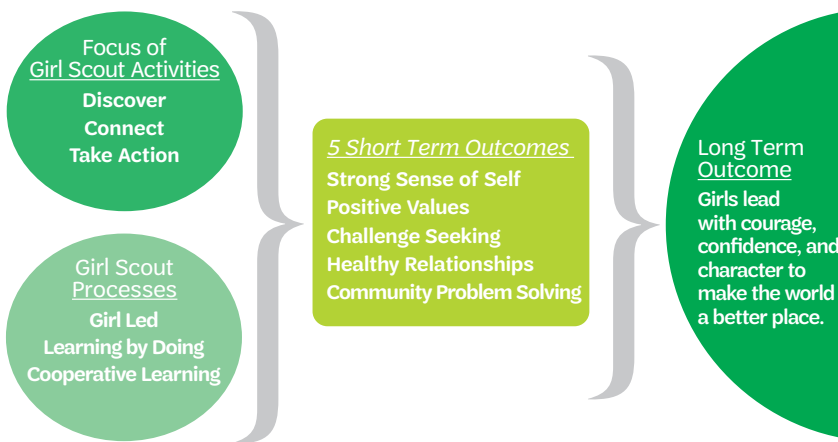


# The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

When girls become Gold Award Girl Scouts, they practice leadership skills that they will carry into their futures. **The Girl Scout Leadership Experience** provides a framework for supporting girls as they learn to lead by creating thoughtful change in their communities. It can be broken down into **three actions** Girl Scouts take during their Gold Award projects, the **three processes** that they use to do so, and **five ways they benefit** a result.



## Actions—what girls do:

When girls **discover**, **connect**, and **take action** they demonstrate leadership.

1. When girls **discover**, they better understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world.
2. When girls **connect**, they support, inspire and partner with others, globally and locally.
3. And finally, when girls **take action**, they act to make the world a better place. First, they identify the root cause of a problem. Then, they develop and execute a project that continues to address that problem after they've done their part.

**Here's How You Can Help:** Ask girls about the issues that matter most to them. Help them to identify their skills and brainstorm how they can use them for good. Assist them in locating resources to help them learn more about their chosen issue.

## Processes- how they do it:

1. Girls actively lead and shape their experiences. Gold Award projects that are **girl-led** find girls engaging their curiosity, creativity, and critical-thinking skills.
2. **Learning by doing** actively engages girls in a hands-on learning that results in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills
3. **Cooperative learning** empowers girls to learn and achieve even more through teamwork/collaboration.

**Here's How You Can Help:** Allow girls to take full ownership of their projects, even when they reach roadblocks. Encourage them to reflect on their experiences and ask them to share their discoveries with you. Introduce them to subject matter experts and volunteers they might learn from and partner with.

## Outcomes

As girls **discover**, **connect**, and **take action** through Gold Award projects that are **girl-led** and involve **learning by doing** and **cooperative learning**, they benefit in five important ways.



**Here's How You Can Help:** Prompt girls to think about how they've grown over the course of their projects. Ask them what they've learned about leadership and teamwork. Discuss how they can continue applying those lessons once their projects are done.



# 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 two Senior or Ambassador Journeys or have completed a Silver Award and completed one Senior or Ambassador Journey.

## 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 prerequisites** as early on as possible. You might help them identify Leadership Journeys that align with their interests, or even complete a Journey 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, troubleshoot 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.



# The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Adults

## *What is the Gold Award?*

The Gold Award is the highest award that Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts can earn. It has a rich history of recognizing extraordinary efforts by extraordinary girls. To become a Gold Award Girl Scout, a girl identifies an issue she cares about, then plans and carries out a project to address it, which will have a lasting impact in her community and beyond.

## *What are the prerequisites?*

Girls must be registered Senior or Ambassador Girl Scouts. Before beginning her application, a Girl Scout must have completed two Senior or Ambassador Journeys or have completed one Senior or Ambassador Journey and have earned the Girl Scout Silver Award.

## *How long does a Gold Award project take to complete?*

Gold Award projects require a commitment of at least 80 hours from Girl Scouts. The timeline is designed by each individual Girl Scout. A project might be completed over the course of a summer—or in the span of a year or more.

## *What should Girl Scouts consider in their decision to become a Gold Award Girl Scout?*

They should consider the time commitment and decide for themselves whether they truly want to take it on. The decision to do so should be a girl's own.

