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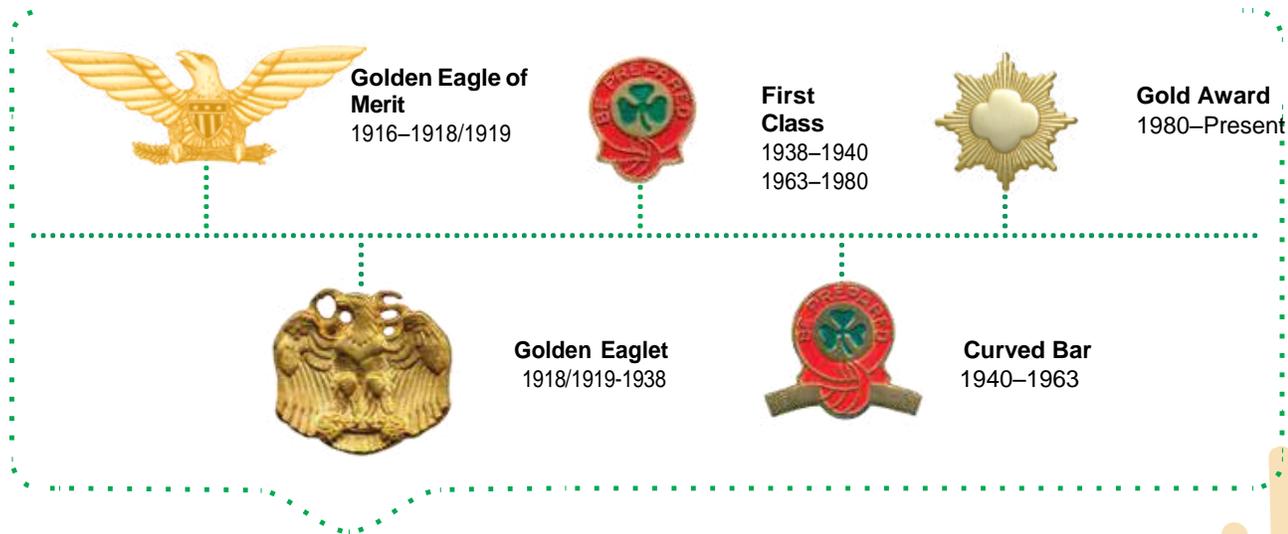
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**Contacts:**

Reach the Gold Award staff liaison at [awards@gshom.org](mailto:awards@gshom.org).

## Be a part of history

From its beginning in 1916, the highest Girl Scout award has been a symbol of excellence and leadership that recognizes the extraordinary efforts of extraordinary girls. While it's gone by many names, it's a timeless award that has inspired generations of young women to find greatness inside themselves and share their ideas and passions with their communities and the world. We hope you'll join them!



## Why go Gold?

You've walked in the footsteps of the very first Girl Scouts. You've camped, explored, learned skills, and had fun. You've made lifelong friends in the Girl Scout sisterhood. What's next? Maybe it's time to go Gold!

When you work on a Gold Award project, you delve deep into your passions, flex your problem-solving muscle, stand up for what you believe in, inspire others, and make a difference. It's an opportunity to do something more and to set your sights on true leadership.

## Here are a few other reasons to go Gold:

- **Planning to go to college?** Some universities and colleges award scholarships to Gold Award Girl Scouts.
- **Considering a military career?** Gold Award Girl Scouts are entitled to enlist at a higher pay grade when they join the military.
- **Looking to stand out?** Girl Scouts of the USA selects ten girls each year to be National Gold Award Girl Scouts based on their Gold Award projects. To learn more, see “National Gold Award Girl Scouts,” page 26.

 **Something to remember:** *Go Gold is for you*—not for anyone else! The Gold Award is an opportunity to set your sincere passions in motion. It’s challenging. It’s immensely rewarding. And it’s entirely up to you.



## What is a Gold Award Project?

The Gold Award project is a *take action project* that must include **four elements**. In the project, you’ll identify the **root cause** of a community issue that you are passionate about. The action you take must address a *real need* and have *long-term benefits*. You must show **leadership**. And the project must be **sustainable** and **measurable**.

Your Gold Award project needs to reflect what you’re capable of. It’s important to know that the Gold Award Committee considers all projects on an individual basis.

## What does “take action” really mean?

Taking action means working to understand the root of a problem so that you can develop a project that continues to address that problem—even after you’ve done your part. It’s more than just community service, which is helping others from your heart for a short time. When you do a take action project, you’ll use both your heart and your head to make a difference that lasts.

## EXAMPLE

### **Gold Award Take Action Project:** **Backyard Bounty**

Aurora noticed that fruit growing on backyard trees in her neighborhood was going to waste. She researched and reached out to people in her community and discovered two **root causes**: People didn't know about gleaning or about organizations that would take extra food.

Aurora went into action and created something new—the *Backyard Bounty* project. She showed **leadership** by partnering with Jewish Family Services and working with teens in the Hand Up Teen Leadership program to create a gleaning club. Her club educated the community about what could be done with excess food growing in neighborhoods. The club also harvested unused food from trees and gardens.

Aurora tracked her progress so that the impact of her project was **measurable**. Altogether, the club gleaned 1,200 servings of healthy produce to donate to struggling families. She tracked the number of people who were educated about gleaning and the number of volunteers who helped too.

Aurora made her project **sustainable** by agreeing to co-chair the club in its second year. She also made all of her project materials available to Jewish Family Services so that the project could be continued in her absence.

Aurora established a **global link** by expanding her project to other communities outside of her neighborhood.

## EXAMPLE

### **Gold Award Take Action Project:** **Special Olympics Aquatic Program**

Victoria Rose reached out to the Special Olympics Aquatic Program in her community and asked them about their program needs. She discovered that they didn't have enough volunteers or formal volunteer training. Also, the program didn't have enough athletic training facilities. Through her research, she discovered the **root cause**: There was no startup support for a training program. She showed her **leadership** by partnering with Special Olympics and creating something new—the first-ever *Special Olympics Aquatic Volunteer Training Program*.

Victoria Rose tracked her progress so that her impact was **measurable**. She recruited and trained 60 volunteers to support 150 athletes during their annual spring games. She also secured three additional pools as training sites, located in underserved areas of San Diego.

Victoria Rose made her project **sustainable** by allowing Special Olympics to adopt and implement her volunteer training program.

Victoria Rose established a **global link** by creating a program that could be adapted for use elsewhere, reaching out to other communities to secure pools for training, and serving diverse athletes.



