

# *The Girl Scout Gold Award Information Packet*



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Since 1916, Girl Scout's highest award has stood for excellence and leadership for girls everywhere. Soon, you will be joining the ranks of generations of young women who have made a difference in their communities and beyond.

As a Girl Scout, you are part of the sisterhood of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a global movement comprised of more than ten million girls worldwide who are using their talents to positively impact their communities. With your talent and passion, you, too, can make changes in your community that can reach people around the world.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest and most prestigious award that a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador may earn. Fulfilling the requirements for the Girl Scout Gold Award starts with completing two Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador journeys or having earned the Silver Award and completing one Senior or Ambassador journey. Each journey you complete gives you the skills you need to plan and implement your Take Action Project.

After you have fulfilled the journey(s) requirement, 80 hours is the suggested minimum hours for the steps: identifying an issue, investigating it thoroughly, getting help and building a team, creating a plan, presenting your plan, gathering feedback, taking action, and education and inspiring other. The suggested minimum hours are not a rule; they are a guide for you to plan your time in achieving your goal.

## **THE GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD PROJECT**

You must be registered as a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador to begin work on the Gold Award. Work started prior to being registered as a Girl Scout Senior may not be applied toward this award, nor can you finish up the work after September 30<sup>th</sup> of the year after you graduate High School. A girl is officially a Girl Senior Scout after she registers and the official membership begins October 1<sup>st</sup> of that year. Our Council works with the girls and allows them to apply requirements starting June 1<sup>st</sup> of the year she registers as a Girl Scout Senior.

Plan to work on the Gold Award for two to four years. It is very difficult to complete all of the required steps for the Gold Award in one year. Don't wait until your last year as an Ambassador to make the decision to earn the Gold Award. Recognitions are only symbols of your work – it is the quality of the work and what you have learned while doing it that is important. Do your best work possible. Using short cuts or bending the rules is not in keeping with the meaning of the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Keep records of all your work using the Girl Scouts of Central Texas Gold Award paperwork. Keep your notebook or file in a safe place. It is your responsibility – not your leader's or advisor's – to keep track of your documentation. (She/He may want to keep a duplicate copy for her/himself.) You may not count work done as a Girl Scout Cadette for the requirements on the Gold Award.

## STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

When you decide to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award, you are on your honor to uphold the Standards of Excellence. These standards set a high benchmark for everything you do and invite you to think deeply, explore opportunities, and challenge yourself. Following the Standards of Excellence challenges you to develop yourself as a leader, achieve the Girl Scout Leadership Outcomes and make a mark on your community that creates a lasting impact on the lives of others.

### Girl Scout Gold Award Steps and Standards of Excellence

Girl Scout Gold Award Steps	Standards of Excellence
<p><b>1. Choose an issue:</b> Use your values and skills to identify a community issue you care about.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Live the Girl Scout Promise and Law.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate civic responsibility.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Investigate:</b> Research everything you can about the issue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use a variety of sources: interview people, read books and articles, find professional organizations online. Remember to evaluate each source's reliability and accuracy.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate courage as you investigate your issue, knowing that what you learn may challenge your own and others' beliefs.</li> <li>▪ Identify national and/or global links to your community issue.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Get help:</b> Invite others to support and take action with you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek out and recognize the value of the skills and strengths of others.</li> <li>▪ Respect different points of view and ways of working.</li> <li>▪ Build a team and recruit a project advisor who will bring special skills to your Take Action project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Create a plan:</b> Create a project plan that achieves sustainable and measurable impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lead the planning of your Take Action project.</li> <li>▪ Work collaboratively to develop a plan for your project that creates lasting change.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Present your plan and get feedback:</b> Sum up your project plan for your Girl Scout council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submit a Project Proposal to your council that is concise, comprehensive, and clear.</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ Articulate your issue clearly and explain why it matters to you.</li> <li>▪ Accept constructive suggestions that will help refine your project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Take action:</b> Take the lead to carry out your plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Take action to address the root cause of an issue, so that your solution has measurable and sustainable impact.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Actively seek partnerships to achieve greater community participation and impact for your Take Action project.</li> <li>▪ Challenge yourself to try different ways to solve problems.</li> <li>▪ Use resources wisely.</li> <li>▪ Speak out and act on behalf of yourself and others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Educate and inspire:</b> Share what you have experienced with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflect on what you have learned when you present your Girl Scout Gold Award Final Report to your council.</li> <li>▪ Summarize the effectiveness of your project and the impact it has had on you and your community.</li> <li>▪ Share the project beyond your local community and inspire others to take action in their own communities.</li> </ul>

## GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD TOOLKIT

Stay organized and keep track of your ideas, contact information, appointments, and plans with the Girl Scout Gold Award Toolkit. This toolkit includes a “standards of excellence” tracking sheet, tips, planning guides, and advice to help with each step of your Take Action project. Use these tools as you need them—and don’t forget that your journey(s) include tools and ideas, too!