## *Who else is involved in a Girl Scout's Gold Award project?*

Girl Scouts select a project advisor, who is an adult expert on their chosen issue. (Note: a girl's parent, caregiver, or troop leader can't hold this role.) The project advisor

provides advice and expertise throughout the project. And because the Gold Award emphasizes leadership, Girl Scouts assemble a team of volunteers to help with their project. The volunteer pool is not limited to fellow Girl Scouts and can include anyone.

## *What are helpful ways for parents to support their daughter as she becomes a Gold Award Girl Scout?*

- **Get to know more about the Gold Award**, including the associated council's Gold Award process and its safety, insurance, and travel guidelines. The council's Gold Award page and [girlscouts.org](https://www.girlscouts.org) are both great resources.
- **Discussing project ideas** with her, to help her identify her passions.
- **Encourage**—but don't pressure.
- **Help her develop a network of contacts** that can provide insight, skills, and resources.
- **Acknowledge that she is capable** and that she can assume leadership and responsibility in her own way.
- **Prompt her to take the lead** in working with her council, project advisor, and team.
- **Let her grow** by working through challenges she encounters along the way.
- **Recognize that her project is as unique as she is**, so don't compare her—or her project—to other girls and their Gold Awards.
- **Be a cheerleader** from the sidelines, and help when asked.
- **Celebrate big-time** as she's honored as a Gold Award Girl Scout!



# The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Project Advisors

## ***What is the Gold Award?***

The Gold Award is the highest award that a Senior or Ambassador Girl Scout (grades 9–12) can earn. To become a Gold Award Girl Scout, a girl identifies an issue that's important to her, then develops and carries out an innovative and sustainable solution with measurable impact. Each solution/project must link to a national and/or global issue.

## ***What types of projects are Gold Award-eligible?***

A Gold Award project must reflect the following: the Girl Scout has identified the root cause of a community issue she's passionate about, the action she takes must address a real need and have long-term benefits, she must show leadership by guiding a team of volunteers, and the project must be sustainable and measurable with a national and/or global link.

## ***How long does a Gold Award project take to complete?***

Gold Award projects require a commitment of at least 80 hours from the Girl Scout. The timeline is designed by the Girl Scout and enhanced with your input.

## ***Who can be a project advisor?***

A project advisor is an adult who chooses to be on a Girl Scout's Gold Award team and is an expert on the issue the girl's project addresses. Parents, caregivers, or troop leaders of girls pursuing their Gold Award cannot be advisors. Adult siblings and family members like aunts and uncles can sometimes be advisors if they are

experts on the issue the Girl Scout is exploring. However, we encourage Girl Scouts to branch outside of their families when possible.

## ***What is the role of a project advisor?***

A project advisor offers a Girl Scout guidance and expertise as needed, during the planning and execution of the girl's Gold Award project. Note that it's important that the project and its core ideas be the Girl Scout's own.

## ***How can I support a Girl Scout as she completes her Gold Award project?***

Although the project advisor role is flexible, here are some ways you can show your support:

- Recognize that the girl's project is as unique as she is, so don't compare her—or her project—to other girls and their Gold Awards.
- Let her interview you to help her better understand the issue she's addressing.
- Refer her to colleagues or acquaintances of yours for interviews or advice.
- As she researches and plans her project, refer her to relevant books, web resources, and/or organizations.
- Offer to act as a sounding board for any questions that may come up over the course of her project.
- Help her brainstorm the metrics most useful in ensuring her project has a measurable impact.
- Offer to review her proposal or final report before it's submitted.

Reviewer _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Project Proposal	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement (See Notes)
Date Received _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved Date _____

**Girl Scout's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PREREQUISITES PROPOSAL (ONLY)**

- Journey Prerequisite met
- Gold Award Workshop Complete

**PROPOSAL**

Did the applicant earn the GS Bronze and Silver Award?

- Yes     No

**PROPOSAL**

Does it appear that the project advisor is **NOT** related to the applicant OR is her troop leader?

- Yes
- No – Follow up needed

NOTE: (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

**PROPOSAL OR FINAL**

Does the applicant have a team consisting of at least one or more people?

