



Your Guide to Going Gold



How to Become a Gold Award Girl Scout

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the mark of the truly remarkable. Through pursuing the Gold Award, Girl Scouts change the world by tackling issues they are passionate about to drive lasting change in their communities and beyond while they learn essential skills that will prepare them for all aspects of life. As a bonus, the Gold Award opens doors to a variety of scholarships, preferred admission tracks for college, strong networking and amazing career opportunities, and much more.

This guide offers a comprehensive overview of everything from planning to proposals and teamwork to time logs. So, whether you've been dreaming of your Gold Award since you were a Daisy or you're a new member in high school looking to make a difference, this guide is for you. Let's get going and let's Go Gold!

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Part 1: The Gold Award Defined

Curious about the Gold Award? Read on to learn more about what it means and how you'll lead lasting change in your community.

The benefits of becoming a Gold Award Girl Scout

When you become a Gold Award Girl Scout, you delve deep into your passions, flex your problem-solving muscle, stand up for what you believe in, inspire others, and make a difference. It's an opportunity to do something more and to set your sights on true leadership.

Here are a few other reasons to Go Gold:

- Grow professional skills. Gold Award Girl Scouts become pros in team building, problem solving, project planning, and time management. These are invaluable skills that all professionals need—and all people value. You can highlight these experiences as you apply to schools, jobs, internships, and other opportunities.
- Earn scholarships. Many universities and colleges award *scholarships* to Gold Award Girl Scouts.
- Build your network. Gold Award Girl Scouts recruit and lead teams to do amazing things! This experience will give you a network of supporters that lasts a lifetime.
- Enlist at a higher pay grade when you join the military.
- Each year, GSWISE selects one Gold Award Girl Scout to receive GSUSA's Gold Award Scholarship for their exemplary Gold Award project.

Things to remember:

Do this for you—not for anyone else! This isn't your parent's or troop leader's project. The Gold Award is an opportunity to harness your passion and put your ideas into motion. It's challenging. It's immensely rewarding. And it's entirely up to you.

Once you've earned the Gold Award, you can proudly claim your Gold Award digital credential from Credly, our verification partner! You can display it on your social media profiles, including LinkedIn. This allows prospective employers, universities/colleges, military academies, and others to verify your achievement simply by viewing your profile.



Key Elements of the Gold Award

The Girl Scout Gold Award is a **Take Action project** that must include **five elements**. Your project must (1) address a **root cause** of an issue that you feel passionate about that has a (2) **national and/or global link**. Through your actions, you must demonstrate (3) **leadership** while also creating (4) **sustainable** and (5) **measurable** impact.

What does “take action” really mean?

Taking action means working to understand the root cause of a problem so that you can develop a solution that continues to address that issue—even after your Gold Award project has been completed. Simply put, taking action goes beyond community service.

What’s the difference between community service and a Take Action project?

Take Action and community service projects are different, and both are essential to Girl Scouting. When you earn the Gold Award, you are transformed from living the Girl Scout Law to bringing it to life!

Community service projects are acts of kindness and important ways to help something or someone right now. They are commonly “one and done” activities. Performing community service almost always multiplies efforts that are already in place. Examples include collecting food for an existing food pantry, providing clothing or toiletries to people who have suffered a disaster, cleaning up a run-down playground, or picking up trash at a park, forest, or beach.

Girl Scout Take Action projects address an issue by tackling the factors that cause or contribute to it. As you may expect, these projects have a far-reaching impact. They are designed to change something for the better—forever.

Use this table to help determine whether an idea is a community service or Take Action project.

Something to remember:

Collecting, beautifying, decorating, and cleaning can be part of a Take Action project; however these activities are not stand-alone Gold Award projects. Stay focused on unique solutions with long-term relief.



Community Service	Take Action
A short-term effort that helps something or someone fulfill an immediate need	A long-term project with sustainable and ongoing impact that addresses a root cause of an issue
Done FOR the community	Done WITH the community
Joining an existing effort to solve a problem	Creating a unique initiative to address an issue
Done as part of an existing team (usually as a volunteer)	Creating and leading your own team of volunteers
Working towards a goal that’s set by others	Setting the goals and leading a team to achieve them

Key Elements of the Gold Award

What is a root cause?

Root causes are an issue's trigger—they identify *why* an issue is happening. Often, you'll have to look for the *why* in a lot of places in order to get to the root causes. Once you've identified your issue, you can create a "mind map" in GoGold, the Gold Award web app (learn more about *GoGold*). This will help you find its root causes. A mind map can help you understand what triggers your issue and will help you look further to find the root causes of those triggers.

Root Cause Example: *Rachel is passionate about ocean conservation. She asks why ocean pollution happens and lists several causes, including acid rain, soil runoff, and oil spills. She remembers witnessing the harmful impact of a major oil spill in her local ecosystem and decides to learn more about why oil spills happen. Rachel reaches out to experts and, after additional research, learns that a lack of safety protocols for oil storage is one of the root causes. She chooses to create a project that addresses how oil storage can be made safer to prevent spills.*

Step 2: Investigate will walk you through how to use a mind map and then research your issue's root causes. When you're ready, visit **Step 2 of GoGold** to do it yourself!



How do I include a national and/or global link in my project?

Identifying a national and/or global link doesn't mean you need to travel or expand your project across the globe. It's likely that the issue you've been working towards addressing is relevant worldwide—it can be found in your own local, regional, or national community and across the globe, whether it's poverty, hunger, illiteracy, homelessness, or pollution.

Research how other areas, communities, or countries address your issue. Seeing how other people and places implement solutions might inspire your actions and will absolutely show you a national or global connection. Consider reaching out, explaining your ideas, and asking for their advice, ideas, and even collaboration. You can use what you learn to inform your project. Plus, these kinds of partnerships can be excellent ways to make sure your project's sustainable.

