

Girl Scout Gold Award Adult Volunteer Guide



The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors can earn. Your role, whether you're a troop/group volunteer or a project advisor, is to encourage Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors to think critically, be open to multiple perspectives, investigate thoroughly, work cooperatively, and identify resources within and beyond their local communities. You are supporting girls as they develop into leaders for today and tomorrow. There is no formal training required for you to act as the girl's project advisor.

This guide is intended to be used with the Guidelines for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors and the Girl Scout Gold Award Toolkit. Both of these documents along with the most recent Girl Scout Gold Award updates and resources are posted on the GSHPA Web site at www.gshpa.org.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is designed to be completed by an individual girl. To earn the award, each girl must complete two Senior or Ambassador journeys or complete one Senior or Ambassador journey and have earned a Girl Scout Silver Award. After completing either of these requirements, a minimum of 80 hours is suggested to complete the steps to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award.

Tips for the Troop/Group Volunteer

At this level, Girl Scouts are on their honor to uphold the Standards of Excellence. These standards respect the skills and talents that Girl Scouts bring to making a difference in world and provide a challenge that inspires girls to learn what they can accomplish by doing their very best.

Steps	Standards of Excellence	Coaching Tips
1. Choose an issue: Use your values and skills to identify a community issue you care about.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Live the Girl Scout Promise and Law. ▪ Demonstrate civic responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a listening ear. ▪ Give constructive feedback.
2. Investigate: Research everything you can about the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use a variety of sources: interview people, read books and articles, find professional organizations online. Remember to evaluate each source's reliability and accuracy. ▪ Demonstrate courage as you investigate your issue, knowing that what you learn may challenge your own and others' beliefs. ▪ Identify national and/or global links to your community issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Before the online investigation starts, suggest taking the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge at www.girlscouts.org/internet_safety_pledge.a.sp. ▪ Recommend ways to expand the project beyond the local community. For example, talking to and involving people from organizations that offer help to people on a national and global level (such as the Red Cross and Doctors without Borders).
3. Get help: Invite others to support and take action with you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek out and recognize the value of the skills and strengths of others. ▪ Respect different points of view and ways of working. ▪ Build a team and recruit a project advisor who will bring special skills to your Take Action project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working with a team will help make a bigger impact and cover more ground. Although this is an individual project, other Girl Scouts, neighbors, classmates, and friends can help. ▪ Make sure that either you or a family member is aware of times and places and who the interview subjects are. ▪ A network is a great thing. Share pointers on how to create an effective network.

<p>4. Create a plan: Create a project plan that achieves sustainable and measurable impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lead the planning of your Take Action project. ▪ Work collaboratively to develop a plan for your project that creates lasting change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide guidance on project sustainability. Here are suggestions: education and raising awareness, holding workshops and hands-on learning sessions, collaborating with community groups to ensure the project lasts. ▪ Suggest using creative ways to support the project. If money is required to complete the project, please adhere to money-earning guidelines in the Volunteer Packet and <i>Safety-Wise</i>.
<p>5. Present your plan and get feedback: Sum up your project plan for your Girl Scout council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submit a Project Proposal to your council that is concise, comprehensive, and clear. ▪ Describe your plan, including the Girl Scout Leadership Outcomes you want to achieve and the impact you plan to make on yourself and the community. ▪ Articulate your issue clearly and explain why it matters to you. ▪ Accept constructive suggestions that will help refine your project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suggest using the tools and tips in the toolkit in preparing the Project Proposal. ▪ Provide constructive suggestions. Project Proposals are submitted to councils. The Council (or the council's Gold Award Committee) approves the project.
<p>6. Take action: Take the lead to carry out your plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take action to address the root cause of an issue, so that your solution has measurable and sustainable impact. ▪ Actively seek partnerships to achieve greater community participation and impact for your Take Action project. ▪ Challenge yourself to try different ways to solve problems. ▪ Use resources wisely. ▪ Speak out and act on behalf of yourself and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conducting interviews on the chosen issue is an important part of this step. Play the interviewee to help synchronize the timing and the flow of the interviews.
<p>7. Educate and inspire: Share what you have experienced with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflect on what you have learned when you present your Girl Scout Gold Award Final Report to your council. ▪ Summarize the effectiveness of your project and the impact it has had on you and your community. ▪ Share the project beyond your local community and inspire others to take action in their own communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be available for any questions that might arise as during sharing or reflection. ▪ Suggest using the tools and tips in the toolkit to prepare the Final Report.