## EXAMPLE

### **Gold Award Take Action Project:** **Girls Love STEAM**

Nikki is a STEAM\* enthusiast who wanted to change the perception that robotics and other STEAM activities were just for boys. Through her research, she discovered the **root cause**: Girls weren't the target audience for most STEAM outreach programs. She showed her **leadership** by partnering with a publisher, local elementary schools, and the school district to create something new. She wrote, illustrated, and published two STEAM books for girls and built a companion website and lesson plans. She also formed a team to help her present her books and activities to local elementary school classes.

Nikki tracked her progress so that her impact was **measurable**. Her books have been taught to 180 students from six classes in four schools across the country. She also collected evaluations of her project from the classroom. The feedback she received was rewarding! Students let her know that because of her class, they were excited to try more science projects and join robotics teams.

Nikki's project is **sustainable** because her books and lesson plans have been adopted by schools who continue to use her curriculum. She has also launched a company called *Girls Love STEAM* and has a third book in the works.

Nikki established a **global link** by making her STEAM curriculum available to schools across the country.

\*Science, technology, engineering, arts, and math.

Let's get  
started



## How do I find the root cause of my issue?

Create a “mind map” for finding root causes of an issue. The mind map will help you understand what triggers your issue and will help you look further to find the root causes of those triggers. You’ll find a sample mind map and a blank map for you to use on p. 13 & 14. When you research and interview community partners, you’ll learn more about root causes, too. Community partners are experts already working in the area of your issue. You’ll learn about connecting with and interviewing community partners on p. 15.



## How do I show leadership in my project?

Show leadership by gathering and working with a team of volunteers—don’t fly solo on this one! Put your leadership skills to work by planning, directing, assigning, motivating, collaborating, and making decisions to ensure your project’s success.



## How do I make my project sustainable?

Your project is sustainable when it carries on or continues to have impact, even after you’ve done your part. In a nutshell, you create lasting change.

Examples: A school or organization could agree to continue your project, or you might create a binder, pamphlet, video, website, or social media campaign that could be an ongoing resource.



## How do I make my project measurable?

Your project is measurable when you collect information or data throughout your project and use it to show that your actions have had an impact on the community issue you’ve chosen. So think about what you can count in your project. How much? How many?

Examples: You can show the number of people the project helped, the number of people who got involved, or a number that shows the change in a community’s need. You can also ask those who have worked with you or those you have helped to complete an evaluation. Then use their responses to measure impact.



**Something to remember:** A successful Gold Award project has true impact. So holding one workshop that teaches a handful of girls about body image won’t do. Stretch yourself so that you create meaningful change. Then measure it! Get a feel for the scope of Gold Award projects by visiting [girlscouts.org](http://girlscouts.org) and searching for “Girls Changing the World.”



## How do I include a global link in my project?

You don't have to leave the country! Your project has a global link when you **take your project outside of your local community** and inspire others to take action. You can take your project to:

- Local youth groups
- Health and human services agencies
- Community centers
- Churches, synagogues, or mosques
- School districts

**You can also create a global link by investigating** how people in other communities or other parts of the world address your issue. What kinds of programs do they have in place? How can you learn from these? Can you incorporate what you learn about other communities into your project?

## What a Gold Award project isn't

**It's not a collection project.** Collecting food for shelter pets, for example, wouldn't qualify. When you collect food once, it's not sustainable. It's really just a one-time gig. And it doesn't identify and solve a root cause, like overcrowding of animal shelters.

**It's not a fundraiser.** Planning a 5K or another event to raise funds for a cause won't do. That's because money alone doesn't usually address the root cause of a problem. And money runs out. So it's not sustainable. Also, in your role as a Girl Scout, you can't raise money for another organization.

**It's not a make or donate project.** Making blankets or donating food for homeless families also wouldn't work. While it's helpful, it doesn't identify and solve a root cause, and it provides immediate but not long-term relief. So it's not sustainable.



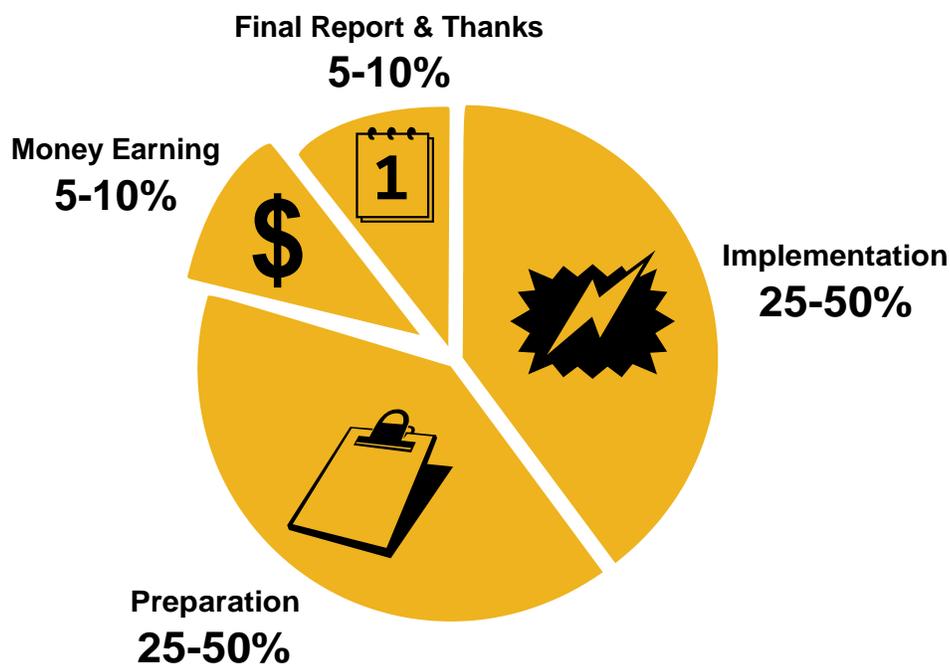
**Something to remember:** Making things or collecting things to be donated are service projects. You may have done these activities before as a Girl Scout, and there's no doubt that service is very important to a community. But the Gold Award asks you to step into a real leadership role where you research, plan, and then create something new that isn't already in place.

## How much time does it take?

Plan to spend at least 80 hours on the Gold Award project—that’s the minimum. You’ll keep track of your time in a log, making note each time you work on your project. You can track your time on *GoGold Online*, or use an app, spreadsheet, or simply a notebook.

 **Something to remember:** Your time log should include a short description of how you spent your time and the *actual time spent on the project*. Time spent driving, getting gas, picking up volunteers, attending training, and other secondary activities doesn’t count.

Use this chart to guide you in how you spend project time.



**Implementation** is the process of leading and performing the work you defined in your project proposal and making changes, when necessary, to achieve the project’s goal.

**Note:** You can start preparing for your project before your proposal is approved. Get started on research, contacting possible venues or community partners, and finding potential volunteers. But don’t start implementing your project until it’s been approved. You can log up to 10 percent of your total project hours before approval.