National and/or Global Link Example:

For the past four years, Maria has volunteered at a local animal rescue group. It regularly operates at its maximum capacity and is unable to take in additional animals. Maria decides to tackle one of the root causes of this issue for her Gold Award. As she begins her research, she learns that animal rescue groups across the country share similar challenges and discovers various perspectives on animal welfare across the globe. Then, she reaches out to relevant animal welfare organizations to better understand the issue and to access the research that they have available. She decides to focus on a solution that she can implement at animal rescue groups in her community and share widely.

Visit **Step 4 of GoGold** to identify your issue's national and/or global link. Be sure to include research that backs it up!

Key Elements of the Gold Award

How do I show leadership in my project?

It isn't a leader's job to do everything; rather, it's the leader's job to make sure everything gets done. You will demonstrate leadership by recruiting and engaging a diverse team of volunteers from your network and around the community. Share your vision to help align your team—you can also map out activities, set schedules, create a communication plan, and solve challenges if they arise.

Take Action projects require partnering with the community you're serving, so be sure to enlist appropriate individuals, groups, or organizations before, during, and after your project to make sure they are engaged with and benefit from your project. Ideally, your project will provide the community you serve with a much-needed solution, so they will help sustain your project.

Step 3: Get Help features important members of your team and the roles they might play. When you're ready, visit **Step 3 of GoGold** to list your team members and share how you plan to lead them as you implement your project.

Leadership Example: *Caitlin elevated their passion for theater to raise awareness about substance abuse issues among high school students. Caitlin reached out to the high school's drama club for volunteer actors and backstage crew members. Caitlin found volunteers within their Girl Scout troop to design and distribute promotional materials for performances.*

At a local drug abuse education nonprofit, Caitlin learned about the extent of substance abuse in town and found a project advisor. Caitlin's advisor connected them with volunteer educators who informed the educational components of Caitlin's project and hosted talk-backs after performances. Finally, Caitlin engaged other high school drama clubs to make sure that the program continued to reach the target audience.



Key Elements of the Gold Award

What does a sustainable project look like?

Sustainability means that your project, as well as the work towards addressing your issue, carries on or continues even after you've done your part and earned the Gold Award. In a nutshell: you'll put a plan in place that helps your Gold Award create lasting change.

Sustainability is not one-size-fits-all. Here are three different ways you can make sure your project is sustainable:

1 *Create a permanent solution ... and make sure it's used.*

Short project description	How you know it's sustained ...
Brand-new girls wrestling team at your school	Get a letter of commitment from your school administration to sustain the team
Cultural competency club at a local community center	Provide a how-to manual with guidelines and your organization charter to the community center so they can maintain your project after you wrap up
Formal-wear lending boutique for military families	Establish a system for rotating and refreshing available items that outlasts your support

2 *Educate others by inspiring them to change their attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors ... and prove the changes by using a measurement tool and either 1) putting a plan in place to continue the education beyond your involvement or 2) enacting a call to action.*

Short project description	How you know it's sustained ...
Stress-relief awareness campaign	Collect pre- and post-surveys to measure change in your audience's knowledge and perceptions and enact a call to action, like a pledge, to track who commits to adopting new self-care habits
Reading workshops to promote early literacy	Collect pre- and post-surveys to measure how audience reading skills improve and share the curriculum with a community partner to continue literacy education
School recycling presentations	Collect pre- and post-surveys to measure increase in recycling know-how and enact a call to action, like an online tracking system to count the number of students recycling at the school and total pounds of recycled material annually

3 *Advocate to change a rule, regulation, or law ... and engage others in your advocacy.*

Short project description	How you know it's sustained ...
Protecting sea turtle habitats	Get others to take up the cause by signing a petition as part of a campaign to enact a law that protects the animals' habitats. Your advocacy is what matters—bonus points if you get a law passed, but even if you don't, you can still change minds and behavior along the way.

Visit [Step 4 GoGold](#) to plan your project's sustainability.

Key Elements of the Gold Award

How do I measure my impact?

Your impact is measurable when you collect information or data throughout your project and use it to show that your actions have had a positive effect on the community and/or contributed to addressing your issue.

Think about what you can **count** in order to measure the effectiveness of your project. This means that you will need to set a goal or two! That way, when you measure your results, you'll know how effective your project was overall. Goals can feel intimidating, but remember, you're setting them for yourself—and they are adaptable.

You can begin demonstrating your impact by asking “how much?” or “how many?”

- You can count how many people your project helped, involved, or educated, or how many people changed their behavior or attitudes. You can also count the number of members in a group (social media or in person) or how many clicks, shares, views, or comments your website or posts received.
- If you are introducing a new concept to a group, you can use a pre- and post-questionnaire to measure how much they've learned or assess what behaviors they've changed.

Successful Gold Award projects have goals and measure true impact. Be confident in setting and measuring multiple goals, so you can understand the impact of each part of your project. And don't be shy about expanding your efforts as you go!



Measurement Example: *Nancy is creating a technology class for women in the prison system to help prepare them for future employment. She sets two goals: to reach 50 women in the prison system with her technology class by the end of the school year and to be sure at least 75% of the women feel like they have increased their tech skills. To measure her impact, she plans to use two metrics: she will track participation to make sure she serves at least 50 women, and she will circulate questionnaires before and after the classes to assess if her participants are increasing their tech skills. By consistently tracking her progress, she can adjust her plan to better meet her goals.*

Visit **Step 4 of GoGold** to create your project's goals and outline how you'll measure your impact.

Something to remember: While goals are important guidelines, they may change as you go along. It's OK—it's all part of the learning process. Collecting and analyzing data throughout your project will help you gauge the impact your project is having, make improvements and adjust your goals as necessary, and ultimately tell a compelling story about your Gold Award. If you think you need to change your goals after your proposal has been approved, reach out to your council contact for advice and support.

Part 2: Achieving Your Gold Award

Now that you've learned about the Gold Award, you're ready to earn it—the greatest achievement in Girl Scouting! It may sound daunting, but we'll break it down into smaller, more manageable steps. Read on for more on how to get started. And remember: your council and the Girl Scout Movement will be there to support you every step of the way!

