girl scouts

# The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Leaders

## *How can girls earn the Gold Award?*

The first step is to check in with your council's Gold Award staff. You'll want to find out if they require any type of training (e.g., an informational session) before girls can begin the Gold Award application process. These staff members will also be invaluable partners to both you and your Girl Scouts throughout the process. 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.

## *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.

**Here's more on that:**

- **Sustainable** projects continue to have an impact after the Girl Scout has completed her part.
- **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 GSUSA's Gold Award webpage for the fundamentals—and visit your council's website as well, because each council has a unique process that supports girls through their Gold Award journeys! Your council may also offer sharable resources aimed at both Girl Scouts and adults.

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.

**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 the Silver Award or a Senior/Ambassador Leadership Award.

## *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 applications and give them access to scholarship opportunities. And for girls who plan to enlist in the armed forces, it may mean an increase in rank

  **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 prerequisite** as early on as possible. If they haven't earned the Silver Award, you might help them identify a Leadership Award that aligns with their interests, or even plan to complete one as a troop.
- **Get to know the safety and fundraising guidelines.** Reach out to your council's Gold Award staff for info about the council's specific requirements.
- **Introduce parents/caregivers to the Gold Award.** Your council may offer a guide for parents/caregivers that you can distribute as you see fit. You might also 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** if your council offers one. You might also consider organizing a carpool. Make it as easy as possible for your girls to opt in!
- **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, troubleshot 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.