



The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Leaders

How can girls earn the Gold Award?

The first step is to check in with your council's Gold Award staff. You'll want to find out if they require any type of training (e.g., an informational session) before girls can begin the Gold Award application process. These staff members will also be invaluable partners to both you and your Girl Scouts throughout the process. When girls are ready to get started, they can complete an online application through [GoGold Online](#)—our national web app that guides girls through the seven steps to earning the Gold Award.

What are the core components of earning the Gold Award?

A girl first identifies the root cause of a community issue she's passionate about. She then designs and implements a Take Action project that addresses a significant need in the community and has long-term benefits. The girl must show leadership by guiding a team of volunteers who support her project, which must be sustainable and measurable with a national and/or global link.

Here's more on that:

- **Sustainable** projects continue to have an impact after the Girl Scout has completed her part.
- **Measurable** projects enable a girl to demonstrate her impact through data and other information. She can use numbers to say, "Here's how I know I made a change."
- A Gold Award project has a **national and/or global link** when a Girl Scout can explain how her project connects to an issue that is relevant beyond her own community. Examples: poverty, literacy, women's rights, environmental sustainability.

What resources are available to help girls and caregivers understand the Gold Award?

Check out GSUSA's [Gold Award webpage](#) for the fundamentals—and visit your council's website as well, because each council has a unique process that supports girls through their Gold Award journeys! Your council may also offer sharable resources aimed at both Girl Scouts and adults.

In October 2019, GSUSA will release brief coaching videos on its [YouTube channel](#). These videos will help girls understand the core components of going Gold.

Pro-tip: Help your troop parents learn about the Gold Award! When they understand the process and see the value, they can help their daughters prioritize it among their other commitments.

What is the time commitment behind earning the Gold Award?

Gold Award projects require a commitment of at least 80 hours from Girl Scouts, though the girls themselves design the timelines. In some cases, the work is completed over the course of a summer, and in others, over a year.

When are Girl Scouts eligible to begin working toward their Gold Award?

Girl Scouts should be a registered Senior or Ambassador in grades 9–12. In order to be eligible, girls must have completed two Senior or Ambassador Journeys or have completed a Silver Award and completed one Senior or Ambassador Journey.

What are some ways that leaders can support girls as they become Gold Award Girl Scouts?

- **Help girls understand the value of going Gold.** It's the chance to build resume-worthy leadership skills while making a lasting impact in their communities! The Gold Award can help girls strengthen college and job applications and give them access to scholarship opportunities. And for girls who plan to enlist in the armed forces, it may mean an increase in rank

Pro-tip: The Bronze and Silver Awards aren't required prerequisites for the Gold; however, the skills girls develop in earning these awards will help prepare them to become Gold Award Girl Scouts. The Bronze and Silver help girls discover how to plan and lead projects, connect with their communities, and drive intentional change.

- **Provide encouragement, but not pressure.** The Gold Award is a major time commitment. It's not for everyone, and that's OK! A girl's decision to become a Gold Award Girl Scout should be entirely her own.
- **Help girls understand the prerequisites** as early on as possible. You might help them identify Leadership Journeys that align with their interests, or even complete a Journey as a troop.
- **Get to know the safety and fundraising guidelines.** Reach out to your council's Gold Award staff for info about the council's specific requirements.
- **Introduce parents/caregivers to the Gold Award.** Your council may offer a guide for parents/caregivers that you can distribute as you see fit. You might also encourage these folks to attend an info session with you and/or your troop.
- **Offer the opportunity to attend an information session as a troop** if your council offers one. You might also consider organizing a carpool. Make it as easy as possible for your girls to opt in!

- **Dedicate a few minutes of meeting time to updates on girls' Gold Award projects.** This gives Girl Scouts the opportunity to talk through challenges, celebrate successes, and find support in brainstorming. And keep in mind though that any decisions about a girl's project should ultimately be her own.

Troop profile: If and how you dedicate meeting time to the Gold Award is up to you.

Troop leader Melanie from Girl Scouts of the Commonwealth of Virginia surveyed her troop and found that all nine members planned to become Gold Award Gold Scouts—so she dedicated two meetings per semester to the Gold Award, in addition to short check-ins during regular meetings.

"In our dedicated Gold Award meetings, we [talked] about issues in our area that our girls could address, mapped the steps for requesting permission to do the projects (if needed), and [brainstormed] general tips for moving forward, troubleshoot obstacles, etc."

The approach helped Melanie support her girls to the finish line. To date, seven have become Gold Award Girl Scouts and the other two are wrapping up!

