

# Gold Award 101

## Ideas, Instructions, Process & Proposal

A Comprehensive How-To Guide for Senior and  
Ambassador Girl Scouts, Leaders, Parents, and Mentors



Presented by the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Council  
Gold Award Advisory Committee

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# Gold Award Checklist

*\*\*The Gold Award is earned by Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors in grades 9 through 12. Requirements started prior to becoming a 9th grade Girl Scout Senior CANNOT be applied towards earning the Gold Award.*

## Prerequisites and Planning Your Project

- ✓ Become a registered Girl Scout. Your membership needs to remain current the entire time you are earning the Girl Scout Gold Award.
- ✓ Attend a Girl Scout Gold Award Training (not required but strongly recommended).
- ✓ Earn the Silver Award and complete ONE age-appropriate Senior or Ambassador Journey.  
**-OR-**
- ✓ Complete TWO age-appropriate Senior or Ambassador Journeys
- ✓ Research possible Take Action projects. Be sure to keep track of the time you spend gathering the information you need to fill out your Project Proposal. These hours count towards your minimum 80 project hours.
- ✓ Go over your proposal with your Project Mentor and obtain his or her signature, validating that they are aware of your project plans. Check out page 22 of Gold 101 for more tips on working with a Gold Award Project Mentor.
- ✓ Submit your completed Gold Award Project Proposal to your local Program Specialist via email, mail or in person. **Please allow 2 months for processing prior to starting your project.** Example: If you are planning on starting your project in the month of May, please submit all your paperwork in March.
- ✓ Two weeks after submitting Proposal, follow-up with your local Program Specialist to check on the status of your application.

## Making Your Project Happen

- ✓ Your Gold Award Advisor will contact you to set up a time for your initial interview. At this meeting, your advisor will discuss any changes that may need to be made to your project. She/he will also give you final approval to begin work on your project.
- ✓ Keep your Advisor informed about the progress of your project, even if nothing is happening. Contact your advisor at least once per month to give an update.
- ✓ Remember to blog, pin, post, scrapbook and photograph during ALL phases of your project.

## Celebrating Your Project's Success

- ✓ Complete first draft of Final Report and send to your Gold Award Advisor for feedback.
- ✓ Make any needed changes to your Final Report. Send final draft to your Advisor.
- ✓ Arrange a time to meet with your Advisor to hold your final interview.
- ✓ Meet with your Advisor for your final interview. Bring the following:
  - 3 copies of your Final Report
  - Gold Award Binder
  - Completed Press Release Information Form
  - Completed Consent for Use of Photographs Form
  - Completed Photo Requirements form
  - Completed Yearbook Tribute Form
- ✓ Attend Recognition Ceremony Informational Meeting (typically in March).
- ✓ Celebrate your accomplishment at the annual Girl Recognition Ceremony in the spring.  
*\*\*All paperwork and the exit interview must be completed by February 1st of that year. A girl has until September 30th following high school graduation to finish her Girl Scout Gold Award before she is no longer eligible to complete the award.*

## The Girl Scout Gold Award

Since 1916, Girl Scout's highest award has stood for excellence and leadership for girls everywhere. Generations of young women have made a difference in their communities and beyond.

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

## Why Reach for Gold?

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest and most prestigious award that Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors can earn. This is one of the very few youth awards that stays on a recipient's resume throughout her entire life. What else could you do that would have such a lasting impact on your future?

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, our country's renewed attention to personal commitment and character continues at its highest level since WWII. As a nation, we've developed a clear realization that the foundation of our successful society relies on leadership skills, commitment to community and country, cultural awareness and acceptance.

## Colleges and Universities Value the Gold Credential

Although typically difficult to express and even harder to measure, over the past decade colleges and universities have changed their applicant evaluation criteria to include specific inquiries regarding traits that demonstrate strong character. Essay questions on the Common Application, the college application used by the University of Michigan, many Ivy League schools, and over 250 other institutions, include:

*Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.*

*Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.*

*Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.*

Michigan State asks: *Discuss an activity or organization that you have participated in, or are currently participating in, outside of your own cultural group.*

These are challenging questions for most students who are entering their senior year of high school. Wherever your college aspirations lead you, Gold Award projects provide an outstanding focal point for college essay responses, demonstrating active participation and specific outcomes related to a community or global issue. The Gold Award is nationally and internationally recognized, the female equivalent to Eagle Scout for Boys Scouts. As you would expect, many universities and colleges weigh the Gold Award heavily in their acceptance criteria, and some offer scholarships to Gold Award recipients. Military academies ask directly, at the top of their application, if applicants have earned the Eagle or Gold Award.