Tips for the Project Advisor

A Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor is chosen by a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador to help plan and implement her project. A girl may not choose her troop leader or a relative as her advisor. As the project advisor, you provide guidance, experience, and expertise to the girl as she works to complete her Take Action project.

Your primary responsibilities include:

- Partnering with a girl to support her in completing her Take Action project
- Understanding the steps to the Girl Scout Gold Award and the Standards of Excellence that need to be upheld in the Take Action Project

Girls will start working on their project by first searching for issues that they care about, and then investigating how they can narrow the focus of the issue that they have chosen, enlisting the help of others in the community, and working collaboratively to create and implement their plan.

Before girls can start working on their project, they must submit a Project Proposal to their council advisor for approval before submitting to the GSHPA staff liaison for review by the Regional Girl Scout Gold Award Committee. Girls will seek your expertise in developing and implementing the project ideas.

Girl Scout Gold Award projects require the following:

- Makes a lasting difference in the local community, region, or beyond.
- Puts the Girl Scout Promise and Law into action.
- Includes provisions to ensure sustainability.
- Identifies national and/global links to the girl's selected issue.
- Inspires others.

If you require additional assistance at any time during the award process, contact the group/troop volunteer, or your GSHPA regional Girl Scout Gold Award staff liaison. They will provide you with background information about Girl Scouts including policies, and information about any learning opportunities including council sponsored *Go for the Gold* webinars. Girls should only contact their council advisor or project advisor, not the staff liaison.

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Girl Steps to Earning the Girl Scout Gold Award

NOTE: Your project must follow the below steps in order!

- **Pre-requisites**
 1. If you have earned your Silver Award complete 1 journey at either the Senior or Ambassador level.
 2. If you have not earned your Silver Award complete 2 journeys at the Senior or Ambassador level.
- **Submit a letter of intent to your Regional Gold Award Staff Liaison.**
You will be assigned a Gold Award Advisor at this point.
- **Read the Guidelines for Earning Your Gold Award Booklet.**
- **Complete the Take Action Project Planning Checklist**
The answers to all of the questions below must be **YES** before you submit you're **Gold Award Take Action Project Plan** for council approval.
 - Will your project demonstrate your leadership skills?
 - Have you set your project goal and identified what you would like to learn?
 - Have you chosen your Take Action team? Have you discussed the project with them?
 - Have you created a budget for the project?
 - Have you created a plan to finance, if necessary?
 - Have you made a timeline for your project?
 - Does your project address a need in the local community and have you found national and/or global link?
 - Can your project be sustainable?
 - Does your project challenge your abilities and your interests?
- **Submit your Gold Award Take Action Project Plan**
Once you answer yes to all the items on this checklist, you're ready to submit your Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action Project Proposal. Remember, specifics are good. This will allow a better understanding of your project. Plans must be submitted before the 15th of each month for review at the following monthly Gold Award Advisor meeting.
- **Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action Project**
 - After you have received approval of your project, you may start putting your plan into action.
 - A Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action Project addresses the root cause of an issue, produces impact that is measurable and sustainable, and is a local project that links to a national and/or global issue.
 - Devote a suggested minimum of 80 hours to complete your project. Steps to complete your Take Action Project are:
 - ✓ Choose an issue
 - ✓ Investigate
 - ✓ Build a team
 - ✓ Create a plan
 - ✓ Present your plan and get feedback
 - ✓ Take action
 - ✓ Educate and inspire
- **Submit your Gold Award Take Action Final Report. Celebrate a job well done!**

CONGRATULATIONS!