- **Help girls make community connections.** Girls will seek experts to speak with about their chosen issues. Are there any other volunteers or caregivers who can help or introduce a girl to a potential community partner?
- **Brainstorm ways your troop members can support one another.** Girls might join forces to fundraise for their projects. They might volunteer on one another's projects—or help recruit volunteers from their schools, teams, and clubs. Assisting with another Girl Scout's project may help fulfill community service requirements for school or religious organizations.

Gold Award: Leader Checkpoints

To ensure that your girls are planning a quality **Gold Award Take Action Project** and prepared for their interviews.

Prerequisite: Journeys

- Complete two Journeys including earning the Awards * **OR** one Journey if Silver was earned
*The Journey Award requirement is a Take Action project
(A troop project, but recommended that each girl has a leadership role)

Gold Award Steps:

1. **Mandatory:** Read the **Gold Standard** & sign page 20 to be brought to interview
2. Use the [Girl Scout Gold Award Guidelines for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors booklet](#) OR use the [GoGold](#) online portal to come up with your Girl Scout Gold Award project.

The time it takes to complete the guidelines is the beginning of the Gold Award project hours, so girls need to keep a **detailed hour log!**

The use of the Gold Award Guidelines ensures a Gold Award Take Action Project that fulfills all GSUSA's Gold Award requirements:

1. **Issue** that the girl is passionate about- which tackles the **Root Cause**
 - a. *The project should address an issue in the community that the girl wishes to improve.*
2. **Project Goal**-identify what she wants to learn-*why her project matters*
3. **Individual Projects**- she is the CEO
4. **Project Advisor**- (not Leader or relative) someone who is knowledgeable in the topic of the project
 - a. *Examples- person from organization, school guidance counselors, teacher, community member*
5. **Build a Team**- can be experts in the field, peers, school clubs, town officials, friends, etc.
6. **Global Connection**- Research how the issue connects globally. After project is complete tell others about the project's impact & what she has learned. Share her project using social media, Facebook, Twitter, Blog, You Tube, or newspaper articles, presentations, etc...
7. **Sustainable**- must be able to carry on, impact is a lasting change. Examples: school clubs, organizations carrying it on, adding to school curriculum

Gold Award Proposals:

Hard copies will no longer be accepted starting August 1, 2020.

- **MUST** submitted through [GoGold](#)
- Submit Gold Award proposal at least 4-6 weeks prior to proposed start date of project
- Girl will be contacted via their email with the results of her project's review and interview date

Proposal Review Outcomes:

- Girl will be invited to an interview, **OR**
- Girl will be asked to think about a few missing items and bring this information to their interview (i.e. more team members, detailed plan, project sustainability), **OR**
- Girl will be asked to coordinate with a Gold Award Counselor to help strengthen their project before interview

Deadlines:

- October 1: **ONLY High School seniors** last day to submit proposal to Council
- March 31: Project completed & all paperwork to Council to be in the current year's ceremony
- September 30: After High School graduation, ultimate deadline to earn Gold!

Interviews:

At the interview, the girl needs to be able to talk about:

- Journey Take Action project she completed and leadership skills used
- Silver Award project, if earned
- Bring page 20 from the [Gold Standard](#) signed
- Discuss her Gold Award Project with confidence (*a practice run would be a good idea*)
- Bring in a detailed hour log of the time spent on GoGold and any other work done towards developing the project
- If the girl cannot answer any of the above questions, she will get 30 days to submit the answers prior to working on her project

GSNC Gold Award Mentors:

Once approved girls will be assigned a mentor from council. All mentors are **volunteers** who give their time to help girls succeed.

- **Girl is responsible** for checking in with mentor to keep her abreast of progress
- All flyers and money earning needs to be approved by Gold Award Mentor
- Mentors are there to help address any bumps in the road and cheer them on
- Hour Log need to be **documented along the way**, organized by day & time spent
- Mentors review, accept or decline hour log and approve final reports

GSNC can write letters for college applications, if needed.

Please reach out to customercare@gsnc.org with "Gold Award Letter for College" in the subject line.

For information on Gold Award Scholarships, visit: www.gsnc.org/gold.

Take Action Project Topics

You can use one of these topics to help you choose an issue you are passionate about. Then think about the root causes (why) the issue is happening to help create your Take Action project.