## How do I know I'm ready?

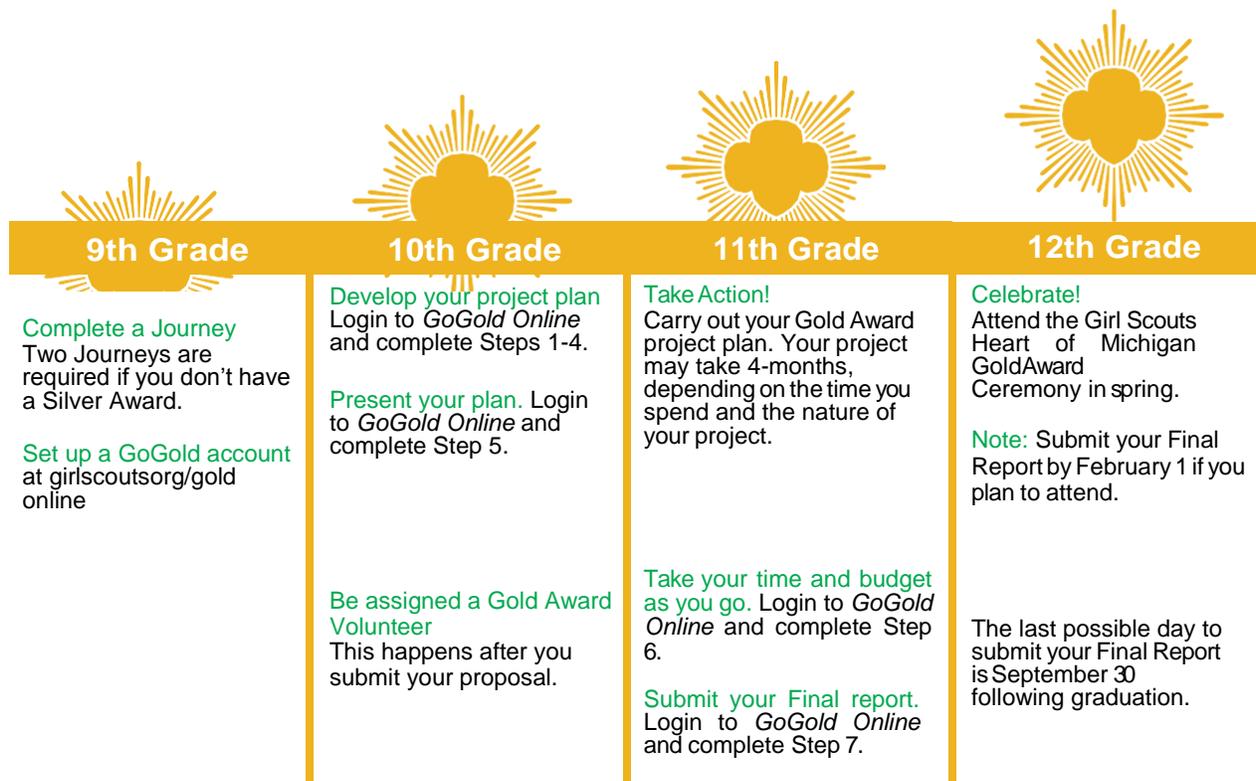
You can submit your Gold Award proposal after you've crossed these items off your to-do list:

### You're ready when:

- You are in grades 9-12.
- You are a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador.
- You've completed two Senior or Ambassador Journeys OR have earned a Silver Award and completed one Senior or Ambassador Journey.

## How do I know what to do and when?

We've got you covered. Follow this timeline to ensure that you meet Gold Award requirements on time.



# What are the 7 steps to the Gold Award?

Let's break it down with a description of each step and tips for success. You'll complete these steps using the *GoGold Online* web tool. When you're ready, find the tool and register at [girlscouts.org/gogoldonline](https://girlscouts.org/gogoldonline).



## Step 1: Choose an Issue

In this step, you'll answer six questions that will help you reflect on your experience, education, and personal values in order to find an issue you care about.

### Things to think about

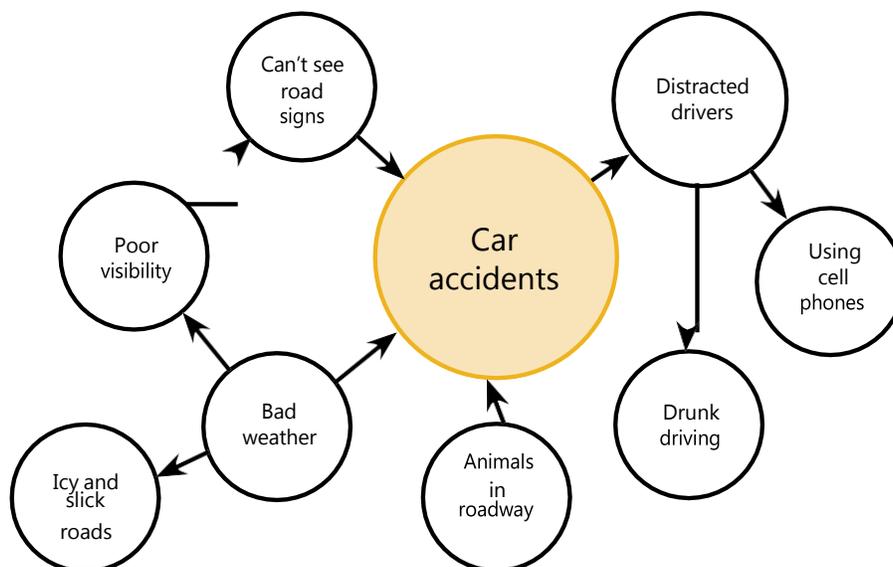
- What inspires you? Is it something in your school, community, country, or the world?
- What motivates you into action? Is it people, events, activities, places?
- What skills, talents, and strengths do you have to offer?
- How do you want to make a difference? As an advocate for justice? A promoter of environmental awareness? As a trainer, mentor, or coach? As an artist, actor, or musician? As an organizer of petitions or campaigns? As an entrepreneur? Can you think of another role?
- What motivates, inspires, and interests others? Can you build a team to support your idea?
- What would benefit the community both immediately and long-term?
- Check back through your Girl Scout Leadership Journeys. Are there activities in the Journeys that interest you? Can you use them in your Gold Award take action project?

**If these questions aren't working for you**, try making a passion list. Start by listing 10 things you're passionate about. See the take action project ideas in the Appendix (p. 31) if you need help. Then narrow your list down to your top five. Finally, answer this question: *Which two are your best bets for creating a Gold Award project that would benefit the community?*

## Step 2: Investigate

In Step 1, you identified a community issue. You'll need to narrow down the issue to its root causes for your Take Action project, and you'll need to identify an organization in the community you can partner with. You'll work on both of these in Step 2 as you investigate and research your issue more.