How do I know I'm ready?

You can begin working on your Gold Award proposal in GoGold after you've crossed certain items off your to-do list. You're ready when:

- You're in grades 9–12.
- You're a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador.
- You've completed the Girl Scout Silver Award, one Senior/Ambassador Leadership Award, or one Senior/Ambassador Journey.
- You feel compelled to do something meaningful that will make the world a better place!

How do I know what to do—and when?

A great place to start is by taking GSWISE's mandatory Girl Scout Gold Award training to learn about the Gold requirements and GSWISE processes. Register for an in-person session at gswise.org>MYGS or view the recorded virtual training which can be found at www.gswise.org/goldaward

How much time does it take?

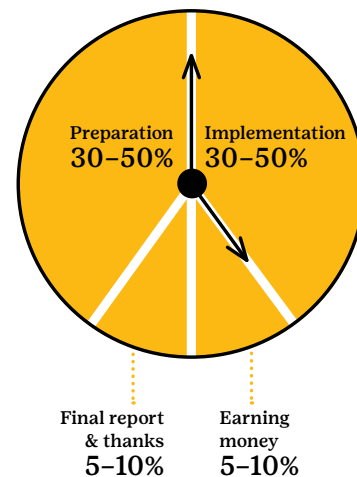
Plan to spend 80 hours bringing your project to life—that's the minimum. These hours will give you the time you need to properly plan and execute your project—though keep in mind that your schedule and other time commitments will influence how long it takes to complete your project. This is OK, whatever timeline you follow is just fine!

Use this chart—and the definitions to the right—as a guide to help you plan how to best invest your time for maximum efficiency and impact.

Preparation (30–50%) includes time planning pre- and post-approval.

- Pre-approval (up to 25%) is the process of preparing your project plan before council review and approval. This includes some research, contacting possible community partners, investigating potential venues, finding prospective volunteers, and ultimately completing your project proposal.

Budget Your Hours



- Post-approval (up to 25%) is the work of finalizing your research and locking in your logistics after your proposal is approved by your council. For example, you might contact your venue and set dates and times for workshops.

Implementation (30–50%) is the process of leading and executing the plan you defined in your project proposal and making changes, when necessary, to achieve the project's goal. *This includes training your volunteers, leading your team to do your project, and more!*

Earning money (5–10%) is optional, and only includes time you spend earning money for your Gold Award.

Final report & thanks (5–10%) includes reflecting on your impact and appreciating your team, which are essential parts of the Gold Award, so make these a priority as you wrap up.

It's easy to forget an activity, email, or conversation, so use the "Track My Work" tab in GoGold to make sure you don't miss a thing.

Part 2: Achieving Your Gold Award

What is the GoGold web app?

GoGold is a mobile-friendly web app you will use to track your progress towards completing the seven steps of the Gold Award—from idea to proposal, to taking action and final report—online!

You can use GoGold to brainstorm and submit your official Gold Award proposal as well as your final report. This system is designed with you in mind. It offers a lot more than just a place to upload documents.

GoGold takes you through each of the Gold Award steps while offering new ways to examine the issue you want to work on and its root causes, plan your project, set goals, map a timeline, and add your team members.

The functionality built into GoGold is going to save you time, too. The system includes options for your troop leader to virtually sign off on your prerequisites and for your project advisor to verify your proposal is ready for your council’s review process. (We will tell you more about the role of a project advisor in **Step 3**.)

Think of GoGold as an interactive, informative, and enormous filing cabinet up in the cloud—where every single Gold Award proposal and final report is proudly safeguarded and catalogued for all the Girl Scouts who are on this amazing journey. Plus, GoGold is the exclusive way your council can nominate a Gold Award Girl Scout for consideration to be selected as a National Gold Award Girl Scout. **Learn more** about how Going Gold could give you the opportunity for this national recognition.

What are the #1 tips to help me succeed?

Do This	Not This
Pull a team of volunteers together and put your leadership skills to work.	Do it all yourself with just a few or no volunteers.
Choose a project advisor who is an expert on your issue and willing to be involved.	Choose a parent or troop leader as an advisor.
Plan ahead and anticipate obstacles.	Wing it without a plan.
Break up your work into small, manageable bundles and assign each bundle a timeline.	Procrastinate or try to do it all at once.
Update your project advisor and council contact and ask questions when needed.	Keep project progress, obstacles, and details to yourself until you submit your final report.
Document everything as it occurs so that the information you collect is accurate and honest.	Make up a timeline after you’ve finished the project or put together several small projects.
Measure your project’s outcome—you can always look to your council contact for guidance on collecting data, conducting surveys, and doing pre- and post-evaluations.	Complete your project with no real way to measure the impact you’ve made.
Make sure your project includes the five Gold Award elements.	Submit your project proposal without addressing root cause or including a national and/or global link, sustainability, measurability, or leadership.
Include detailed goals in your project proposal that show your anticipated impact.	Skip goal setting.
Do research to make sure any organizations you plan to work with want to sustain your project.	Assume that organizations need your help.
Create a dynamic project with measurable impact on a community.	Create a static website as the focus of your project or hold a one-day workshop.
Be original—this is your chance to shine!	Copy what others have done.

What are the Seven Steps to the Gold Award?

Step 1: Choose an issue

Step 2: Investigate

Step 3: Get help

Step 4: Create a plan

Step 5: Present your plan

Step 6: Take action

Step 7: Educate and inspire

Let's break it down with a description of each step and tips for success. You'll complete these steps using *GoGold*. When you're ready, *create a GoGold account and get started!*

Step 1: Choose an issue

In this step, you'll answer questions that will help you reflect on your personal values, education, experience, and interests in order to find an issue you care about.