Community Development

Civic/Public Infrastructure
Homeless Awareness
Transportation
Social Services
Volunteer Capacity/Management
Historic Preservation
Animal Care Services
Independent Living Assistance

Economic Development

Financial Literacy
Workforce Development
Financial Asst. Development
Economic Revitalization
Technology Access

Disaster Recover and Relief

Disaster Mitigation
Disaster Recovery
Disaster Preparedness
Disaster Relief

Education

Adult Literacy
Computer Literacy
Special Education Programs
After School Programs
English Language Learning
Classroom Education
Child Literacy
Job Preparedness
Cultural Heritage
School Preparedness

Environment and Energy

Clean Air
Environmental Protection
Waste Reduction/Recycling
Clean Water
Environmental Restoration
Weatherization
Energy Conservation
Indoor Environment
Environmental Awareness

Health & Wellness/Nutrition

Disabilities Services
HIV/AIDS Prevention
Nutrition Education
School Lunch Nutrition
Substance Abuse Prevention/Rehabilitation
Food Protection
Maternal/Child Health Services
Aid to Seniors/Elders
Health Service Delivery
Mental Health Services

Public Safety

Accident Prevention
Crisis Intervention
Victim/Witness Services
Community Policing
Fire Prevention
Public Safety Education
Conflict Resolution/Meditation
Legal Assistance
Crime Awareness/Prevention
Offender/Ex-Offender Services/Rehabilitation
Children and Youth Safety

Youth Development

Children and Youth Safety
Juvenile Justice Services
Bullying Prevention
Teen Pregnancy/Parenting Services
Gang Prevention/Rehabilitation
Youth Leadership Development

Veterans Assistance

Housing Assistance
Military Family Assistance
Veteran Employment Services
Outreaching and Counseling
Veterans Disabilities/Rehabilitation

Arts, Culture, Heritage

Appreciation
Tolerance
History
Therapy



The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Adults

What is the Gold Award?

The Gold Award is the highest award that Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts can earn. It has a rich history of recognizing extraordinary efforts by extraordinary girls. To become a Gold Award Girl Scout, a girl identifies an issue she cares about, then plans and carries out a project to address it, which will have a lasting impact in her community and beyond.

What are the prerequisites?

Girls must be registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador. Before beginning her application, a Girl Scout must have completed two Senior or Ambassador Journeys or have completed one Senior or Ambassador Journey and have earned the Girl Scout Silver Award.

How long does a Gold Award project take to complete?

Gold Award projects require a commitment of at least 80 hours from Girl Scouts. The timeline is designed by each individual Girl Scout. A project might be completed over the course of a summer—or in the span of a year or more.

What should Girl Scouts consider in their decision to become a Gold Award Girl Scout?

They should consider the time commitment and decide for themselves whether they truly want to take it on. The decision to do so should be a girl's own.

Who else is involved in a Girl Scout's Gold Award project?

Girl Scouts select a project advisor, who is an adult expert on their chosen issue. (Note: a girl's parent, caregiver, or troop leader can't hold this role.) The project advisor

provides advice and expertise throughout the project. And because the Gold Award emphasizes leadership, Girl Scouts assemble a team of volunteers to help with their project. The volunteer pool is not limited to fellow Girl Scouts and can include anyone.

What are helpful ways for parents to support their daughter as she becomes a Gold Award Girl Scout?

- **Get to know more about the Gold Award**, including the associated council's Gold Award process and its safety, insurance, and travel guidelines. The council's Gold Award page and [girlscouts.org](https://www.girlscouts.org) are both great resources.
- **Discussing project ideas** with her, to help her identify her passions.
- **Encourage**—but don't pressure.
- **Help her develop a network of contacts** that can provide insight, skills, and resources.
- **Acknowledge that she is capable** and that she can assume leadership and responsibility in her own way.
- **Prompt her to take the lead** in working with her council, project advisor, and team.
- **Let her grow** by working through challenges she encounters along the way.
- **Recognize that her project is as unique as she is**, so don't compare her—or her project—to other girls and their Gold Awards.
- **Be a cheerleader** from the sidelines, and help when asked.
- **Celebrate big-time** as she's honored as a Gold Award Girl Scout!



The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Project Advisors

What is the Gold Award?

The Gold Award is the highest award that a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador (grades 9–12) can earn. To become a Gold Award Girl Scout, a girl identifies an issue that's important to her, then develops and carries out an innovative and sustainable solution with measurable impact. Each solution/project must link to a national and/or global issue.

What types of projects are Gold Award-eligible?

A Gold Award project must reflect the following: the Girl Scout has identified the root cause of a community issue she's passionate about, the action she takes must address a real need and have long-term benefits, she must show leadership by guiding a team of volunteers, and the project must be sustainable and measurable with a national and/or global link.