**Start by using a mind-mapping tool** to explore the root causes of the issue you've chosen. Here's an example mind map:



Notice that the community issue, “car accidents,” is placed in the large, center circle and that triggers for accidents like bad weather and distracted drivers are explored further.

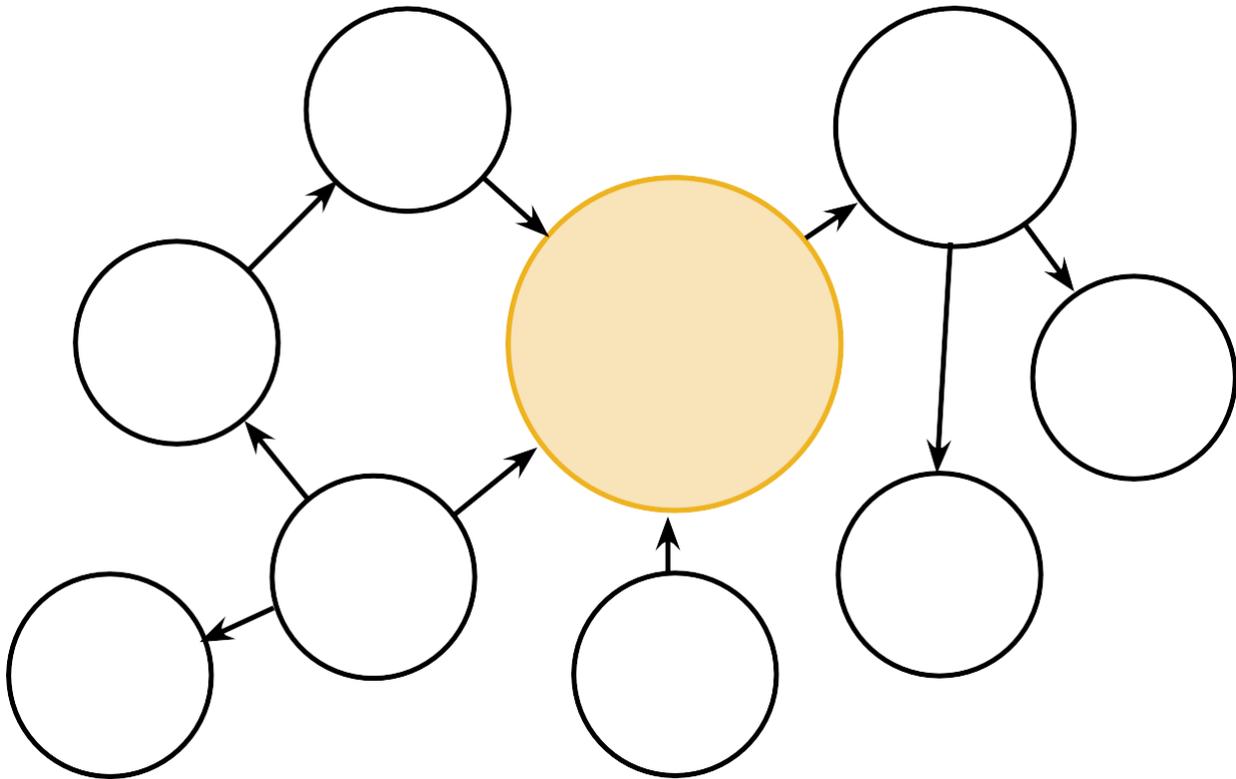
When you explore further, you find root causes. In this example, the root causes are found in the outer circles. For distracted drivers, **the root causes** are “using cell phones” and “drunk driving.” And the root causes for accidents caused by bad weather are “icy and slick roads,” “poor visibility,” and “can’t see road signs.”





### Try it! Instructions:

Place your community issue in the gray circle. Ask yourself, “What triggers this issue?” Then explore further to find **root causes** (these will be the outside circles—like in our example). Add as many other circles as you like. Select one or two root causes and you have the foundation of a strong Gold Award project!



**Great! You’ve figured out some root causes. Now take your research further to make sure:**

- Your root causes are real.
- The need you’ve identified is a real need in the community.
- You can make your project idea happen—that it’s realistic.
- You learn about networks and resources that can help you.

**Start with research.** Jump online to research local organizations that address your issue. Or drive around in your community to scout out people and places related to your issue.

You’ll be surprised what you’ll learn and see when you’re actually out in your community.

**Then make a community map.** A community map highlights the people, things, services, organizations, and businesses in a given area with a focus on those who can help support your project.

## Try it! Instructions:

Sit down with paper and markers and draw everything out—buildings, streets, landmarks, businesses, libraries, schools, and parks. Simple lines work just fine. Then place the resources you found during your research on your map. Here are some examples (yours will be different, tailored to your issue and community):

- City Hall, where you can contact the mayor and other elected officials
- A homeless shelter where you can talk to the director about developing a program to help those in need
- A local salvage yard where you can talk to the owner about developing ways to deal with trash that's hard to recycle (like refrigerators)

## Need help? If you get stumped, try answering these questions:

- Who has knowledge and background of root causes for various community issues?
- Who can access additional resources?
- Who may be good at helping think through solutions?
- Who can serve as a project advisor for the Gold Award?
- Who may be able to offer financial or in-kind support for the project?
- Who may be able to help publicize the issue and project?

**Finally, contact those in the community who can help.** Use your map to decide who you would like to interview and follow these tips:

**Make arrangements.** Decide who you would like to interview, contact them, and set up a date and time.

**Prepare.** Research and learn all you can to help you come up with questions to ask. You can start with sample questions like these, but be sure to add your own too:

- What are the biggest challenges or problems that you have faced or are facing?
- What do you think is the root cause of these issues?
- What will it take to address them?
- Are there resources available to do that?
- What are the strengths of the community?

**Conduct the interview.** Find a quiet place where you can give your full attention and agree to turn off your cell phones. Be sure to thank your interviewees for their time, and then briefly describe your project. Being prepared is key! Keep questions simple and related to the issue at hand. When you're done, ask if you can share more about your project as it develops.

**Send a thank-you and review what you learned.** When your interview is over, send a thank-you note within a week. If you think you might need to meet again, mention it in your note. Then review your interview notes to find info that will help you on your project. Contact the person you interviewed if you have gaps in information or need to check your facts. Checking (and even rechecking) facts is important!

### Step 3: Get Help

In Step 3, you'll form a team of volunteers. Working together to put your plans into action allows you to flex your leadership muscle and make a bigger impact than you would on your own. Anyone can be on your team—you don't need to limit yourself to just people your age or those who are Girl Scouts. But do choose volunteers who will work to put your project into action and who will stick it out until you're done.