1. **Choose an issue:** Use your values and skills to choose a community issue that you care about. Check out the Decision-Making Tips in your toolkit. If you have more than one issue that you are passionate about, interview others to help you decide. Practice making your pitch and see how it feels. You can also make a 15-second video, write a bumper-sticker slogan, or come up with another fun way to sum up why this issue is important to you.

**Tools:**

- **Decision-Making Tips**
- **Interview Tips**
- **Making-Your-Pitch Tips**

2. **Investigate:** Use your sleuthing skills to learn everything you can about the issue you’ve identified. Zoom in on your issue to identify a specific aspect of it that you would like to address, because focused effort has more impact than a big idea that’s scattered.

- **Log on:** Check news sites and the sites of organizations related to your issue. Explore how the media in other countries cover your issue. *Note:* Before doing your online research, take the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge at [www.girlscouts.org/internet\\_safety\\_pledge.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/internet_safety_pledge.asp).
- **Go to the library:** Find books that offer in-depth analysis about your issue, read your local newspaper, and look for magazine articles that offer different perspectives on your issue.
- **Interview people:** Talk to your friends, neighbors, teachers, business owners, and others who can offer information or insights about the issue you’ve chosen.

Knowing the various causes of a problem enables you to figure out unique ways to solve it. Use the Mind-Mapping Tool in your toolkit to create a diagram that tracks a problem and its possible causes.

**Tool:**

- **Mind-Mapping Tool**

- 3. Get help:** Invite other people to join your team to support your efforts and help you take action. Consider reaching out to classmates, teachers, friends, and experts from organizations and businesses. Networking with people can make you a more effective leader. Also, the more people you have behind you, the more likely you will positively influence your community. You are the leader of your team – plan your project, motivate your team, learn from others.

Choose a project advisor, a person with expertise in the topic of your Gold Award project. An advisor can help you identify resources, provide insights, solve problems, and provide additional background information on your chosen issue.

**Tools:**

- **Teaming Tips**
- **Project Advisor Tips**

- 4. Create a plan:** Going for the Girl Scout Gold Award requires you to address the root cause of an issue and, thus, make a lasting impact in your community—take a look at the Sustainability Tips in your toolkit for ideas. Create a plan that outlines the best use of your time and talent, your resources, and your team’s talents, making the most with what you have- that’s your challenge!

**Tools:**

- **Project Planner**
- **Planning and Budgeting Tips**
- **Sustainability Tips**

- 5. Present your plan and get feedback:** Fill out the Project Planning Checklist in your toolkit to organize your thoughts and make sure you have everything you need before you hand in your Project Proposal Form to your Girl Scout council for approval. Include what you’ve learned, why your project idea matters, with whom you’re teaming, and your plan for making your project sustainable.

Girl Scout Council approval is required before you can continue working on your project. Once your project is approved, take a look at your Project Planner from step 4. Do you have everything you need?

**Tools:**

- **Project Planning Checklist**
- **Project Proposal Form**

- 6. Take action:** Lead your team, carry out your plan. Use the tools you have developed in the previous steps and remember to check your journey(s) for tips. If you hit a speed bump along the way, learn from it and find ways to adjust your plan.
- 7. Educate and inspire:** Tell your story and share your results. You can inspire someone who has never before considered taking action to do something! Use the Reflection Tool in your toolkit to identify how this experience has affected you and how your views may have changed. Finally, complete your Girl Scout Gold Award Final Report, which is a comprehensive account of what you’ve done, with whom you’ve connected, the lasting impact you’ve made, and what this experience has meant to you.

**Tools:**

- **Sharing Tips**
- **Reflection Tool**

- **Girl Scout Gold Award Final Report**

Congratulations! Celebrate! Be sure to thank your project advisor, your team, and all the other people who helped you along the way.