Important Guidelines to Follow

- **Letter of Intent.** To be submitted before starting work on any part of the Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action Project. After submitting this form, you will be assigned a Gold Award Advisor who will work with you throughout the Girl Scout Gold Award process. You will be responsible for completing the requirements, developing a timeline, and getting the paperwork in on time; however, your Gold Award Advisor will be available to answer questions and guide you toward success with your project.
- Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania must receive the ***Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action Project Proposal*** by the deadlines listed in the chart on Page 5 in order for the project to be reviewed at the Gold Award Advisory committee meetings.
- All Gold Award forms must be **typed or printed clearly in black ink**, and must be **neatly and completely filled out**. All questions must be answered on a separate sheet of paper and attached to the *Project Plan and Final Report* forms.
- Your project should **meet a community need** and be able to link to a more global issue.
- Your project is suggested to be about **80 hours to complete**. This includes planning, doing, and wrap-up time.
- **Graduating seniors** should turn in the *Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action Project Plan* by the deadline for the May committee meeting, April 15, to ensure enough time to complete your project.
- **Consider what funding is necessary to do your project.** Be realistic about budgeting. Don't plan a project that requires seeking a grant or raising large sums of money. Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania **does not allow girls to participate in or hold fundraisers** for Gold Award projects. Any requests for donations of items **MUST** be approved prior to making the "ask." See "Money and your Gold Award Project" for more information on page 8.
- During your project, stay in touch with your Gold Award Advisor to discuss how your plans are proceeding. If you come to a challenge and you need help, she can assist you to work through it. She is there to help you. If your project changes in any way from your initial *Gold Award Take Action Project Plan*, you must notify your Gold Award Advisor, and submit the changes in writing to Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania. Your advisor will let you know where you can send it.
- After you have finished your project, complete and mail the *Girl Scout Gold Award Final Report* form to your Gold Award Advisor. Once she receives it, she will set up a meeting to discuss your project. You will receive your final approval from your Gold Award Advisor. Once approved, your Gold Award Advisor will send a signed copy of your final report to the Regional Gold Award Staff liaison. You will then be sent a ceremony packet, containing paperwork necessary to receive your Gold Award pin and plan your ceremony. **Allow at least eight weeks after you receive final approval from your Gold Award Advisor before the date of your ceremony.**

Project Review Process

- The Gold Award Advisory Committee is made up of adult volunteers that meet to discuss the projects.
- Be detailed in your proposal - this is all the committee members are going to know about what you want to achieve.
- The committee will determine if your project can be approved as written, approved with suggestions, or if it needs to be resubmitted.
- Make sure your proposal answers the following questions:
 - Not knowing who I am, will the committee understand what I want to accomplish?
 - Will the committee understand why I chose this project?
 - Will the committee understand how I plan to meet my intended goals?
- After the meeting, you will receive a letter stating the committee's decision. You may not begin work on your actual project until you receive notification that your project proposal has been approved. Work completed on your actual project prior to approval will not count toward your 80-hour project.
- Any changes made to your initial project proposal need to be submitted in writing to the Regional Gold Award Staff Liaison.
- **Please pay careful attention to the following deadlines to ensure enough time to complete your project.** If your proposal is submitted after a deadline has passed, it will be reviewed at the following committee meeting. Remember to allow at least 3 days for mailing your information.

Committee Meeting	Deadline to Submit Proposal	Committee Meeting	Deadline to Submit Proposal
January	December 15	July	June 15
February	January 15	August	July 15
March	February 15	September	August 15
April	March 15	October	September 15
May	April 15	November	October 15
June	May 15	December	November 15

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

- Graduating seniors should turn in the *Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action Project Plan* by **April 15 for the May Committee meeting** of the year you graduate to ensure enough time to complete your project.
- Graduating seniors must turn in the *Girl Scout Gold Award Final Report* by **September 30** of the year you graduate. After this date, you will be considered an adult Girl Scout, and you will no longer be eligible to work on the Girl Scout Gold Award.
- If you would like to be included in the **Gold Award Ceremony** of your Senior year, **your project and final report must be completed and submitted by April 15.** Otherwise you will be invited back the following year.

