



Girl Scout Gold Award

Troop Volunteer and Advisor Guide



July 2021



The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors can earn. Your role, whether you're a troop volunteer or an 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 the local community. You are supporting girls as they develop into leaders for today and tomorrow.

This guide is intended to be used as a supplemental resource to GSHNJ's Gold Award tutorial and GSUSA's *Your Guide to Going Gold*. Troop volunteers and advisors are strongly encouraged to review these materials to better support Girl Scouts on the path to the Gold.

Before a Girl Scout can begin working on the Gold Award project, she must 1) be a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador, 2) complete two Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador Journeys (or just one Journey if she earned the Silver Award), and 3) view the GSHNJ Gold Award tutorial in gsLearn. Girls ages 13 and up can [request their gsLearn account here](#). After completing these prerequisites, a minimum of 80 hours is required to complete the steps to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award.

Here are the steps each Girl Scout will take on her path to the Gold Award:

1. Choose an issue.
2. Investigate the issue thoroughly.
3. Get help and build a strong project team of at least five team members, including a Troop Advisor and Project Advisor.
*Note: The Girl Scout must have two separate, non-parent/caregiver advisors. If the Girl Scout needs assistance identifying a Troop Advisor in her area, advise her to contact awards@gshnj.org for assistance.
4. Create a plan.
5. Present the plan and get feedback. Submit a detailed proposal and meet with the Gold Award Advisory Committee to get valuable feedback.
6. Take action. Put the plan into motion.
7. Educate and inspire others.



Tips for Troop Volunteers

To ensure girls' projects meet the requirements at each step of their project, review the guidelines below.

Steps	Standards of Excellence	Coaching Tips
1. Identify 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. Encourage the Girl Scout to tackle issues she's passionate about.
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; Remember to evaluate each source's reliability and accuracy and cite all sources in your GoGold Online submission. 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"> Guide the girl in performing extensive research of their selected topic. These findings should be used to help identify the underlying root cause of the selected issue and their target audience. 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 and build your team: Invite others to support and take action with you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a team of 5 or more reliable and knowledgeable team members. Remember, your team must expand beyond your immediate circle of family and friends. Identify subject matter experts and set up interviews to learn more about your issue. Respect different points of view and ways of working. Recruit a Project Advisor to bring special skills and expertise to your Girl Scout Gold Award project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with a team helps make a bigger impact and cover more ground; Although this is an individual project, each Girl Scout will build a reliable team of 5 or more individuals. The team must extend beyond their circle of family and friends. Make sure that either you or a family member is aware of the girl's whereabouts. We want to ensure the safety of the Girl Scouts. A network is a great thing; Share pointers on how to create an effective network. If appropriate, provide suggestions for potential team leads or community partners.
4. Create a plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on your research and growing network of experts, develop a plan that creates lasting and measurable change. Identify SMART goals (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound). Specify your target audience and how they will benefit from your project. Identify ways you can measure your impact. From surveys to pre/post tests, how will you know you've met your goals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide feedback and guidance on project sustainability; Suggestions: education and raising awareness, holding workshops and hands-on learning sessions, collaborating with community partners to ensure the project lasts after the girl's involvement ends. Review the proposed budget, ensuring that all project expenses have been accounted for and that the girl has adhered to the project funding guidelines outlined in the Gold Award tutorial.

Tips for Troop Volunteers continued

Steps	Standards of Excellence	Coaching Tips
<p>5. Present your plan and get feedback: Submit your project proposal and interview with the Gold Award Advisory Committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a Project Proposal on GoGold Online that is concise, comprehensive, and clear; Your plan must identify the root cause of your issue, your target audience, and how you will measure your impact. • Describe the measurable goals you want to achieve and the impact you plan to make. • Articulate your issue and explain why it matters to you by citing reliable data and statistics. • Prepare for your initial interview by reviewing the rubric in the Gold Award Girl Handbook and bringing a pad and pen to your interview to take notes. • Accept suggestions to help refine your project. Aim to address feedback within 1-2 weeks. • Get approval from council before proceeding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the Girl Scout to utilize the coaching and planning tools provided in GoGold Online. • Provide constructive suggestions before the Project Proposal is submitted to council. • Practice interview skills in advance of the committee interview.
<p>6. Put your plan into action: Take the lead to carry out your plan and engage your target audience.</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. • 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"> • Make time for regular check-ins where you can provide guidance, feedback and troubleshooting (if needed); This is also a great opportunity to touch base and ensure the Girl Scout is sticking to her timeline and staying on task.
<p>7. Educate and inspire others: Share what you have experienced with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on what you have learned as you prepare to present your Final Report to council. • Using measurable data, summarize the effectiveness of your project and its impact. • 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 during sharing or reflection. • Suggest using the tools and tips in GoGold Online to finish the project strong.