- Yes
- No – Follow up needed

NOTE (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

**PROPOSAL & FINAL**

Does the application have ALL required signatures and initials?  Yes     No – Follow up needed

**PROPOSAL – Projected Timeline Hours**

- < 80hrs     = 80hrs     ≥ 80hrs

**FINAL – Actual Hours Logged**

Total # hours: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PROPOSAL) Projected Budget:**

1. Did the applicant submit a projected budget?  Yes     No – Follow-up needed
2. Is the applicant expecting to conduct any money-earning/solicitation activities?  Yes     No  
*(This will be noted if the applicant cites "donations" for income.)*
3. If yes to #2, did the applicant also submit a money-earning/solicitation application?  Yes     No

**(FINAL) Income & Expense Report**

1. Did the applicant submit a complete income & expense report?  Yes  No – Follow up needed
2. Did the applicant provide copies of receipts to show proof of expenses?  Yes  No – Follow up needed
3. Did the applicant submit in-kind forms for in-kind donations valuing ≥ \$250 (*required*)?  Yes  No

<b>PROPOSAL FEEDBACK</b>	<b>FINAL REPORT FEEDBACK</b>
<p>1. Is the applicant’s issue clearly addressed?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – Follow up needed</p> <p>NOTES: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>2. Does the applicant clearly address the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Root cause <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – Follow up needed</li> <li>- Target Audience <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – Follow up needed</li> <li>- National/global link <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – Follow up needed</li> </ul> <p>NOTES: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>3. Does the applicant successfully explain her goal to make her project measurable and sustainable?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – Follow up needed</p> <p>NOTES: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>1. Did the applicant clearly describe the issue being addressed?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – Follow up needed</p> <p>NOTES: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>2. Did the applicant successfully measure the project’s success to show how it addressed the root cause and its impact on her target audience?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – Follow up needed</p> <p>NOTES: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>3. Does the applicant clearly show her project’s sustainability and her leadership?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – Follow up needed</p> <p>NOTES: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p><b>National candidate?</b> Using the attached Gold Award Rubric, grade each the application on each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National and/or Global Link</li> <li>Measurability/Impact</li> <li>Root Cause</li> <li>Resources</li> <li>Sustainability</li> <li>Community Engagement</li> <li>Team Leadership</li> <li>Personal Growth &amp; Development</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Total:</b> _____</p>



# National Gold Award Girl Scout Rubric

Please refer to the glossary for further explanation of the terms in *red*.

Category	Description	0 Does Not Meet the Requirements	1 Meets Requirements Marginally	2 Meets Requirements Well (Indicates a Gold Award Project)	3 Exceeds Expectations	4 Far Exceeds Expectations (rare!)
<b>National and/or Global Link</b>	<i>The nominee explained how her project connects to an issue that is relevant beyond her own community, and ideally used research to inform the project itself.</i>	The nominee did not connect the project to a larger national and/or global issue. She did not convey research that helped to shape her project.	The nominee showed limited understanding of the connection between her project and a national and/or global issue. She demonstrated limited research on her issue.	The nominee specifically connected her project to a larger national and/or global issue. Her solution contributes to solving that problem.	The nominee specifically connected her project to a larger national and/or global issue. She has examined solutions to the same or similar problems in other communities or countries and used this research to inform her project.	The nominee connected her project to a larger national and/or global issue, used thorough research to inform her project, and has replicated or shared her project beyond her immediate community.
<b>Measurability/Impact</b>	<i>The nominee demonstrated her impact through data and other information. She used numbers to say, "Here's the change I planned to make, and here's how I know I made it."</i>	The project solution demonstrated little or no impact on the problem identified. The nominee may not have measured the impact, or the impact was not meaningful.	The project solution had limited impact on the problem identified; or the nominee made a clear effort to explain the problem, but the project solution does not match the problem well, or the impact is unclear.	The project solution <b>successfully addressed</b> the problem identified and the nominee explained how she measured her impact.	The project solution <b>successfully addressed</b> the problem identified for a significant number of individuals and/or to a significant degree. The nominee identified her success criteria and built them into her project planning.	The project <b>successfully addressed</b> the problem identified for a significant number of people to a significant degree. The nominee identified her success criteria and used data and analytics to demonstrate her project's impact over time.
<b>Root Cause</b>	<i>The nominee identified a <b>root cause</b> of her issue and addressed it through a well-constructed and researched project plan.</i>	The nominee did not identify a <b>root cause</b> of her issue. Her project addressed an immediate need with a short-term or one-off solution.	The nominee identified a <b>root cause</b> of her issue, but her project did not address it.	The nominee showed careful consideration of a <b>root cause</b> of the problem identified through a well-constructed approach.	The nominee presented a well-constructed and well-researched plan with careful attention to detail that described the problem, formed a well-reasoned solution that addressed a <b>root cause</b> , and executed on a plan to implement her solution.	The nominee presented a well-constructed and well-researched project plan that showed both careful attention to detail and creative thinking in addressing a <b>root cause</b> of her issue and the solution was especially innovative and/or the impact was profound. Her project may have addressed a new/underserved area.
<b>Resources</b>	<i>The nominee used the resources (technical, natural/environmental, financial, social, subject matter experts/human, infrastructure, local organizations, and more) available to her in a creative and effective way to increase her project's reach or expand its impact.</i>	The nominee did not describe the connection between her project and appropriate resources.	The nominee made limited use of available resources but there was some attempt to use available resources to enable or inform her work.	The nominee demonstrated a well-considered use of resources.	The nominee demonstrated a well-considered use of resources, and showed some innovation in finding or using resources in her project.	The nominee showed remarkable innovation or ingenuity in the use of her resources – making great use of existing resources, or overcoming a significant lack of resources available to her.