## **PAPERWORK AND COMPLETION**

The Girl Scout Gold Award Project Application form must be submitted to the Council Gold Award committee at least 4 weeks prior to the start of your project. This application includes a timeline and plan for the project. The Gold Award committee reviews applications and final reports on a bi-monthly basis. If you don't hear back within two weeks, please contact them at [mygoldaward@gctx.org](mailto:mygoldaward@gctx.org). They may make suggestions based on safety, timeline, or project standards. You can't start your project without approval from the Gold Award committee.

The Girl Scout Gold Award Final Project Report must be filled in and submitted to the Council Gold Award committee. The Gold Award committee reviews applications and final reports every two weeks. If you don't hear back within two weeks, please contact them at [mygoldaward@gctx.org](mailto:mygoldaward@gctx.org). The deadline to be included and honored at the annual Council and State-wide ceremonies is typically in February, but is subject to change. Girls approved after the February deadline will be included in the next year's ceremonies. Ceremonies can also be planned by individuals, groups, or service units to honor girls upon completion of their project.

## DEFINITIONS

- **ADVISOR** – While your troop leader can guide you through the journey and the project idea phase, you may need to seek a **project advisor** once you have determined your project. You are encouraged to use resource people who are knowledgeable in the field in which you are doing your project. Your advisor is there to answer questions, insure safety, provide encouragement, follow GS-USA policies, but not to do the project for you. Throughout your project, you are responsible for maintaining contact with your project advisor(s).
- **COUNCIL GOLD AWARD COMMITTEE** – The Council Gold Award Committee works with Girl Scouts to ensure that the Gold Award application process meets the highest standard according to the Girl Scout program. The Gold Award Committee is knowledgeable about the Gold Award project requirements, expectations, and process, including GS-USA policies and pre-requisites. The committee reviews and approves all Gold Award applications and final paperwork.
- **COMMUNITY ASPECT** - The idea of the Girl Scout Gold Award is that you do something to benefit your community and learn those skills that make you a citizen of your community and the world. The Gold Award project should reach beyond the “world” of Girl Scouting and extend into the surrounding community. If you do something for your council, it needs to involve and benefit the community as well.
- **GLOBAL ASPECT** – For a Girl Scout Gold Award project, you should identify a national and/or global links to your selected issue. You should learn from others and develop a plan to share the results of your project beyond the local community.
- **CONTINUING IMPACT/SUSTAINABILITY** – A Gold Award Take Action Project includes provisions to ensure sustainability. Gold Award projects should be ongoing in their effort or because you have trained others to carry on the work. How can this project continue when you are gone? If the project is an event, the event should be something that people will want to continue for the next year; if it is a service, it should be something that creates change or action with long-term possibilities, empowering others besides just the girl; if it is something tangible, it should come with a plan for use and maintenance within the community.
- **FINANCIAL PLAN/BUDGET** - Will you need money for your project? How much will it cost? How will you get the money? List all your expenses and talk with your advisor about how to cover these expenses. Projects should be financially **realistic**. You must obtain approval from the Gold Award Committee if you plan to raise funds and remember to follow all Girl Scout money earning requirements. Remember, girls cannot solicit funds or donations. \*\*\*See MONEY and Your Leadership Project\*\*\*
- **COLLABORATIVE ORGANIZATIONS** – If your project is focused on an existing organization or program, then your project must expand its work. The project must meet a need that is currently not being met. If you are working with an existing organization, get a letter in writing from that organization approving the work of your project. Submit this letter with your project proposal.



## From Good to Great: Successful Girl Scout Gold Award Projects

A Girl Scout Gold Award project is different from a good community service project. It should involve girl planning, leadership and decision making and focuses on addressing a real need in your community. It encompasses the mission of Girl Scouting — building “girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.”

### Is it Leadership or Service?

**Service:** Service is based on working within a plan that is already established, acting as an assistant or helper, using a prepared list of resources, using existing funds that are allocated to you, asking permission to make changes, and reporting to a supervisor for direction.

**Leadership:** Leadership can require creating a vision and an outcome, setting a goal, developing a plan of work, creating the scope of the project, functioning in a director capacity, delegating to others, making decisions for change, creating a list of needs and resources, creating a budget, evaluating the performance of yourself and/or others, writing reports, accepting accountability for the outcome.