Use the interactive question tree in GoGold to answer a series of questions that will help you explore how to merge your passions and skills to take action. It's easy! Simply answer the questions and GoGold will do the rest, compiling your responses into project themes that may interest you.

Why?

Why are you inspired? Do you care about poverty, women's rights, environmental sustainability, health and relationships, animals, human rights, veterans, sports, or something else?

Who?

Who do you want to help? The elderly, children, those less fortunate, nature, people with disabilities, or animals?

Where?

Where do you want to make an impact? Your school, neighborhood, city, state, country, or around the world?

What?

What are your strengths and talents? Public speaking, math, community building, empathy, research, or people skills?

How?

How do you want to make a difference? Will you change a law, lead workshops, start a club, develop curriculum, give presentations, teach a skill, or take action another way?

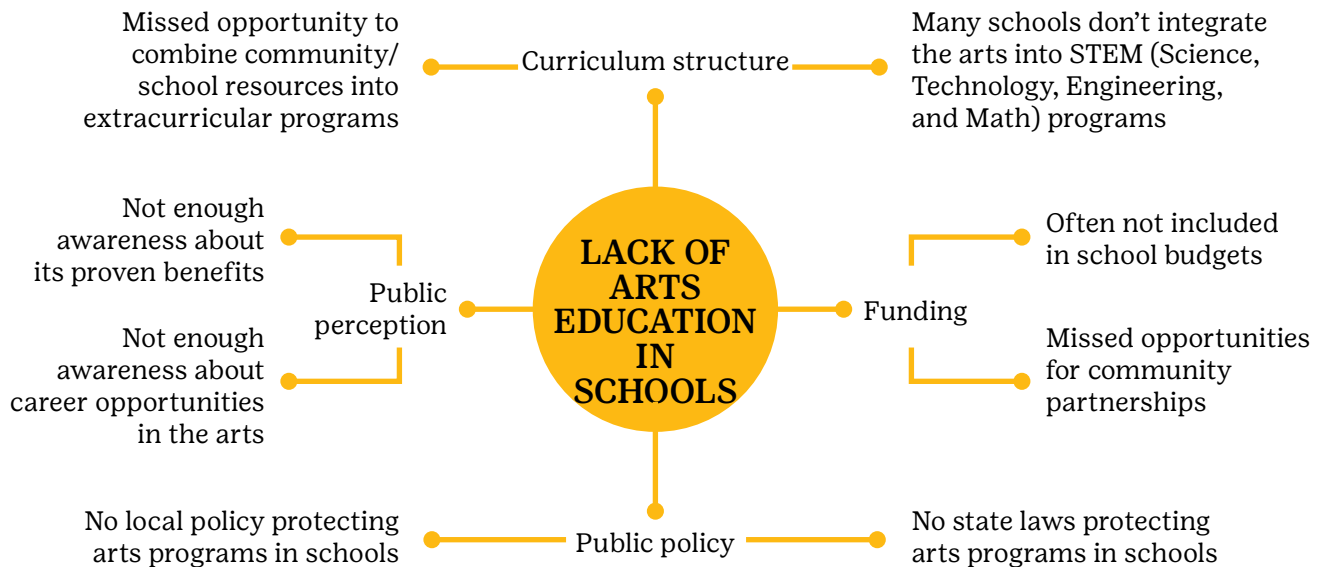
You can complete the quiz as many times as you want. And you'll leave the step with an issue or two you may want to explore further.

What are the Seven Steps to the Gold Award?

Step 2: Investigate

In Step 1, you identified a community issue or two that you're interested in exploring further. You'll need to trace back the issues to their root causes for your project and then connect with issue experts to plan your project. By addressing the root causes of your issue and involving your community in the solution, you'll be primed to make a sustainable impact.

Start by using a mind-mapping tool to explore the root causes of the issue you've chosen. Here's an example mind map:



Notice that the community issue “lack of arts education in schools” is placed in the center and that things that trigger it, like funding, public policy, public perception, and curriculum structure are explored further. When you explore further, you find **root causes**. In this example, the root causes are in the outer prongs. For example, the root causes of the public’s perception of lack of arts education in schools include not enough awareness about proven benefits and not enough awareness about career opportunities in the arts.

Once you’ve identified root causes, take your research further to make sure:

- You’ve identified a real need in the community.
- You can make your project idea happen—it’s realistic.
- You can learn about resources and develop a network beyond your friends and family to help you.

Get online. Check news and organizations’ sites related to your issue. Explore how the media in other countries cover your issue.

Get reading. Find books that offer in-depth analysis of your issue, read your local newspaper, and look for magazine articles that offer different perspectives.

Interview experts. Talk to friends, neighbors, teachers, business owners, community partners, and others who can offer information or insight about the issue you’ve chosen.

Need help identifying organizations or people who have knowledge of your issue or finding an expert to interview? Click the help icon next to the “Research” tab in GoGold for suggestions, including a community map, a short list of thought starters, and interview tips.

What are the Seven Steps to the Gold Award?

Step 3: Get help

In Step 3, you'll form a team of volunteers. Working together to put your plans into action allows you to flex your leadership muscle and make a bigger impact than you would on your own. Anyone can be on your team—you don't need to limit yourself to just people your age or those who are Girl Scouts. But do choose a diverse group of volunteers with different skill sets who will work to put your project into action and stick it out until you're done.

Here are some important members of your team:

GSWISE Staff and the **Highest Award Mentor Committee** are eager to help you succeed along your entire Gold journey. Reach out to us anytime at customercare@gswise.org or 800-565-4475.

Your project advisor is an adult you approach and invite to be on your team, who has some level of expertise in one or more areas of the issue your project addresses. Think of your project advisor as a professional consultant; they can guide you as you plan and implement your project. The project advisor does not design your project but does offer valuable insight, advice, and guidance.

Parents/guardians and troop volunteers cannot be project advisors. Sometimes adult siblings or family members such as aunts or uncles can be approved project advisors if they are experts on your issue. However, we strongly encourage you to reach outside your familiar circle and grow your network. The *Project Advisor Guide* will help your advisor understand their role and how they can support you.