Category	Description	0 Does Not Meet the Requirements	1 Meets Requirements Marginally	2 Meets Requirements Well (Indicates a Gold Award Project)	3 Exceeds Expectations	4 Far Exceeds Expectations (rare!)
<b>Sustainability</b>	<i>The nominee's project has continued to have an impact after she has completed her part.</i>	No plan was put in place to continue the project and the solution cannot be maintained following this project.	There may be some impact beyond her involvement, but it's not very significant or solid. There may be a vague <b>sustainability</b> plan, but there is little evidence to back it up.	The project included a clear, thoughtful plan for <b>sustainability</b> .	The project has had a significant and lasting impact beyond her involvement.	The project has had a significant and lasting impact beyond her involvement, and that impact is strong and self-sustaining.
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<i>The nominee exercised leadership by involving appropriate members of the community she served in her project.</i>	The nominee did the project for her <b>target audience</b> . She did not engage appropriate members of the community in the solution, before, during, or after the project.	The nominee may have attempted to work with appropriate members of the community for her project, but it was not a core element of her project's work. This project may have conveyed some benefit to the <b>target audience</b> but it was not a partnership.	The nominee engaged appropriate members of the community before, during, and after the project and she has demonstrated that her <b>target audience</b> is benefiting from her project.	The nominee engaged her community before, during, and after the project. There are demonstrated ways that appropriate community members are benefiting from and participating in her project. The community is helping sustain her work after the project's completion.	The nominee engaged her community before, during, and after the project. There are demonstrated ways that appropriate community members are benefiting from and participating in her project. The community has taken her idea and replicated it, or established it as an ongoing service.
<b>Team Leadership</b>	<i>The nominee led a team to accomplish her goals. She explains how she attracted people to help with her project, delegated the work, and managed her team.</i>	The nominee did not lead a team or engage others to help with her project - the nominee did it by herself or this project appears driven by an adult (parent, mentor, or existing organization that the girl served).	The nominee did not convey significant effort to engage a wider team from the community or the nominee led her project team with outsized support or direction (excessive help from an adult). Teamwork might have been limited to people from her immediate network performing only peripheral tasks but it was not a functioning team.	The nominee recruited and led a team to complete her project. There is evidence that the team performed their assigned roles.	The nominee effectively led a team that included at least one expert, along with a diverse representation of skill sets. She sparked action within her larger community.	The nominee thoughtfully assembled and engaged a team with diverse skill sets and areas of expertise. She showed extraordinary effort in inspiring others outside of her immediate network to take action on her chosen issue.
<b>Personal Growth and Development</b>	<i>The nominee described the new skills she gained, qualities she learned about herself, and how these discoveries will help her in the future.</i>	The nominee did not describe or exhibit meaningful personal growth as a result of completing her project.	The nominee gave general/non-compelling examples of personal growth.	The nominee described how her project changed her experience or outlook, and there is some evidence that this development will continue.	The nominee was able to articulate the impact completing the Gold Award had on her, including skills gained, how the project helped her learn about herself, and how these discoveries connect with her future plans.	The nominee expressed concrete examples of how she will apply lessons from her Gold Award in future endeavors. She has demonstrated ongoing civic engagement that is tied to, or inspired by her project.