Here are several examples of good service projects that have expanded into great Girl Scout Gold Award projects:

Good Service Project	Great Girl Scout Gold Award Projects!
Volunteering many hours at a Park Service site picking up litter.	Reseeding an area with native vegetation and ridding area of non-native vegetation. Creating an interpretive guide on what the area was like 50 years ago and why it is important to preserve native species.
Working at the local library doing children’s story hours or conducting a book drive for the juvenile detention center.	Creating a reading program for a migrant work camp in the summer. Assuring that each child receives a book (bilingual) of their own. Matching young children with volunteer tutors from the high school Spanish club to create an ongoing service project.
Volunteering to collect games and food at the mall for a teen center.	Creating a health access booklet for teens in the community; culminating with a teen health fair with various organizations presenting their services. Admission is canned goods for a teen center.
Acting in a play to commemorate the 100 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of a community.	Researching and writing a script for a cemetery tour focusing on the founders of the community. Casting parts, creating costumes and arranging for a series of evening cemetery tours to kick off the founding of the community.
Planting flowers in a park during a community service day.	Working with the city parks department to start a public gardening project in your community. Providing food to a food bank from the garden. Using a greenhouse at a school to start plants yearly with kids and retired folks as mentors.



## M\*O\*N\*E\*Y and Your Leadership Project

(adapted from the Girl Scout Gold Award “Go for It” insert)

One of the challenges facing every girl “going for the Gold” is financial. Often, when the planning gets serious, adjustments have to be made in the doing. On the one hand you are asked to meet a need in your community; on the other hand, you have some major constraints outlined in *Safety-Wise* and by your council. So what’s a girl to do?

OK. The reality first. Then some possible ways to approach it. Think of those who have gone before you. They figured it out, and so can you! Then clear the adjustments you have made in your plan with your Girl Scout council.

1. **You can’t ask for money as a girl member of Girl Scouts.** You can’t ask for materials or services (technically called gifts-in-kind) either. This asking is considered fundraising by the IRS and Girl Scout policies — and for a lot of reasons (legal and otherwise), adults are the only people who can raise money for Girl Scouting. **However, if the neighbor wants to claim the donation as a tax deduction, he or she will need to make the donation to the council for IRS purposes and get a receipt signed by a council staff person.**

**What you can do:** Since adults can solicit money, work with an adult partner if you really need to get a donation of materials or need some funds. You **can** describe your project to others, write a letter, create a PowerPoint presentation or write the grant, but an adult has to do the actual ask and sign on the dotted line. And don’t forget to clear the solicitation with your council. No way around it.

2. **You can’t raise money for another organization as a Girl Scout.** That means you can’t have a bake sale and tell people that you are giving the proceeds to a homeless shelter for meals, you can’t ask for pledges for a walk-a-thon to benefit breast cancer research, and you can’t hold a benefit dance to raise money for Sally’s kidney operation.

**What you can do:** This is where it gets a bit tricky. Your troop/group **can** hold a bake sale or birdhouse sale and can charge a fee to an approved event that you put on to earn money **for your troop/group’s activities**. However, **your troop/group must have council permission for any money-earning activity**. **Your troop/group may then decide to use that money toward** the completion of a Girl Scout Gold Award Project, such as the purchase of materials. It must be a troop/group decision on how to allocate the funds, which can be used for individual projects.

3. **You can’t use Girl Scout Dough.** Previously, Girl Scouts were eligible to use their Girl Scout Dough towards supplies on Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards under the “Special Option Use” for Girl Scout Dough. Due to guidance from GSUSA, we have changed our “Special Option Use” procedures.

If you are an individually registered member, things are slightly different. You cannot earn money as an individual Girl Scout for yourself. The money you earn must go to an account held by a group (troop/group, service unit, or your council). Next, you must present your need for funds to that group. There is no guarantee that you will get back the amount of money you earned for the group, as the dispersal of funds will be a group decision.



## Some Frequently Asked Questions on Money

**Q: Can I use my own money on the Girl Scout Gold Award Project?**

A: Yes. If you want to use your own money, you can. You may receive help from your family, too. However, we encourage you to work with others to earn the money. That's part of the process. "Going for the Gold" is not meant to be a hardship on a family or individual.