Parents or guardians are amazing supporters! They can act as cheerleaders, sounding boards, and chauffeurs. They can also help you out with safety, transportation, and travel guidelines. The *Guide for Adults* lists helpful ways your parents or caregivers can help you; however, as we said above: parents/guardians cannot act as your project advisor.

Troop volunteers and individually registered member mentors can help make sure you've completed your Gold Award prerequisite and may also agree to be a part of your volunteer team. They can also review Gold Award funding, safety, and travel guidelines with you. The *Guide for Leaders* will get them started!

Friends and family may want to help you implement your plan. Troop sisters, relatives, friends, siblings, and cousins can all make terrific team members. Feel confident about giving them hands-on roles and delegating tasks to them, too!

Use Step 3 of GoGold to keep a list of your confirmed team members. You're required to work with at least one adult volunteer—your project advisor, so be sure to list them first. Then, add at least three to five additional team members who are not your parent/guardian or troop volunteer. From there, you can add as many others as you'd like!

Keep in mind that a good leader identifies specific team members with varied backgrounds and skill sets to assist with specific tasks associated with their project. While you may be inclined to primarily enlist your peers, adult support can help you form partnerships with organizations, access resources, and provide important safety measures (your council can help make sure you're covered). So, be ready to identify each volunteer's role and don't worry about missing someone—you can add more team members as you go along.

Something to remember: When you expand your circle, you expand your impact. You may feel a little bit uneasy to approach and invite those outside your network to join your team, but remember to use your proposal as your guide to explain your plans. Chances are—they will be impressed!

What are the Seven Steps to the Gold Award?

Step 4: Create a plan

In Step 4, you'll bring together the work and research you did in Steps 1–3 to show how you will achieve your project's purpose. You'll work out the specific details of your project proposal, including a project description, proposed budget and timeline, and your thoughts on how the project will impact you, your target audience, and your wider community. You'll also define your project's national and/or global link, set goals to measure your impact, and plan how you'll sustain your project (refer back to *Part 1* for a refresher).

Provide as much detail as you can so your council can evaluate your timeline and proposed scope of work. Make sure you've clearly articulated your ideas and plans, identified your team, set clear goals, and determined how your impact will be measured so it can be easily understood and evaluated. The people reviewing your proposal may not know you personally; be specific so your vision is clear to them.

How do I earn money for my project?

Gold Award projects don't need to be expensive to be successful. But we know that sometimes a project requires additional resources. First, determine how much money you need for your project by completing a proposed budget during Step 4 in GoGold. Then, decide how you'll fund your project.

What You Can Do:

- If you're in a troop, you and your Girl Scout sisters can decide to use a portion of your **troop treasury** to fund your Gold projects. Discuss your project's financial needs with your troop.
- You can also use your **Program Activity Credits** to fund your Gold. Contact us at 800-565-4475 or customercare@gswise.org to get this process started.
- Use **personal money** from babysitting, chores, or job, etc.
- Troops may participate in approved **Money-Earning Activities** in which they are the sole beneficiary of the profit after they have supported GSWISE through participation in both council-sponsored product sales (the Fall Product Program and Girl Scout Cookie Program).

- o Example money-earning activities: car wash, garage sale, sell handmade items, aluminum can collection drive, host an event and charge an entrance fee, provide neighborhood services such as shoveling snow, etc. Groups can also sell pre-cooked meat products (such as brat fry) after receiving food safety instruction.
- o All money-earning activities must be approved by GSWISE before taking part in a money-earning activity. For council money earning guidelines please visit www.gswise.org/resources.
- o Find additional ideas for money-earning activities and managing troop finances in the Troop Money Management Finance Booklet in Rallyhood and in Volunteer Essentials at gswise.org.

- Apply for a **community grant** and contact GSWISE at customercare@gswise.org or 800-565-4475 to work with our Philanthropy Team on the approval, application, and reporting process.
- **Direct solicitation for philanthropic donations** by asking friends, family, and companies to donate money and/or supplies for your Gold project. To get started, it is required that you contact our Philanthropy Team at customercare@gswise.org or 800-565-4475 to work through this process which makes sure all donations are tracked and donors receive tax receipts or acknowledgement letters.
 - o If soliciting for monetary donations, GSWISE will set up a link (that is unique to your project) in our GSWISE donor system. You will then provide that link to your potential donors. When you complete your fundraising, GSWISE will send you a pre-paid card with the amount you have raised. If donors prefer to send a paper check through the mail, the check should be made out to "GSWISE" with your name in the memo section, so we know it is for your project. They can send checks directly to: GSWISE, 131 S 69th St., Milwaukee, WI 53214, for processing.
 - o If soliciting for donations of supplies, you will need to provide a list of items needed and businesses you wish to solicit from for GSWISE review and approval.

What are the Seven Steps to the Gold Award?

How do I earn money for my project?

What You Can't Do

- **Raise money for another organization and donate proceeds to that organization**
- **Raffles, contests, BINGO** or other games of chance. IRS guidelines prohibit these activities from being conducted by Girl Scouts.
- **GoFundMe** pages and other forms of third-party crowdfunding sites
- **Activities that generate profit for a specific company** as Girl Scouts restricts the endorsement of commercial products. This includes product demonstration parties (e.g. Tupperware) and promoting any company or business by distributing its coupons as a Girl Scout or volunteer, hosting a Girl Scout night or promoting a special night for discount at a restaurant (e.g. Culver's night).
- **Sell non pre-cooked meat products**

If your project expenses are too high or you encounter challenges funding your project, you may need to consider adapting your project, so the expenses aren't so high. If you raise more funds than your project requires, consider expanding your project to utilize all funds or be prepared to return unused funds to your contributors.



Can I use media to share my project?