#### Here are some important members of your team:

**Your project advisor** is an expert in your chosen community issue. It's up to you to choose your project advisor. Pick someone who is knowledgeable and experienced. Project advisors can guide you as you plan and implement your project. But they shouldn't design your project for you. That's your job!

**Your Gold Award mentor** is a Gold Award process expert who will guide you so that your project meets the Gold Award requirements. You'll be assigned a Gold Award mentor after you submit your project proposal through *GoGold Online*. Your Gold Award mentor's goal is to ensure your project meets the requirement, so have an open mind when she offers suggestions. She has your best interests at heart!

Your Gold Award mentor is there to answer your questions, discuss your concerns, and help you make changes to your proposal if you need to.

Your Gold Award mentor is also there for you when you're wrapping up. She will review your final report before you submit it to make sure you've met all requirements.

**Parents or guardians** can act as coaches, cheerleaders, sounding boards, and chauffeurs. They can also help you out with safety, transportation, and travel guidelines.

**Troop leaders and Individually Registered Member mentors** can help make sure you've met Gold Award prerequisites and may also agree to be a part of your volunteer team. They can also review Gold Award funding, safety, and travel guidelines with you.

**The Gold Award staff liaison** coordinates the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Gold Award Program and works closely with the Gold Award Committee. Have general Gold Award questions? Need help with *GoGold Online*? Contact the Gold Award staff liaisons at Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

**Others in your circle who want to help you implement your plan**, like relatives, friends, people you've met through networking, and girls in your troop.

## Step 4: Create a Plan

In Step 4, you'll work out the specific details of your project proposal, including a project description, planning information, and your thoughts on how the project will impact you, the community, and your target audience.

**Something to remember:** It's important to be detailed in this step so that Gold Award Committee members get a strong sense of what you want to do and how you will do it.

## Step 5: Present Your Plan

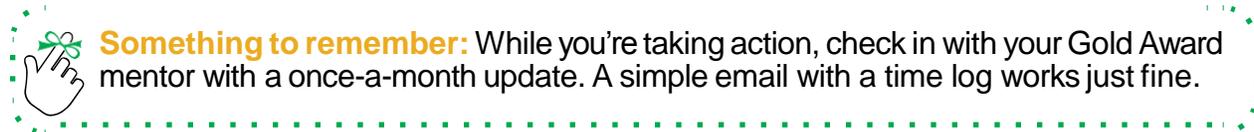
Submit your proposal using the *GoGold Online* portal. Be sure to download a copy of your proposal to keep for your records.

### You're ready to submit your proposal when:

- You've met the prerequisites (see "How to know I'm ready?" p. 10).
- Your project contains the five elements of a Gold Award (root cause, leadership, sustainable, measurable, and global link).
- Your proposal is original. You've done all the work.
- You've chosen a project advisor/mentor who is an expert in your chosen issue (Step 3: Get Help).
- You have a team of volunteers who will take action with you.
- You've partnered with a community organization to address your issue and secured your letter of support.
- Your project addresses the needs of a target audience.
- Your budget is realistic.
- Your project will take at least 80 hours to complete.
- You have the skills and resources to carry out your project.
- You've set clear goals. You can say, "Here is the change I hope to make, and here's how I'll know I've made it."

## Step 6: Take Action

Once your proposal is approved, it's go time! Log your hours and track your budget as you put your proposal into action.



## Step 7: Educate and Inspire

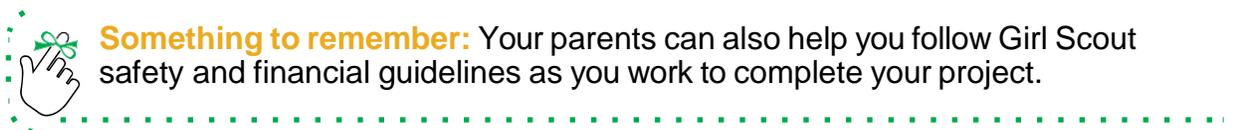
By Step 7, you're in the home stretch. Be sure to fully reflect on each question and provide thoughtful, detailed answers.



## What do my parents need to know?

Let parents know that you're taking the lead. They can still help by:

- **Reading through Gold Award material** so that they understand the process and can offer support. In particular, parents can read through the safety, insurance, and travel guidelines on pages 23-25 and discuss these with you before you put your Gold Award project in motion.
- **Discussing project ideas** with you to help you come to your own project decisions that reflect your passions.
- **Providing encouragement** but not pressure.
- **Recognizing that you are capable** and that you can assume leadership and responsibility in your own way.
- **Helping you develop a network** of contacts who may provide insight, resources, or useful skills.
- **Allowing you to grow by working through issues and problems** on your own—not jumping in to set things straight.
- **Being a cheerleader** from the sidelines and helping when asked.
- **Celebrating big time** as you are honored for your Gold Award accomplishment.



## Can I change my proposal after I've submitted it?

If you need to make a change to your proposal, contact your Gold Award mentor to discuss the reasons for the change.

## How do I fund my project?

It's likely that you'll need some funds to support your project. Finding funds can feel a little daunting. But being really passionate about your project can help you overcome money concerns. Here are some ideas for project funding:

**Treats & Reads and Cookies.** Participating in the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Treats & Reads is one of the best ways to earn money for your Gold Award project. And because these activities get you out in your community, they offer an opportunity to talk to others about your Gold Award. You never know, a cookie booth might be just the place where you'll meet a volunteer for your project or a person who can support you in another way. It is required to participate in both Treats and Reads and Cookies to be able to do a money-earning project.

**Troop/group money-earning.** These are activities that are organized by you or your troop (not by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan). Examples include car washes, present wrapping stations, bake sales, garage sales, recycling, etc. These are allowed if you have participated in Treats and Reads and Cookies. Also, there is a Troop Money earning application to complete and submit to your Gold Award mentor.

**Cookie Cash.** Got cookie cash? Whether you are a member of a troop or Juliette/ Individually Registered Member (IRM), you can use Cookie Cash to cover Gold Award project supply costs (but not things like meals and gas). You can submit a Cookie Cash Reimbursement Request form to [awards@gshom.org](mailto:awards@gshom.org) after your final report has been approved by the Gold Award Committee. Include your receipts and your Cookie Cash. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will issue you a check for the amount of your expenses. Sorry—we can't give you "change" if your Cookie Cash are more than the total of your receipts.

**Donations.** You can seek donations from individuals, businesses, and community organizations.

Donations are regulated by Girl Scout Heart of Michigan policy.



**Something to remember:** It's important for you to know that when you ask for a donation, you can describe your project in person, write letters, give a presentation, and send emails. But an adult, like a family member or troop leader, must do the actual asking.

