



# The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Leaders

## How can girls earn the Gold Award?

The first step is to check out the Gold Award page on [GSHPA's website](#). You can also reach out to [mygoldaward@gshpa.org](mailto:mygoldaward@gshpa.org) with any additional questions. 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. *GSHPA is dedicated to helping girls of all abilities achieve the Gold Award, if you believe that a girl in your troop may require special assistance, please reach out to [mygoldaward@gshpa.org](mailto:mygoldaward@gshpa.org).*

## 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 and an educational or advocacy component.

### Here's more on that:

- **Sustainable** projects continue to have an impact after the Girl Scout has completed her part.
- **Education/Advocacy** allows your girl to teach others about the issue she cares about and how they can make sustainable change.
- **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 GSHPA's [Gold Award webpage](#) for everything you need to know about the Gold Award Process.

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.

Email [mygoldaward@gshpa.org](mailto:mygoldaward@gshpa.org) with any specific questions.

**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 and scholarship applications. Gold Award Girl Scouts are entitled to enlist at a higher pay grade when they join the military.

**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 [mygoldaward@gshpa.org](mailto:mygoldaward@gshpa.org) for info about GSHPA's specific guidelines.
- **Introduce parents/caregivers to the Gold Award.** 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.** Reach out to your Volunteer Support Coordinator to schedule.

- **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.