Of course! Use multiple forms of media to share your project throughout all stages (planning, doing, celebrating). Here are some options:

- Post on **social media** following our GSWISE Social Media Guidelines: <https://www.gswise.org/en/discover/our-council/privacy-policy.html>
- Consider **print media** such as flyers, newspapers, church bulletin, school newsletter, etc.
 - o Send a **press release** to your local media following the guidelines in Press Kit for Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awardees which can be found at www.gswise.org/goldaward
 - o Print media GSWISE guidelines:
 - Get permission to use our Girl Scout logo and receive the authorized art by contacting customercare@gswise.org or 800-565-4475
 - Make sure to put the “girl” in Girl Scout, and spell it out (don’t abbreviate to GS or Scout)
 - Add high resolution photos after getting photo releases from everyone pictured in the photos.
 - Obtain approval for your printed media before distributing by contact 800-565-4475 or customercare@gswise.org
- Leverage **broadcast media** (television, radio, podcast, etc.). Contact us at customercare@gswise.org or 800-565-4475 to partner with our MarCom team for all television appearances and radio spots.
- When using the **internet** (website, email, etc.), follow the Girl Scouts Internet Safety Pledge: <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/help/help/internet-safety-pledge.html>

What are the Seven Steps to the Gold Award?

What do I need to know about safety?

As a Girl Scout, you know that safety is important. When you work on the Gold Award, it's a good idea to make a basic safety management plan. In advance, think about:

- What could go wrong
- How to prevent things from going wrong
- What to do if they go wrong anyway

Here are several GSWISE safety guidelines and policies to follow throughout your Gold Award:

- Make sure your **Girl Scout membership** remains current while you are working on all steps of the Gold Award.
- Only the CEO or designee can sign **agreements or contracts** on behalf of GSWISE. This includes facility rentals, chartered vehicles, etc. Submit contract to customercare@gswise.org to be signed by an appropriate signer.
- Obtain **parental permission** for any participants under the age of 18 who are participating in your project. Find the Parent Permission Form at www.gswise.org/resources.
- If your project requires youth involvement, you must have the required **minimum number of responsible adults/leaders** present. Consult the Safety section of Volunteer Essentials to determine the number of required adults at <https://www.gswise.org/en/for-volunteers/VolunteerEssentials/Safety.html>.
- Review **Safety Activity Checkpoints** when planning activities to manage safety and risk in Girl Scout-sanctioned activities. Find Safety Activity Checkpoints at www.gswise.org/resources. If an activity is not referenced in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, contact us at customercare@gswise.org or 800-565-4475 for guidance.
- Make sure a **first aid/CPR-certified adult** is present during all activities involving youth/minors.

- Taking pictures? You will need a **Photo Release Form** from everyone that appears in your pictures. Find the forms for adults and minors in English and Spanish at www.gswise.org/resources.
- **Prohibited activities in Girl Scouts:** Bungee jumping; flying in privately owned planes, helicopters, or blimps; hang gliding; untethered hot-air ballooning; hunting; snowmobiling; riding a motorbike or electric scooters; using outdoor trampolines; parachuting or skydiving; parasailing; paintball tagging; riding all-terrain vehicles (ATVs); stunt skiing; zorbing
- **Girl Scouts never drive others during Girl Scout activities or field trips.**
- Review the current federal, state, and local **COVID-19** guidelines and restrictions in your region as well as the GSWISE specific guidelines and restrictions to make sure your Gold Award activities are in compliance.

There are some policies and procedures that may seem cumbersome, but they are in place for your protection and that of Girl Scouts, whom you are representing. If you find yourself in a situation where you need guidance, reach out to your project team, or contact council staff at customercare@gswise.org or 800-565-4475 and we will assist you.



What are the Seven Steps to the Gold Award?

Step 5: Present your plan

You'll know you're ready to submit your proposal to your council for review and approval when you can confidently check all the boxes below:

- You've met the prerequisite (see "How do I know I'm ready?")
- You've created a unique project
- You've chosen an expert project advisor (Step 3: Get Help)
- You've engaged a team of volunteers who will take action with you
- You've addressed the root cause of an issue
- You've tackled your target audience's needs
- You've set clear goals. You can say, "Here is the change I plan to make, and here's how I'll know I've made it."
- You've designed a sustainable project
- You've identified a national and/or global link
- You've developed a realistic budget and identified the resources you need to carry out the project
- Your project will take at least 80 hours to complete
- You have the skills to get started
- You've created a plan to inspire others about your project and its impact

Before you submit, be sure to upload any additional files your council requires and download a copy of your proposal to keep for your records. Then, get your troop leader/volunteer to verify that you completed your prerequisites and obtain project advisor support of your proposal before submitting it. You'll be able to use GoGold to send an email request for verification that they can complete online in just a few clicks. Your council will have a specific review and approval process, so be sure to check in with them for next steps.

Proposal review and approval process

You must obtain GSWISE approval before implementing your Gold Award project. Submit your project for approval at minimum three weeks prior to when you wish to begin. After your submission, you will receive an email from GSWISE connecting you with an adult volunteer from the Highest Awards Committee who will remain appointed to you through the entire duration of your Gold Award, all the way through the final approval process. You will correspond with your appointed committee member through email, text messages, phone calls, video calls, and/or in person meetings to gain council approval (the committee member will confer with all members of the committee behind the scenes to gain collective feedback/questions regarding your project plan). When you correspond with your appointed committee member, you will be asked questions about your project (many of the questions will be provided to you in advance) giving you an opportunity to share your plan in detail so council gains a full understanding of your project. Both you and your appointed committee member will complete individual assessments using the Gold Award Project Proposal Rubric to guide discussion of your project. The committee member may provide you with feedback to consider, and you'll have an opportunity to ask questions as well. Once your project has been approved by your appointed committee member, you will receive a confirmation email from GSWISE and you can move forward with your project plan.

What is the Highest Awards Committee?