How long does a Gold Award project take to complete?

Gold Award projects require a commitment of at least 80 hours from the Girl Scout. The timeline is designed by the Girl Scout and enhanced with your input.

Who can be a project advisor?

A project advisor is an adult who chooses to be on a Girl Scout's Gold Award team and is an expert on the issue the girl's project addresses. Parents, caregivers, or troop leaders of girls pursuing their Gold Award cannot be advisors. Adult siblings and family members like aunts and uncles can sometimes be advisors if they are

experts on the issue the Girl Scout is exploring. However, we encourage Girl Scouts to branch outside of their families when possible.

What is the role of a project advisor?

A project advisor offers a Girl Scout guidance and expertise as needed, during the planning and execution of the girl's Gold Award project. Note that it's important that the project and its core ideas be the Girl Scout's own.

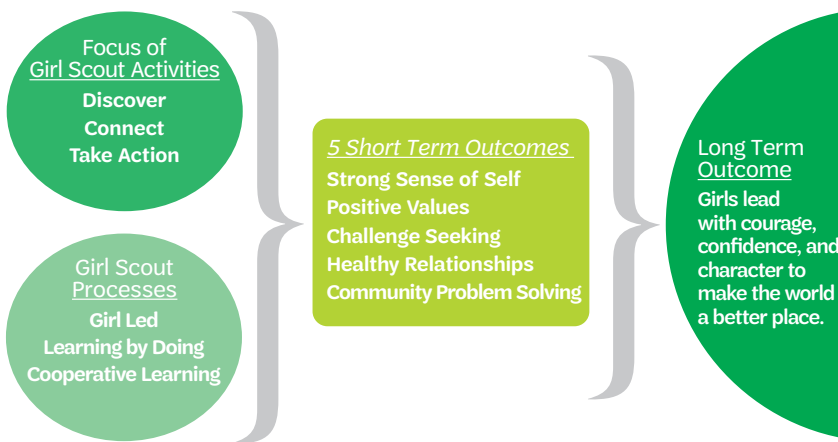
How can I support a Girl Scout as she completes her Gold Award project?

Although the project advisor role is flexible, here are some ways you can show your support:

- Recognize that the girl's project is as unique as she is, so don't compare her—or her project—to other girls and their Gold Awards.
- Let her interview you to help her better understand the issue she's addressing.
- Refer her to colleagues or acquaintances of yours for interviews or advice.
- As she researches and plans her project, refer her to relevant books, web resources, and/or organizations.
- Offer to act as a sounding board for any questions that may come up over the course of her project.
- Help her brainstorm the metrics most useful in ensuring her project has a measurable impact.
- Offer to review her proposal or final report before it's submitted.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

When girls become Gold Award Girl Scouts, they practice leadership skills that they will carry into their futures. **The Girl Scout Leadership Experience** provides a framework for supporting girls as they learn to lead by creating thoughtful change in their communities. It can be broken down into **three actions** Girl Scouts take during their Gold Award projects, the **three processes** that they use to do so, and **five ways they benefit** a result.



Actions—what girls do:

When girls **discover**, **connect**, and **take action** they demonstrate leadership.

1. When girls **discover**, they better understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world.
2. When girls **connect**, they support, inspire and partner with others, globally and locally.
3. And finally, when girls **take action**, they act to make the world a better place. First, they identify the root cause of a problem. Then, they develop and execute a project that continues to address that problem after they've done their part.

Here's How You Can Help: Ask girls about the issues that matter most to them. Help them to identify their skills and brainstorm how they can use them for good. Assist them in locating resources to help them learn more about their chosen issue.

Processes- how they do it:

1. Girls actively lead and shape their experiences. Gold Award projects that are **girl-led** find girls engaging their curiosity, creativity, and critical-thinking skills.
2. **Learning by doing** actively engages girls in a hands-on learning that results in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills
3. **Cooperative learning** empowers girls to learn and achieve even more through teamwork/collaboration.

Here's How You Can Help: Allow girls to take full ownership of their projects, even when they reach roadblocks. Encourage them to reflect on their experiences and ask them to share their discoveries with you. Introduce them to subject matter experts and volunteers they might learn from and partner with.

Outcomes

As girls **discover**, **connect**, and **take action** through Gold Award projects that are **girl-led** and involve **learning by doing** and **cooperative learning**, they benefit in five important ways.



Here's How You Can Help: Prompt girls to think about how they've grown over the course of their projects. Ask them what they've learned about leadership and teamwork. Discuss how they can continue applying those lessons once their projects are done.