout!

WHAT ARE MY DEADLINES?

**March 31:**
Projects need to be complete and final paperwork received by GSNC to be in the current year’s Gold Award Ceremony.

**September 30 after high school graduation: Last opportunity to earn Gold.**
All final paperwork is due. You will be invited to the following year’s ceremony. You are now considered an adult Girl Scout and can no longer work to earn your Gold Award.
The Gold Award Ceremony is the official Girl Scouts of Nassau County celebration that recognizes our newest Gold Award Girl Scouts. The event is held each year in June to recognize those girls who earned their award during the 12 months from April 1 to March 31.

National Gold Award Girl Scout

The National Gold Award Girl Scout is the designation given by GSUSA to the top 10 Gold Award Girl Scouts in the country each year. These young women have earned the Gold Award with outstanding projects and receive scholarship money in the $15,000 range as a result of this honor. Girl Scouts of Nassau County can submit three nominations to Girl Scouts of the USA each year. The GoGold portal is used by GSUSA to review and select the honorees.

* In 2015, Julie Kapuvari from Girl Scouts of Nassau County was recognized as a National Gold Award Girl Scout.

Inspire Younger Girl Scouts

As a Gold Award Girl Scout, you are now a role model for the next generation of girls! We encourage you to tell your Gold Award story to as many people as you can. Don't be shy! This is such a prestigious award; you need to be vocal about it. Make sure to add it on all resumes and bring it up at interviews. It will set you apart from your peers.

You can join the LinkedIn Gold Award Network and get a Gold Award Pin and Digital Credential. Pretty cool!

Invest in a Lifetime Membership

for $200* (a $400 value).

Visit www.girlscouts.org/LTM

*This opportunity is available to graduating high school Seniors and young alums until their 30th birthday.

Cookie Credits can be used toward the purchase of a lifetime membership. Financial assistance is available to those in need.
On My Honor:

I have read through *The Gold Standard*.

Date______________________________________________________________

Girl Scout’s Name________________________________________________

Signature________________________________________________________