- Dedicated group of passionate adult volunteers that want to see you succeed
- They help make sure your projects meet the Gold Award guidelines
- They offer support, answer your questions, provide feedback, are your cheerleaders, and more!

If you wish to connect with the Highest Awards Committee prior to submitting a Project Proposal, contact 800-565-4475 or customercare@gswise.org to make the request to be connected earlier in the process.

What are the Seven Steps to the Gold Award?

Step 6: Take action

Once your proposal is approved, it's go time! Lead your team to carry out your plan. Log your hours and track your income and expenses as you put your proposal into action. Use the Experience Log to upload photos, videos, and/or text posts showing your project in action. These posts will be shared with your council when you submit your final report in Step 7.

Check the "Summary" tab in Step 6 of GoGold for an overview at any time.

What if I need to modify my project?

Even with the best pre-planning intentions, it is inevitable that obstacles will arise that you'll need to overcome. If you need to modify your project plan from your original Project Proposal submission, contact your appointed committee member to keep council informed of the obstacle you encountered and how you are modifying your project. Likely, for minor modifications no further reapprovals will be necessary. However, when council is not informed of a modification that would be considered large, you risk not gaining final approval in the final approval process if your project no longer meets the Gold Award guidelines. Avoid this situation from occurring by simply updating your appointed committee member of any modifications you intend to make, big or small.



Step 7: Educate and inspire

By Step 7, you're in the home stretch and completing your final report. It's time to tell your story—to tell others what you did, what you learned, and the impact your project had on your target audience. This is your chance to shine, so be sure to fully reflect on each question and provide thoughtful, detailed answers.

Upload any files and download a copy of your final report for your records. You'll obtain project advisor verification for the great work you completed and then submit to your council for review and approval.

Similar to when you submit your proposal to your council at Step 5, your council will have a specific review and approval process for Step 7, so be sure to check in with them for next steps.

Final report review and approval process

The official deadline to submit your Final Report is **September 30** after your 12th grade year. After your Final Report is submitted, you will receive an email from GSWISE reconnecting you with your originally appointed committee member from the Highest Awards Committee. Your appointed committee member will correspond with you to schedule your final presentation. Prior to your final presentation, your appointed committee member will also confer with all members of the committee behind the scenes to gain collective feedback/questions regarding your Final Report. During your final presentation (which takes about 30 minutes), your appointed committed member will ask you a series of questions about your completed project (many of the questions will be provided to you in advance), and you and your appointed committee member will determine if the project that you completed followed the Gold Award Guidelines and fulfilled either the 'meet standards' or 'exceeds standards' ratings in the Gold Award Project Rubric. Your final presentation is an opportunity to showcase your hard work! Once your project has been given final approval by your appointed committee member, you will receive a confirmation/congratulatory email from GSWISE noting your accomplishments!

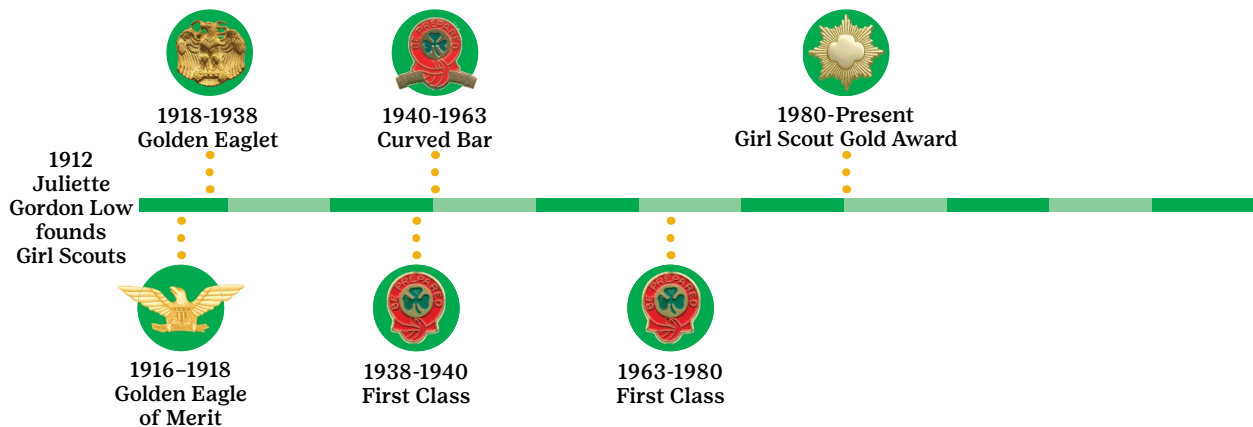
Congratulations, You're a Gold Award Girl Scout!

You've earned the Gold Award, the most highly regarded award in the world for Girl Scouts. It's the mark of the truly remarkable. Becoming a Gold Award Girl Scout marks an important milestone in your Girl Scout career. The same vision, commitment, and leadership that brought you through the Gold Award process will now carry you to new heights. This will distinguish you on scholarship applications, college admission essays, and on your résumé—forever. What you have earned will set you apart, in all the best possible ways!

In addition to accomplishing this challenging personal goal, you can now join an esteemed group of Girl Scouts who share this distinction.

From its beginning in 1916, the greatest achievement in Girl Scouting has been a symbol of excellence and leadership that recognizes the extraordinary efforts of extraordinary people. While the Gold Award has gone by many names, now all Girl Scouts who earned the First Class, Curved Bar, Golden Eaglet, or Golden Eagle of Merit are part of the Gold Award Girl Scout Family (see *GSUSA's proclamation*). Its timelessness has inspired generations of young Girl Scouts to find greatness inside themselves and share their ideas and passions with their communities and the world. Congratulations on joining this network of talented and inspirational individuals!

YOU'VE JOINED HISTORY—WELCOME TO THE GOLD AWARD GIRL SCOUT FAMILY!



Share your accomplishment with the world!

How many other teenagers can say they led a team that tackled an issue in their community to create lasting change? We know you can say it! You stand out in a crowd—own it!