So, if you write emails or a letter, an adult must sign the bottom and use his or her email address or postal address. If you're asking in person, you can provide all the details, but an adult must be the one to say, "Would you be willing to donate to help make this Gold Award project happen?" It's an Internal Revenue Service regulation and Girl Scout policy: Girls are not allowed to directly solicit money or goods.

**Earning grants.** Check with your Gold Award mentor and Girl Scout staff.

**Using your own money.** You can use your own money. But going for the Gold Award isn't meant to be a hardship on you or your family. It's more of a learning opportunity. So put on your creative thinking cap. Start by designing your project so that it's sustainable without ongoing funds from you. And think about easy activities you can do to earn the money you need to get started. Consider pet-walking, babysitting, lawn mowing, recycling, tutoring, or making something to sell. The possibilities are endless!

**Things you can't do to raise money. As a Girl Scout, you can't:**

- Raise or solicit money for other organizations.
- Raise money by associating Girl Scouts with a product, political viewpoint, or cause (like Avon, Mary Kay, Tupperware, Pampered Chef, candle parties, etc.).
- Sell products that create profits for a business besides Girl Scouts, like selling M&Ms, Krispy Kreme, See's Candies, Pizza Hut, Papa John's, Rubio's or other restaurants, catalog sales, etc.
- Sell items on the Internet.
- Use crowdfunding sites (no Kickstarter, IndieGoGo, or GoFundMe).
- Raise money using games of chance like bingo, a raffle, or a contest.

## Can I use media as part of my project?

You are free to include videos, photos, websites, blogs, and flyers in your Gold Award project. But keep these considerations in mind when you do:

**Think safety.** Be sure that the location of the people in your photos and videos can't be traced. For example, avoid filming the front of a home with address or street names in sight or filming a driveway with a car license plate visible.

**Get written consent.** You'll need to get written consent from anyone (adult or minor) you capture in a video or photo you plan to make public. If you're working with people under 18, you'll need a parent signature on the consent form too.

**Represent yourself well.** As you know, what you post on a website can be read by anyone. So be guided by safety and how you represent yourself as a Girl Scout. Things to consider: privacy, language use, sponsorship, links, and proper use of copyrighted material (writing, music, brand images, and pictures).

**Weigh whether you need a website.** It's common for Gold Award projects to have a website. Building a site can be a great way to learn a skill. You can also recruit an expert who can guide you on the technical and legal aspects of having a site. This is your project, so get involved in the process at all levels—decision-making, research, writing, graphics, and web page creation.

## Consider the following questions to help you decide whether to develop a website:

- **Why do you want a website?** Do you need to convey info to your target audience? Or post dates and notices? Would you like to create a scrapbook record for the person who continues your project to follow? Do you need a site to keep track of the work you've done? If you answered "yes" to any of those, a website may be right for you.
- **How many websites already exist on your topic?** Are there a lot? If so, will another really make an impact, or will it just get lost?
- **Does your target audience have internet access?** Choose another communication tool if your target audience doesn't have internet access. If your target audience has access, how will they know about the web page? Will it show up on an internet search? Will you need to market it?
- **How much will it cost?** Will your website be part of another site? Or do you need to purchase your own URL? Will you have to pay more for a password protected site? Does the site provide a way to keep individual files and downloads? Does it have all the functions you need (e.g. a calendar function, email and comment box features)?
- **How much time will be required for upkeep?** Who will be responsible for posting changes? How often do you want to change the site—weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly?
- **Will you need interactivity?** Is your site an information-only site, or will you need an interactive component? If so, can you build in password protection?

## What do I need to know about safety?

As a Girl Scout, you know that safety is important. When you work on the Gold Award, it's a good idea to make a basic safety management plan. In advance, think about:

- What could go wrong
- How to prevent things from going wrong
- What to do if they go wrong anyway

**You'll also need to decide if you'll be organizing an official Girl Scout event.** How? Ask yourself, "Is my Gold Award event marketed to Girl Scouts?"



**Something to remember:** Most young women don't market the events they do for their Gold Award projects as official Girl Scout events.

**If your answer is no**, check out the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](https://gshom.org) at [gshom.org](https://gshom.org) to prepare and learn the risks of activities you might be doing as part of your project. Use the Safety Activity Checkpoints to help you form your safety management plan.

**If you're not sure**, contact Help Desk at [helpdesk@gshom.org](mailto:helpdesk@gshom.org) or calling 800-497-2688



If your answer is yes, complete these steps:

### Step 1: Get the supervision you need

You'll need a registered troop leader or parent who is currently First Aid/CPR/AED certified.

### Step 2: Check out safety resources

- See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for transportation, first aid, and supervision requirements.
- See the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for any activities you might do as part of your project. Don't see the activity you need? Contact [helpdesk@gshom.org](mailto:helpdesk@gshom.org).

### Step 3: Look into insurance

You'll need non-member [accident insurance](#) if you have project volunteers who are not current, registered Girl Scout members. The insurance covers costs that are not covered by personal health insurance, like co-pays and medicines. For those who don't have personal health insurance, Girl Scout insurance covers medical costs up to a limit.

Visit [gshom.org](http://gshom.org) for an insurance application and instructions.

You'll need **proof of liability insurance** if your Gold Award project includes a high-risk activity using a vendor or venue. To see if an activity is high risk, check the *Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Risk level is shown for each activity.

## What do I need to know about driving and travel?

All Gold Award projects involve some travel. Travel can be anything from a short drive to a plane trip.

Either way, plan to follow Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan guidelines for transporting girls anytime you are in charge of getting people from one place to another.

### You're in charge of travel when:

- Your troop is at a meeting and decides to carpool afterward to a site where they'll help with your Gold Award project.
- Your Gold Award project takes place at more than one site and you help volunteers get from one site to another.



**Something to remember:** As a Girl Scout, you can't drive other Girl Scouts for your Gold Award project.

### When you travel:

- Have at least one adult first-aider traveling with the group.
- Keep a first-aid kit in each car.
- Check the adult/girl ratio to make sure you have enough adults for the trip.
- Purchase [extended event activity insurance](#) for trips lasting three nights or more, or trips that are out of the state or country.

## How do I submit my final report?

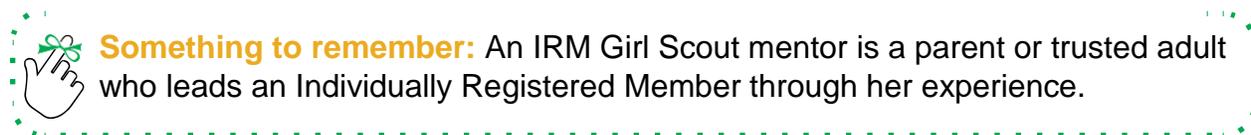
Send your final report and any project documents (like surveys or evaluations) to your Gold Award Mentor *before* you submit it at *GoGold Online*. Your mentor will make sure that the report is complete and that it meets the terms of your original proposal. Once you get the green light from your mentor, submit your report using *GoGold Online*. See the checklist in "Step 7: Educate and Inspire" for a list of documents to upload.



