



The Girl Scout Gold Award: Fundraising Guidelines

Can I raise funds for my Gold Award?

Due to a change in GSUSA guidelines, Girl Scouts are now permitted to raise funds for their Gold Award Projects. In order to comply with nonprofit tax codes, GSHPA has developed guidelines that must be followed by all Gold Award Girl Scouts. In this document, we'll go over GSHPA's Gold Award fundraising guidelines.

How do I raise funds?

GSHPA has established a partnership with [The Foundation for Enhancing Communities \(TFEC\)](#) in order to help you reach your fundraising goals. *The steps are:*

- Your approved Gold Award Project is submitted to TFEC by GSHPA council staff.
- Our partner at the organization schedules time to discuss with you:
 - ✓ Your fundraising mission and plan for your project.
 - ✓ Current community support for your project.
 - ✓ Review any required permissions before fundraising can begin.
- All letters and marketing plans are reviewed with TFEC to ensure that the required IRS and Pennsylvania Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations are included to ensure compliance.

What's the benefit?

Working with TFEC will give you real nonprofit fundraising experience, help you reach ambitious fundraising goals, and ensure that your project complies with all GSHPA guidelines. We want to connect you with the experts so your project is as successful as possible!

TFEC will...

- Accept all donations on behalf of your project.
- Acknowledge all gifts to donors and provide tax deduction letters.
- Review all promotional materials, including Facebook pages, websites, etc., prior to distribution/launch.
- Promote your project on TFEC's website.
- Provide online donation capabilities.
- Provide ability for your project to apply for grants from funders other than TFEC.
- Process vendor payments.
- Provide letters of recognition for in-kind donations.
- ...and more!

Any fundraising done **without** the support and guidance of TFEC may not be in compliance with IRS and PA Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations, and donors will not receive recognition, such as charitable tax deductions, for their donations.

Questions, comments, or concerns about fundraising for Gold Award?

Email mygoldaward@gshpa.org

or

Call our Member Services team at 800-692-7816 www.gshpa.org

What are some ways that girls can fundraise for their Gold Award Projects?

- **"Mom and Pop Fundraising":** There are many projects that do not require a significant amount of fundraising- maybe \$10-15 for supplies. Depending on a girl's financial situation, sometimes it is easiest for relatives to fund her project. This could mean mom and dad (or guardians/caregivers) paying a few dollars for supplies. When it comes to this form of "fundraising," we do not require TFEC's involvement. *GSHPA is dedicated to ensuring that girls of all backgrounds are able to fund their projects, which is why there are plenty of other ways to raise money if this is not an option.*

- **Online Presence:** As many girls are already aware, technology is a huge asset in this digital age. Taking advantage of technology, TFEC will work with you to build a fundraising page for your project and help you create messaging that will allow you to accept donations online. One of our Gold Award girls, Abby, is fundraising to install adaptive swings at her local parks. With an ambitious fundraising goal of \$15,000, she takes advantage of [TFEC's fundraising page](#) and links it to the [website she created for her project!](#)

Pro-tip: Start thinking about how you would like to fundraise as you are working on your project proposal. By creating a detailed budget, thinking about in-kind donations, and making a plan for your fundraising, you will have a head start once your proposal is approved.

Our friends at TFEC tell us that the girls who have the most success with fundraising understand that this is a process, and start early so they don't need to rush to complete their projects. By getting ahead of the game, you can save yourself a lot of stress down the road.

- **In-Kind Donations:** A great way to ask for support on your project without asking for financial donations is by asking for in-kind donations. In-kind donations are donations of supplies instead of money. An example would be if the local hardware store donated cans of paint instead of giving you money to buy the paint. TFEC helps to facilitate in-kind donations by providing acknowledgment letters to donors. That way, the individuals or businesses that donate to your project can still deduct them as charitable gifts on their taxes.

- **Community Support:** The last category of fundraising is community support. This category encompasses all of the different ways that you may get funds from your community to support your project. This may include, but is not limited to:

- ✓ Writing letters to local businesses and charitable organizations asking for financial donations.
- ✓ Applying for community grants to fund your project.
- ✓ Doing traditional fundraising like a bake sale or car wash.

TFEC will help you by checking the language in all of your letters and materials for compliance and assisting you in recognizing your donors. They can also support you in the grant application process, if needed.

Advice from a Gold Award Girl Scout:

1. **Keep in touch with your TFEC advisor.** They're there to help and answer all of your questions. It's always better to ask too many questions than too few.
2. **Start early-** Bigger projects take more time and that's okay, but it's important to factor the time it will take to fundraise into your overall project time.
3. **Keep track of your donations.** TFEC is in charge of all donations, but, just in case anything is missing or not tracked, I keep a record of all donations in a Google Spreadsheet.
4. **Use Google Drive or Excel to stay organized.** Google has a lot of great resources that have helped me write papers, design my logo, and log my donations.
5. **Make plans with a friend who might also be working on her Gold Award.** Parents and Troop leaders aren't able to help too much, so bouncing ideas off others is a good way to come up with inspiration.
6. **Meet up with your Gold Award Advisor,** they might be more helpful than you think!
7. **Grants** are a great way to raise money and connect with the community. Don't be discouraged by how long the application is or how long they might take to get back to you. Just remember: after each application is completed, you have to get approval from TFEC before you submit anything.

Thank you to Abby M. for her input.