When designing your project, it's important to think creatively about how you can make a difference with little or no money. Then talk to your council and advisor about ideas for financing the project or arranging for the donation of materials and services.

**Q: Can I ask friends and neighbors for help?**

A: You shouldn't ask for donations of money, but you can ask for donations of time and stuff, such as clothing for a clothing drive or that pile of bricks left over from your neighbor's backyard project. **However, if the neighbor wants to claim the donation as a tax deduction, he or she will need to make the donation to the council for IRS purposes and get a receipt signed by a council staff person.**

**Q: What if what I want to do costs too much?**

A: It's better to succeed with a smaller project that is within your budget than to be unable to complete a larger project because it exceeds your budget. Be realistic about what you can and can't do. Work with your adult advisor to develop a reasonable budget for your project. If your resources are not sufficient for you to realistically accomplish your goal, then you need to rethink the project. Planning is the key to a good Girl Scout Gold Award Project. You should be prepared with a budget for your project before you meet with your council Girl Scout Gold Award Committee. Think it through and do your homework! Your council has the right to put a cap on spending, as well as to request that large donations go through the council office

**Q: Is it all right to seek help from other organizations when doing my Girl Scout Gold Award?**

A: Yes, with some qualifications. Many service organizations have budgets for community projects. You can use their interests (e.g., Lions Club International may focus on vision care, while Soroptimists may have a committee on literacy) as leverage to support your project and get volunteers to help you. Do some research on local service organizations. Even some businesses give workers time for community service hours and projects. However, remember the rule about having the adult doing the "ask" for actual money and gifts-in-kind, and clearing your joint approach with your local council. (Your council may be asking the same group for major donation and you don't want to interfere with the council's "ask.") Don't let the organization's agenda drive your vision for your project.

**Q: I know you can't raise money as a Girl Scout for other organizations, but can I do it on my own?**

A: As an individual, you can volunteer for other organizations, but you should not identify work that you do to raise funds for another organization as part of your time going toward the Girl Scout Gold Award. Additionally, you may not present yourself as a Girl Scout to the public in this process since you are a volunteer for another organization. For example: If your local Red Cross needs money to purchase training dummies, you may participate under their supervision as an individual volunteer to raise funds, but you cannot count that service as part of your time toward any Girl Scout Award or service hours. However, you can plan a Girl Scout Gold Award project

using the equipment that was purchased as part of your efforts as a volunteer for that organization.

**Q: Can we charge for a Girl Scout event to earn money?**

A: If it is a service project, a fee can be collected to cover the cost of materials. The project ceases to be a service project if you are charging a fee for the event above cost, in which case the hours cannot go toward service hours in any award. If you are doing an event as a Girl Scout (e.g., a Badge Workshop, Bike Rodeo, etc.) and are planning to charge a fee **above** the cost of materials, you **must first** clear this with your Girl Scout council. Provision should be made for scholarships for troop/groups or individual girls who cannot afford fees to your event and you must be clear in your advertisements and materials that this is a money-earning event for your troop/group. If your actual project is an event for the public, you can charge a fee to cover the cost of materials.



## Girl Scout Gold Award FAQs:

**Q: Who can earn the Girl Scout Gold Award?**

A: A girl must be a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador to begin working on her Girl Scout Gold Award Project. Remember, as always, the project must be completed by September 30th following a girl's senior year in high school. If she graduates early, she has until she is 18 to complete the project.

**Q: Can a girl work on the prerequisites for her Girl Scout Gold Award the summer after she has bridged, rather than wait until the new membership year begins October 1?**

A: YES! We want girls to be excited about these awards and to use the time they have, rather than trying to cram it all into the school year or lose the momentum and interest over the summer.

**Q: Can girls earn the Girl Scout Gold Award if they are a Juliette or individual member?**

A: The Girl Scout Gold Award is an individual project. As always, if a girl meets the grade and membership requirements, she can work towards her Girl Scout Gold Award.

**Q: Is the Girl Scout Gold Award Project an individual project, or can it be worked on by a group of girls?**

A: The Girl Scout Gold Award is an individual project. Group projects are no longer allowed as Gold Award projects. Girls however are encouraged and expected to work with a team of individuals and organizations to complete the take action project. This team can include family and friends, community members and fellow Girl Scouts.

**Q: Can a girl earn the Girl Scout Gold Award even if she hasn't been in Girl Scouts very long?**

A: Yes! She just needs to be a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador and be willing to complete the work necessary to earn this award.