**Something to remember:** Gold Award final reports must be submitted by September 30<sup>th</sup> following a girl's high school graduation.

## Can Juliettes/Individually Registered Members go Gold?

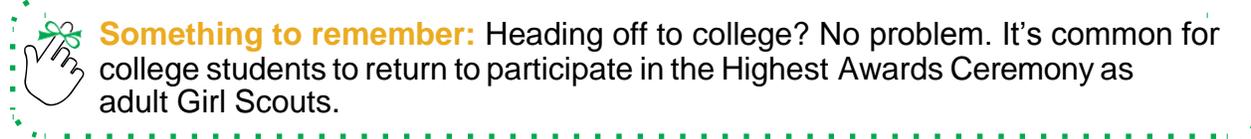
Absolutely! Juliettes/Individually Registered Members (IRMs) can earn the Girl Scout Gold Award. Your IRM Girl Scout mentor can sign the signature page that you submit with your proposal in Step 5 of the *GoGold Online* process.



## When is the Gold Award Ceremony?

The Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Highest Awards ceremony is in May each year. Your final project report must be submitted no later than February 1 to participate in that year.

If you miss the February 1 deadline, you can attend the ceremony the following May.



## What is National Gold Award?

Every year, 10 exceptionally inspiring Gold Award Girl Scouts are chosen as National Gold Award Girl Scouts. This honor is given to those whose projects demonstrated extraordinary leadership, had a measurable and sustainable impact, and addressed a local challenge related to a national or global issue. They're recognized for taking matters into their own hands and being the change the world needs!

### **National Gold Award Girl Scouts:**

- Receive professional public speaking training
- Have the opportunity to reach a national audience and highlight the impact of their projects
- Are awarded college scholarships and other opportunities to help sustain their Gold Award projects

**How are recipients chosen?** Councils nominate their top three Gold Award Girl Scouts from those who have applied for a council nomination. Candidates must have earned their Gold Award between April 1 of the previous year and March 31 of the current year.

**Want to apply?** On April 1 of the current year, you can apply for a council nomination. Find and complete the application at *GoGold Online*. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will notify eligible applicants and can help with the application process.

## What are the #1 tips to help me succeed?

We've pulled together a list of "best tips" based on years of experience leading young women through the Gold Award process. Follow these for Gold Award success:



### Do this ...

**Pull a team of volunteers together** and put your leadership skills to work.

**Choose a project advisor** who is an expert on your issue and willing to be involved.

**Plan ahead** and anticipate obstacles.

**Break up your work** into small, manageable bundles and assign each bundle a timeline.

**Keep in touch with your project advisor and Gold Award Committee volunteer**—update the people who can help you and ask questions when you need to.

**Document everything as it occurs**, including time, so that the information you collect is useful, accurate, and honest.

**Have a plan to measure your project's outcome**—collect data, conduct surveys, and/or do pre- and post-project evaluations with your target audience.

**Make sure your project includes the five Gold Award elements** (see p. 2).

**Include detailed goals in your project proposal that show your anticipated impact.**

**Do your research** to make sure any organizations you plan to work with actually want to sustain your project.

**Create a dynamic project** with measurable impact to a community.

**Be original—this is your chance to shine!**



### Not this ...

Do it all yourself with just a few or no volunteers.

Choose a parent or family member as an

advisor.

Wing it without a plan.

Procrastinate or try to do it all at once.

Keep project progress, obstacles, and details to yourself until you submit your final report.

Make up a timeline after you've finished the project, or put together several small projects.

Complete your project with no real way to measure the impact you've made.

Submit your project proposal without including a global link or proposal or making it measurable and sustainable, or without identifying root causes, or showing how you'll lead others to make your project happen.

Skip goal-setting.

Assume that organizations need your help.

Create a static website as the focus of your project or hold a one-day workshop.

Copy what others have done.

# FAQs

## Frequently asked questions

### **Do I present my Gold Award project proposal to the Gold Award Committee?**

No. You'll submit your proposal using the *GoGold Online* web tool. After you've submitted your proposal you will be assigned a Gold Award mentor to support you through meeting the Gold Award project requirements.

### **When should I submit my Gold Award project proposal?**

The Gold Award Committee meets each month on the second Tuesday. Submit your project proposal by 5 p.m. on the first of the month for processing.



**Something to remember:** The Gold Award Committee is committed to helping all young women who go for the Gold Award. But, they're not available around the clock and can't pull off a quick turnaround. It's best to be timely and organized when interacting with your Gold Award Committee volunteer.

### **How do I get approved?**

Once you submit your Gold Award project proposal and it is approved you'll be assigned a Gold Award mentor who will review your proposal and discuss areas of improvement.

### **What do I do if my Gold Award project proposal isn't approved?**

Don't worry! Your Gold Award mentor or a staff member will discuss with you the parts you'll need to improve. We'll help you figure out what's needed to move forward.

### **Who is my project advisor?**

Your project advisor is an adult who you choose to be on your team and who is an expert on the issue your project addresses. It's important for you to know that parents are not advisors. Adult siblings and family members like aunts and uncles can sometimes be advisors if they are truly experts in the issue you're exploring. However, we encourage you to branch outside your family.

**Can my family be on my team?**

Yes, your family can be on your team. But they shouldn't be the only ones. If you're only working with family, you don't have an opportunity to stretch and grow in the way you need to for the Gold Award. So make it a priority to lead others in the community through your project. Remember too that when you expand your circle, you expand your impact. That's what it's all about!

**Can I do my project to benefit Girl Scouts?**

Yes. Troop members and even your troop leader can help you carry out your project, the community that benefits from your work can be Girl Scouts.

**Why are Journeys a prerequisite to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award?**

The skills you gain when working on Journeys help you develop, plan, and implement your Gold Award project. They're a great way to prepare.

**What is a target audience?**

Your target audience is the portion of the community who will benefit from the work you do as you carry out your project proposal.

**Can I include volunteer hours in my required 80 project hours?**

No. Those 80 hours must be the time you've spent on the Gold Award project. But you can track hours your volunteers donated to your project in your final report as supporting data.

**Can I start my project before it's approved?**

Sort of. You can start to prepare for your project. You can research your topic. You can also contact venues and possible community partners. And you can create resources or begin seeking volunteers. But you should not implement your project until your proposal is approved and you have been assigned a Gold Award mentor.

**Can I do a Gold Award Project with my friends or my troop?**

No. The Gold Award is an individual project. But you can certainly help your friends with their projects, and they can help you.