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 and is an expert on their issue (this person cannot also be the girl's Troop Advisor or parent). The Project Advisor provides guidance, experience, and expertise to the girl as she works to complete her Girl Scout Gold Award project.

Primary responsibilities include:

- Partnering with a girl to support her in the planning, design, execution and evaluation of her project
- Advising in your area of expertise
- Understanding the steps to the Girl Scout Gold Award and the Standards of Excellence required for each step

Girls will start working on their project by:

- Searching for issues that they care deeply about
- Narrowing the focus of the issue they have chosen, so that they can have a powerful impact on a target audience
- Enlisting the help of others in the community
- Working collaboratively to create and implement their plan

Before girls can start working on their project, they need to submit a Project Proposal and attend an interview with the Gold Award Advisory Committee for project approval.

Girls will seek their project advisor's expertise in developing and implementing the project ideas.

Girl Scout Gold Award projects require that the Girl Scout:

- 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
- Educates and inspires others

For additional assistance during the award process, contact the Gold Award team at awards@gshnj.org or call 908-518-4400. Our staff can provide information about Girl Scouts including policies and tips for how you can better support Girl Scouts on their path to the Gold Award.





Reminders for Girl Scouts

- Girl Scout memberships must remain current while working on all steps of the Girl Scout Gold Award.
- All Gold Award project submissions - both Proposals and Final Reports - must be submitted on [GoGold Online](https://www.gshnj.org/go-gold). Every Gold Award candidate must create an account on GoGold.
- GoGold Online includes tools to help Girl Scouts brainstorm project ideas, develop a project plan, and reflect on their experiences. GSHNJ asks that Girl Scouts complete both Steps 1 and 2 in GoGold to help them thoroughly brainstorm their selected topic and build a stronger Take Action project.
- Some projects present safety concerns. Consult our Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials (available at www.gshnj.org) to review safety issues and standards including, but not limited to: adult/child ratios, first aid or CPR-certified adults, and additional insurance requirements.
- You must purchase Plan 2 Insurance for non-registered Girl Scouts involved in your project. To submit a request for Plan 2 Insurance, [complete this online form](#). Not sure if you need additional insurance? Contact awards@gshnj.org.
- If a Girl Scout intends to solicit monetary donations or grant funds to support her Gold Award project, this should be reflected on her proposed budget. Girl Scouts must obtain written approval from GSHNJ's Fund Development team before pursuing a grant funds (FundDevelopment@gshnj.org).
- While Girl Scouts are encouraged to take photos of their projects, they should obtain permission from any individuals appearing in photos they may share elsewhere - this includes getting permission from parents/caregivers to take photos of minors (under age 18).
- Girls earn their Gold Award at the time the project is completed and approved by the council. Final approval must be granted by March 1 to be recognized at that year's Gold Award Ceremony hosted by our council. Projects approved after March 1 will be recognized at the following year's ceremony.
- The final deadline to earn the Gold Award is September 30th of the calendar year the girl graduates high school.



The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

In Girl Scouting, Discover + Connect + Take Action = Leadership. The entire Girl Scout program is designed to lead to 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 is about the activities girls do as well as the processes they use to do them that builds leadership. The Girl Scout processes promote the fun and friendship that have always been 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 cooperation, girls achieve the desired and expected short-term outcomes. This ultimately results in Girl Scouting achieving its mission:

Girl Scouting builds 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.





Gold Award Girl Scouts don't just change the world for the better, they change it for good.

Issues of the world, meet your match: Gold Award Girl Scouts. They commit the time, energy, and passion to tackle challenges in their communities and around the world — all while finishing high school.