**Q: Does a girl have to have earned the Girl Scout Silver Award in order to do the Girl Scout Gold Award?**

A: No. Not at all. However, it's a great foundation for the process. If you have earned your Silver Award, you only have to complete one Girl Scout journey as your Gold Award project pre-requisite instead of two.

**Q: What is the difference between a troop/group advisor and a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor in the Girl Scout Gold Award process? Do girls need both?**

A: A troop/group advisor is the adult who is working with an ongoing troop or group. She can work with girls in the first steps of their Girl Scout Gold Award — helping them get initial information, working on the Girl Scout journey, and developing project ideas. Once a girl develops her vision statement, the advisor might help her identify a person in the community who might be a great project advisor. Girls are encouraged to go beyond the group when seeking specific knowledge for a project. However, the troop/group advisor may act as the project advisor if she can fulfill that role and it is a decision arrived at by the girl and herself. It is highly recommended that leaders/advisors who are parents of the girl NOT act as a girl's Gold Award Advisor. The whole idea is to connect with the community when doing one's Girl Scout Gold Award. That means working beyond the family and the troop/group and the council.

The Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor is an adult who has received training or will receive training on how to work with girls on the Girl Scout Gold Award project. She will have specific experience related to the project. For example, if a girl is doing a project to address a concern about AIDS in her community, the advisor might be someone from a non-profit that works with teens and health issues or an AIDS educator; or if girls are doing a literacy project for children of migrant workers, the project advisor might be an “English as a second language” teacher or a social worker giving assistance to the migrant camp. It is also possible that the troop/group advisor can work in partnership with the project advisor.

**Q: At what point should a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor be identified?**

A: It’s great to have a project advisor to expand the network of adults and provide expertise for a girl’s project. If a girl has an idea before she starts any work on her Girl Scout Gold Award, she might want to identify her project advisor from the very beginning. A girl’s group advisor can act as the project advisor on the Girl Scout Gold Award through the beginning stages, but GSUSA highly recommends that a project advisor be available when the project starts to come into focus. The project advisor should be identified in the planning phase before the Girl Scout Gold Award application is turned into the council. A troop/group advisor may assume the role of project advisor if necessary or if she is truly qualified to oversee the topic area chosen.

**Q: Is it recommended that a girl’s parent be her advisor for the Girl Scout Gold Award?**

A: GSUSA strongly recommend against it, even if a girl’s parent is her leader/advisor. Ideally, she should have an advisor that has experience in the area of her project. Avoid situations where parents do a girl’s work, even when it comes to calling and asking questions. If money earning is involved, the girl and her advisor can act as a team, with the girl doing the planning and the adult doing the “ask.”

**Q: What if a girl has already done some similar activities while doing other Girl Scout awards? Can these activities count toward her Girl Scout Gold Award?**

A: Activities done prior to working on the Girl Scout Gold Award may not count toward the number of hours for this award.

**Q: What is the role of the council’s Girl Scout Gold Award committee?**

A: This is a group of adult staff and volunteers, including past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award, dedicated to helping a girl succeed. They will review the size, scope, and cost of a project and make recommendations to ensure that it is in fact an appropriate project to earn a Girl Scout Gold Award.

**Q: Do the hours put into planning and researching a potential Gold Award project count towards the hours needed for the Girl Scout Gold Award project?**

A: Yes. Even if a girl decides not to do the project she comes up with in the visioning process when she gets down to planning with her advisor, she has not wasted the time in learning the process required to focus on a vision. A girl shouldn’t be focusing on a project that she really doesn’t want to be doing, or isn’t able to do because of something she’s discovered in her research or community networking. A girl might even discover a project advisor in the community networking process who sparks a different twist on her vision. The more that is found out about something, the more possibilities there are — the trick is to end up with a project that meets needs of the community and that allows a girl to be effective and passionate in what she is doing. For example, a girl may find that a safety program is not what is needed to prevent accidents in her community — what’s needed is a stop light at a dangerous intersection. That will require focusing on a different network as she works with the community to make that kind of a change and her project advisor may need to be someone from the city council instead of a safety educator.