**When is the last day to submit my final report?**

September 30th (following graduation) is the last possible day to submit your final report.



**Can I get an extension if I'm too busy to complete my project?**

We get it. High school is a busy time. But the committee can't grant extensions if you haven't had time to complete your project. An extension might be granted if you've had a serious illness, lost your home, or had an equally difficult experience. If one of these applies to you, contact the Gold Award staff liaison at Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

**When must I finish in order to list the Gold Award on my college applications?**

You can put "Gold Award candidate" and the estimated year of completion on your applications as soon as you receive approval for your project from the Gold Award Committee. Once you've actually earned your Gold Award, feel free to indicate that you are a Gold Award Girl Scout and the year you earned the award.

**Who approves the Gold Award Project Final Report?**

The final report is approved by the Gold Award Committee volunteer and accepted by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

# Appendix

## Take action project ideas

### Community development

- \_ Civic/public infrastructure
- \_ Homeless assistance
- \_ Transportation
- \_ Community clean-up
- \_ Social services
- \_ Volunteer capacity/management
- \_ Historic preservation
- \_ Animal care services
- \_ Independent living assistance
- \_ Other community development

### Economic development

- \_ Financial literacy
- \_ Workforce development
- \_ Financial asset development
- \_ Economic revitalization
- \_ Technology access
- \_ Other economic development

### Disaster recovery and relief

- \_ Disaster mitigation
- \_ Disaster recovery
- \_ Other disaster
- \_ Disaster preparedness
- \_ Disaster relief

### Education

- \_ Adult literacy
- \_ Computer literacy
- \_ Special education programs
- \_ After school programs
- \_ English language learning
- \_ Classroom education
- \_ Child literacy
- \_ Job preparedness
- \_ Cultural heritage
- \_ School preparedness
- \_ Other education

### Environment and energy

- \_ Clean air
- \_ Environmental protection
- \_ Waste reduction/recycling
- \_ Clean water
- \_ Environmental restoration
- \_ Weatherization
- \_ Energy conservation
- \_ Indoor environment
- \_ Environmental awareness
- \_ Other environment

### Health and wellness, nutrition

- \_ Disabilities services
- \_ HIV/AIDS prevention
- \_ Nutrition education
- \_ Food distribution/collection
- \_ Health and wellness education
- \_ Substance abuse prevention/rehabilitation
- \_ Food production
- \_ Maternal/child health services
- \_ Aid to seniors/elders
- \_ Health service delivery
- \_ Mental health services
- \_ Other health/nutrition

### Public safety

- \_ Accident prevention
- \_ Crisis intervention
- \_ Victim/witness services
- \_ Community policing
- \_ Fire prevention
- \_ Public safety education
- \_ Conflict resolution/mediation
- \_ Legal assistance
- \_ Crime awareness/prevention
- \_ Offender/ex-offender services/rehabilitation
- \_ Children and youth safety
- \_ Other public safety

### Youth development

- \_ Children and youth safety
- \_ Juvenile justice services
- \_ Bullying prevention
- \_ Delinquency prevention
- \_ Teen pregnancy/parenting services
- \_ Other youth development
- \_ Gang prevention/rehabilitation
- \_ Youth leadership development

### Veterans assistance

- \_ Housing assistance
- \_ Military family assistance
- \_ Veteran employment services
- \_ Outreach and counseling
- \_ Veteran disabilities/rehabilitation assistance
- \_ Other veterans

Visit [girlscouts.org](http://girlscouts.org) and search “girls changing the world” to see the many ways young women are changing their communities through Gold Award take action projects.



# Sample Troop Funds Approval Letter

**Money earned from product sales and troop/group money earning projects belongs to the whole troop.** You'll need permission from your troop to use any of these funds. Present your Gold Award project and your proposed budget to your troop. Let your troop decide if they'll help fund your project. If they agree, request a signed letter from each member of your troop and submit it with your Gold Award final report. And have the troop write your family a check so that you are responsible for managing the funds from your troop.

## SAMPLE LETTER OF PERMISSION:

To whom it may concern,

\_\_\_\_\_ (First name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Lastname)

from Troop XXXX is approved to use troops funds in the amount of \$XXX for her Girl Scout Gold Award project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Troop leader/IRM mentor signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Troop member signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Troop member signature

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Date

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Troop member signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Publicity Release for Minors

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

This activity is part of a project for the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouting. Through their Gold Award projects, teen girls identify a need in their communities and take action to create a sustainable solution. The Gold Award Candidate below is facilitating the activity independently of the local council (Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan) or the national organization (Girl Scouts of the USA) in order to earn the Gold Award.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan or Girl Scouts of the USA may be interested in promoting her project.

Gold Award candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

## Image release

Name of minor (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

I, being the parent or legal guardian of the minor named above, hereby certify that I have the authority to consent to the following conditions on behalf of my child or ward, and hereby consent that my child's or ward's name, image and likeness, as shown in the photographs, videos, motion picture film and/or electronic images in which my child or ward appears, and/or audio recording made of my child's or ward's voice may be used by the Gold Award Candidate above, Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and Girl Scouts of the USA, and their assigns or successors, in whatever way they desire, including TV, print and/or social media. Furthermore, I hereby consent that such photographs, films, recordings and electronic images and the tapes and/or software from which they are made shall be their sole property, and they shall have the right to sell, duplicate, reproduce and make other uses of such photographs, films, recordings, electronic images, tapes and software as they may desire free and clear of any claim whatsoever on my part. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand:

Name of parent/legal guardian (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Your contact information will not be used for any other purposes or distributed to third parties.

Signature of parent/legal guardian (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Publicity Release for Adults

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

This activity is part of a project for the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouting. Through their Gold Award projects, teen girls identify a need in their communities and take action to create a sustainable solution. The Gold Award Candidate below is facilitating the activity independently of the local council (Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan) or the national organization (Girl Scouts of the USA) in order to earn the Gold Award.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan or Girl Scouts of the USA may be interested in promoting her project.

Gold Award candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

## Image release

I, being of legal age, hereby consent that my name, image, and likeness, as shown in the photographs, videos, film and/or electronic images in which I appear, and/or audio recording made of my voice may be used by the Gold Award Candidate above, Girl Scouts San Diego and Girl Scouts of the USA, and their assigns or successors, in whatever way they desire, including TV, print and/or social media. Furthermore, I hereby consent that such photographs, films, recordings and electronic images and the tapes and/or software from which they are made shall be their sole property, and they shall have the right to sell, duplicate, reproduce and make other uses of such photographs, films, recordings, electronic images, tapes and software as they may desire, free and clear of any claim whatsoever on my part. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand:

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Your contact information will not be used for any other purposes or distributed to third parties.

Signature (required): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_