Now that you're a Gold Award Girl Scout, it's time to leverage your accomplishment and share your passion:

- Capture the skills you gained. Remember all the things you learned while earning the Gold Award. Things like project management, team building, public speaking, and resource development are real-life skills that need to be highlighted. Make sure you add your new skills and competencies to your future applications and résumés.
- Apply for scholarships. When applying for scholarships (and you should be!), you'll want your Gold Award to be a highlight. The work that goes into earning it will show you as a well-rounded, community-minded, forward-focused can-doer! Be sure to review these specific *scholarships* designed just for Gold Award Girl Scouts.
- Expand your network. Think of all the people you met and engaged with while working towards the Gold Award. Keep all those contacts and add them to your professional social media accounts, like LinkedIn, whenever possible. Those individuals will be proud to be connected to you, and the Girl Scout Gold Award, forever.
- Get paid more. If you join the military, you can enlist at a higher pay grade.
- Get the job. Highlight your Gold Award on your résumé—as well as all of the skills you gained while earning it. Don't underestimate the power of a Girl Scout alum, or sister Gold Award Girl Scout, receiving your résumé or application!

Résumé tips:

Describe what the Gold Award means for anyone who may not be familiar with it (ideally one sentence or less).

For example:

- Earned the Girl Scout Gold Award by planning and executing an 80-hour service-learning project and managing a team of volunteers and community partners

Quantify, quantify, quantify! Include measurable outcomes from your project to tell about your leadership experience and impact. Instead of saying:

- Developed a robotics program for girls

Try something more powerful, like:

- Created a robotics curriculum that reached 80 girls—90% of whom reported an increased interest in STEM careers

- Partnered with two school districts to add the curriculum to 10 school clubs
- Implemented a social media strategy to educate girls on STEM opportunities, achieving more than 5,000 impressions in total

List skills that you developed in pursuing your Gold Award. Shine a light on transferable skills like project management, communication, strategic planning, research, budget oversight, fundraising, team building, and social media marketing.

Elevate your online story. If you created a website as part of your Gold Award, consider adding a link. You can use a free URL shortener to make the link memorable.

When is the Gold Award Celebration?

Each spring, GSWISE holds a Highest Awards Celebration to recognize current members who have earned the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award over the past year. Families, troop leaders, and project advisors are encouraged to attend to celebrate you! Gold Award Girl Scouts receive their Gold Award pin, yard sign, and many certifications/commendations compliments of GSWISE. GSWISE also recognizes one outstanding Gold Award Girl Scout as a GSWISE Young Women of Distinction for their exemplary project.

To be recognized at the upcoming spring event, the Gold Final Report is due March 1 of the same year the event is being held. Girl Scouts that submit their Final Reports after March 1 will be recognized the following spring. Just remember, the official deadline to complete your project, including Final Report and Final Presentation, is September 30 after your 12th grade year.

Be sure to also celebrate your accomplishments with your troop and family; you deserve all the recognition you can get!

If you're at all curious about the Girl Scouts that have come before you, feel free to check out last year's Highest Awards Celebration Program on our council website at www.gswise.org/highestawards.



Our Resource Roundup for Girl Scouts

Here you'll find a roundup of internet resources that will help you become a Gold Award Girl Scout. We recommend referencing this list as you work on your project, then again once you're officially a Gold Award Girl Scout.

Building a Team and Network

The Gold Award Guide for Project Advisors

The Gold Award Guide for Adults

The Gold Award Guide for Troop Leaders

Designing and Carrying Out a Project: Gold Award Girl Scouts Share their Wisdom on YouTube

Go for the Gold—Tips from Gold Award Girl Scouts

Ready To Get Started?

Create a GoGold Account

FAQs (GoGold Account Required)

You're a Gold Award Girl Scout! What's Next?

Search the Scholarship Database for Opportunities for Gold Award Girl Scouts

Share your Project on the Girls Changing the World Map

Learn About the National Gold Award Girl Scouts

Get your Gold Award Credential



Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast Resources

Gold Award Virtual Training

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WamUIAdhaKs>

Your Guide for Going Gold

<https://www.gswise.org/content/dam/gswise-redesign/documents/Gold%20Award%20Girl%20Guide%20to%20Going%20Gold.pdf>

Gold Award Project Rubric

<https://www.gswise.org/content/dam/gswise-redesign/documents/GSWISE%20Gold%20Award%20Standard%20of%20Excellence%20Rubric1.pdf>

GoGold (Project Proposal and Final Report)

<https://gogold.girlscouts.org/en/sign-in.html>

Frequently Asked Questions

<https://www.gswise.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gswise/documents/Gold%20Silver%20Bronze%20Highest%20awards%20FAQs.pdf>

Press Kit for Highest Awards

<https://www.gswise.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gswise/documents/Press-Kit-for-GS-Awardees.pdf>

Project Ideas

<https://www.gswise.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gswise/documents/Bronze%20Silver%20Gold%20Award%20project%20ideas.pdf>

Greeting Card

https://www.gswise.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gswise/documents/highest_awards/Highest%20Awards%20-%20Gold%20Award%20Greeting%20Card.pdf

Gold Award Announcement Template

<https://www.gswise.org/content/dam/gswise-redesign/documents/Gold%20Award%20Announcement%20Template%20Final.pdf>

Communicating with Your Advisors template

<https://www.gswise.org/content/dam/gswise-redesign/documents/Communication%20to%20Advisors%20Template.pdf>

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

<https://www.gswise.org/content/dam/gswise-redesign/documents/Guide%20to%20the%20Girl%20Scout%20Leadership%20Experience.pdf>

Some Girl Scouts might need additional support in going Gold or may have other special factors that GSWISE's Highest Awards Team should be aware of as you pursue the Gold Award. If this applies to you, please reach out to us at 800-565-4475 or customercare@gswise.org to let us know and we will work with you to make appropriate accommodations as necessary.



Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast
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