



## **M\*O\*N\*E\*Y and Your Take Action Highest Award Project**

One of the challenges facing every girl “going for the Gold” or “striving for Silver” is finances. Often, when the planning gets serious, adjustments have to be made in the doing. On one hand you are asked to meet a need in your community; on the other hand, you have some major constraints outlined in *Volunteer Essentials* 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! Make sure to 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.

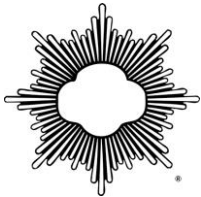
What you can do: Since adults can solicit money, work with an adult partner if you really need to get a donation of materials or need some funds. You **can** describe your project to others, write a letter, create a PowerPoint presentation or write the grant, but an adult has to do the actual ask and sign on the dotted line. And don’t forget to clear the solicitation with your council. No way around it. Highest Award Money Earning Form and In Kind Donation Form must be submitted to [Mbonus@gscwm.org](mailto:Mbonus@gscwm.org) 3 weeks before event or ask. Form can be found <http://www.gscwm.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gscwm/documents/Silver%20Award%20Money%20Earning%20and%20Gift%20Form.pdf>

- 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 or Silver 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 group or individual projects.

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, or service unit). 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. We suggest you first check with your council about the options open.



### Hot Group Money-Earning Ideas

Reminder: All Girl Scout activities should meet **Volunteer Essentials** and council guidelines — **and be approved by GSCWM**.

- 1.** Sell Girl Scout cookies. (Think big — arrange for booths at sports events or college dorms or sell cases of cookies to businesses for special treats for their staff. You end up helping your council as well as your group.)
- 2.** Provide childcare at special events during the holiday season or community events. (Be sure to have an adult trained in first aid present.)
- 3.** Host a young girl badge day for troops in your Service Unit. (Be sure to have adults trained as Girl Scout Leaders and First aid present to maintain Girl Scout girl/adult ratio.)
- 4.** Recycle aluminum cans. (How about a community can-a-thon? Involve small businesses as well as families.)
- 5.** Put on a gigantic garage sale. Don't forget to make refreshments to sell!

6. Offer clown activities and face painting at family events or malls.
7. Wrap gift packages at holiday fairs.
8. Hold a penny drive. Appeal to friends and family members to save loose change for you. (Donations of coins can accumulate really fast, and can present you with the nice problem of hauling a heavy load to the bank.)
9. Provide classroom or home birthday parties on order (cupcakes and games for the busy mom).

Do Not Engage In The Following Kinds Of Activities:

1. **Money-earning projects where you are performing an activity that someone normally gets paid to do** — in other words, taking jobs away from people, such as store workers, maintenance staff, or service providers. (**However**, if certain activities — for example, cleaning a stadium after a game or gift wrapping at a store — have previously been defined clearly as opportunities for nonprofits to earn money, you can undertake these activities **with council approval**.)
2. **“Cheap labor” projects disguised as money-earning projects.** At first it may sound like a great idea, but you are actually being taken advantage of and taking away the job of someone who should be paid more money than you are being offered. That’s why there are child labor and minimum wage laws!
3. **Money earning projects where Girl Scouts of the USA might be perceived as endorsing a product or political viewpoint or cause.** This includes getting paid to pass out flyers for political candidates or freebees at a business opening. When in doubt, check with your council.
4. **Money earning projects where the money goes to individuals rather than to your group as a group donation.** You cannot be employed *as a Girl Scout* to earn money.
5. **Selling anything on the Internet as a Girl Scout.** Safety and council boundaries are of primary concern here.

## Some Frequently Asked Questions on Money

Q: Can I use my own money on the Girl Scout Gold or Silver 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" or "Striving for Silver" 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 troop leader, GSCWM 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. For more information speak with Melanie Bonsu, Director of Development and Marketing/Communications at: [mbonsu@gscwm.org](mailto:mbonsu@gscwm.org)**

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 Girl Scout Gold Award Committee or you submit your Silver Proposal to your troop leader. Think it through and do your homework! GSCWM has the right to put a cap on spending, as well as to request that large donations go through the council office. Work with them.

Q: Is it all right to seek help from other organizations when doing my Girl Scout Highest 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. Research 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 GSCWM. (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 GSCWM as a money earning activity. 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.