**Q: How can we assure that Girl Scout Gold Awards represent quality projects? In the past we have had some projects that resemble service projects signed off by advisors.**

A: The best way to assure that a girl is doing the best of her ability is to ensure that both she and her advisor receive orientation about the award and about the difference between a service project and a Girl Scout Gold Award project — whether it is through training, Web site information, or a marketing piece. This is why you should remain in constant communication with your advisor(s), Area Gold Award Consultant, and/or Program Specialist.

**Q: What if a girl is 16 and graduating? Can she complete her project when she is in college?**

A: Yes. A girl has until she turns 18 or until the end of the Girl Scout membership year when she is a senior in high school.

**Q: What if a girl graduates and is 18 and doesn't have her project completed?**

A: In this case the girl would have until September 30th of the year she graduates.

**Q: What if a girl's project is not completed by the council ceremony time?**

A: In Girl Scouts of Central Texas, girls will be honored at the council and state-wide ceremonies the next year. Girls and their advisors should be encouraged to work within the council timeline; however, the ceremony time should not dictate whether a girl is able to earn her Girl Scout Gold Award or not. **A council or Girl Scout Gold Award Committee can not insist that a Girl Scout Gold Award project be completed by a certain time other than within the national guidelines** — by the end of the Girl Scout membership year when a girl graduates or when she turns 18 years old.

**Q: Can a girl who is developmentally disabled/delayed earn the Girl Scout Gold Award? Don't we need a different set of requirements?**

A: The Girl Scout Gold Award is something done to the best of a girl's ability. It is totally possible to work with someone who needs to adapt the program with the existing requirements. For example, a young woman who will never hold a job because of the severity of her disabilities was able to adapt the career component, turning it around so that she learned how to select her personal caretaker, how to evaluate her caretaker, and how to let her go. Her project focused on a community awareness program involving the group home that she lived in and was overseen by her caretaker. Her troop/group helped do the "legwork" and she provided the vision. There is not a need to have special requirements for girls who are handicapped or mentally challenged — encourage flexibility and the recruitment of advisors that can work with the girl individually.

**Q: How do we get letters of congratulations?**

A: Girl Scouts of Central Texas requests letters of congratulations from GSUSA, the President of the United States, and the Governor of Texas.

**Q: Who purchases the Girl Scout Gold Award for the girl?**

A: Girls Scouts of Central Texas purchases both the Gold Award pin and parent pin for each recipient. These are presented to the Gold Awardee at the Council Ceremony.



## **Ways Parents/Guardians Can Support Girls Working on the Girl Scout Gold Award**

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award in Girl Scouting that girls 14-18 can earn. It represents a girl's commitment to herself and to her community, as she focuses on leadership, career exploration, personal challenges and completing a lasting project that will benefit her community. It takes many hours of preparation, planning and work to accomplish the goals a girl has set for herself.

Parents/guardians play a significant role in supporting a girl's path to the Girl Scout Gold Award. As a parent you may be called upon to be coach, mentor, cheerleader, sounding board and chauffeur. As a parent, you are not expected to be a taskmaster — this is the girl's project. However, you can assist a girl by:

- Reading through the materials provided to girls regarding the Girl Scout Gold Award so that you feel comfortable offering support.
- Helping her choose a topic that will become the basis for her project if she asks for ideas. Remember, however, that the topic is based on her passion, not yours.
- Encouraging and supporting her, but not pressuring her. "Going for the Gold" is something that a girl has to want to do herself.
- Recognizing that your daughter is capable, competent and worthy of respect as she assumes greater citizenship and responsibility. You can help provide her with positive and constructive support on this journey.
- Aiding her in accessing a network of adults who can lend insight, provide contacts, and point to resources. You may work with someone who has just the skill set your daughter needs in an advisor, or someone who belongs to a service club that your daughter and her advisor can approach for financial assistance.
- Practicing good parenting when it comes to making sure she gets enough rest, eats well and is supported by the whole family in her endeavor.
- Helping and supporting girls in any Girl Scout safety or money earning guidelines during her path to the Girl Scout Gold Award. These are important to assure the safety of your daughter and the integrity of the Girl Scout program.
- Allowing your daughter to stumble and learn the lessons that come with the Girl Scout Gold Award project. She will be working with a Girl Scout Gold Award Project advisor, an adult who has been trained to assist her in partnership who has skills specific to the project, and a council Gold Award Committee.
- Helping with the project as asked or cheerleading from the sidelines if appropriate.
- Joining in the celebration as she is honored for her accomplishments.