TO BE APPROVED AT THE MEETING, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A GOLD-WORTHY PROJECT

What does "Gold-worthy" mean? Simply put, a project will be Gold-worthy if it meets the following criteria:

- It meets a community need and can be linked to a global issue.
- The project must be done to address a problem in a girl's community outside of Girl Scouting
- It has an identifiable result: the project will accomplish something
- It is sustainable (ongoing), or has a plan to become sustainable
- It is more than a service project: it will stretch the Girl Scout's leadership skills and provide more to the community than a one-time benefit
- It meets all GSUSA and Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania requirements, and is in accordance with *Safety Wise* and all financial regulations.

Make sure you include all the details for the above criteria in your project proposal. Remember, the committee does not know you; your proposal is all they have to make their decisions.



Gold Award Project Check List

✓	ACTIVITY	DATE COMPLETED
	Attend Gold Award Information Session and/or Download Gold Award Take Action Tool Kit from council website.	
	Read the Gold Award Take Action Tool Kit	
	Start working on the Journey requirements.	
	Download <i>Letter of Intent</i> found at www.gshpa.org . Submit to regional council office when you have completed Step 1. A Gold Award Advisor will be assigned to you after receipt of your <i>Letter of Intent</i> .	
	Work on a timeline for your Gold Award Take Action Project and the requirements and discuss with your Gold Award Advisor.	
	Organize team and find Take Action Project Advisor, if needed.	
	Fill out the <i>Gold Award Take Action Project Plan</i>	
	Submit <i>Gold Award Take Action Project Plan</i> to Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania by deadline dates listed in the booklet to ensure review at the meeting of your choice.	
	Once approved, start working on your <i>Gold Award Take Action Project</i> . Keep a detailed journal/log of your hours.	
	Stay in contact with your Gold Award Advisor throughout your project. Inform her/him of any changes or problems with your project.	
	Once project is completed, submit <i>Gold Award Take Action Project Final Report</i> . Please include the detailed log/journal of your hours. The log should be neat and legible.	
	<p>Final Approval</p> <p>Once you have received final approval from your Gold Award Advisor, you will receive your ceremony packet from Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania and can begin to plan your ceremony. Please allow eight weeks to receive your pin and invitations.</p>	
	Submit back to council what is necessary.	

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

In Girl Scouting, Discover + Connect + Take Action = Leadership. The entire Girl Scout program, regardless of the exact topic, is designed to lead to leadership outcomes (or benefits) that stem from these three keys.

- **Discover:** Girls will understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world
- **Connect:** Girls care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.
- **Take Action:** Girls act to make the world a better place.

It's not only about the activities girls do, however, but the processes they use to do them that builds leadership. The Girl Scout processes promote the fun and friendship that have always been so integral to Girl Scouting.

- **Girl-led:** Girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how, and why of their activities.
- **Learning by doing:** Girls use a hands-on learning process that engages them in continuous cycles of action and reflection that result in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills.
- **Cooperative learning:** Through cooperative learning, girls work together toward goals that can be accomplished only with the help of others, in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration.

When Discover, Connect, and Take Action activities are girl-led and involve learning by doing and cooperative learning, girls achieve the desired and expected short-term outcomes. This ultimately results in Girl Scouting achieving its mission of building "girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place."

Through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, girls gain specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, and values in Girl Scouting. Girls reflect on the impact they have had and how the experience has helped to strengthen their leadership skills.

The following are the fifteen outcomes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience:

Discover outcomes:

- Girls develop a strong sense of self.
- Girls develop positive values.
- Girls gain practical life skills.
- Girls seek challenges in the world.
- Girls develop critical thinking.

Connect outcomes:

- Girls develop healthy relationships.
- Girls promote cooperation and team building.
- Girls can resolve conflicts.
- Girls advanced diversity in a multicultural world.
- Girls feel connected to their community, locally and globally.

Take Action outcomes:

- Girls can identify community needs.
- Girls are resourceful problem solvers.
- Girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally.
- Girls educate and inspire others to act.
- Girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world.

For more about The Girl Scout Leadership Experience, go to www.girlscouts.org/gsle.