## Employers Value Gold Awards Too

The Gold Award demonstrates an incredible outward-looking achievement that puts others' needs in front of yours. Managing a Gold Award project is like managing a business: the people who benefit from your project are your customers. Earning Gold proves that you have project management skills, can work with a team, you motivate others, stick to a plan, stay within a budget, and deliver something that is completely in the service of others. That's what most employers are looking for in their next hire! The country's largest employer, the U.S. government, also highly values this award. Recipients of the Gold Award who enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible for advanced rank in recognition of their achievements. An amazing 64% percent of today's women leaders in the United States (civic, corporate, political, etc.) were once Girl Scouts.

## What Makes a Good Gold Award Project Great?

Remember, you're going to be talking about this honor for the rest of your life, so don't skip lightly past the selection process. In a perfect world, you find an interest or need in the community or beyond, something that touches your soul, that you can talk about with passion. Wouldn't it be great if we could all find that 'passion' part while we're trying to think of a Gold project? The truth is, for most girls, the passion typically develops over time as you work with experts and adult volunteers who are inspiring, dedicated, and highly experienced in the field your project engages. Or the passion can come from an unexpected source: it is often an unforgettable and moving experience to see the beneficial impact you will have on those you serve. This is your project, so take the time to pick one that you'll be proud to talk about later. In the following sections we'll help you find a project that is interesting, achievable, affordable, and worthy of your time, effort, and reputation. Every successful Gold Award project has several key elements:

**Gold Projects benefit non-profit, community, and government organizations.** There are a lot of individuals and for-profit companies who would appreciate a helping hand, but Gold projects are done for established, not-for-profit companies, organizations, and communities at large. Your Gold work cannot include paid employment of any kind, and cannot be done for the benefit of the Girl Scout organization.

**Gold Projects have a beginning and an end.** These are 'projects' that have a defined outcome, like a completed room renovation at a domestic violence shelter, a website for a service organization, or a chest filled with handmade, customized toys for a school for the blind.

**You are the CEO.** You don't have to do all of the work yourself, but you are the one in charge of all aspects of the project. As Chief Executive Officer, you seek the input of your recipient organization so your project is of the highest benefit to them, but the deliverables are all yours to manage. You have complete ownership of design, recruitment of volunteers to help you, budgeting, supply acquisition, delivery, quality, follow-up, and customer satisfaction.

**Demonstrate leadership.** A Gold project is typically much bigger than the minimum 80 hours of effort we look for from our candidates. You'll engage others by telling them about your project and the people you can work together to help. By directing a team of volunteers, you'll exponentially increase the benefit to your organization, and increase its visibility in your community.

**Sustainability.** Gold projects make a lasting impact, through influence, information, design, and delivery. Great Gold projects are sustainable; they enhance an organization's offerings, set a positive example, inspire continued improvement, and touch lives long after you've completed the work.

# How to Get Started, Get It Done, and Get Your Award

Now that you understand the general characteristics of the Gold Award, the following sections will guide you through the steps to achieve it. As you pursue your Girl Scout Gold Award, you are on your honor to uphold the standards of excellence that are exemplified in the Girl Scout Promise and Law. These standards set a high benchmark for everything you do and invite you to think deeply, explore opportunities, and challenge yourself.



The GSUSA [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) website offers extensive information about all aspects of the Girl Scout program. The top of the home page offers a tab called **Our Program**. If you click that tab, you can find a link to **Highest Awards**, which offers detailed information on Bronze, Silver and Gold. The Gold section offers **Gold Award Guidelines**, a document that walks candidates through a 7-step process:

- Step 1: Choose an Issue: Use your values and skills to identify a community issue you care about.
- Step 2: Investigate: Research everything you can about the issue.
- Step 3: Get Help: Invite others to support and take action with you.
- Step 4: Create a Plan: Create a project plan that achieves sustainable and measurable impact.
- Step 5: Present Your Plan and Get Feedback: Sum up your project plan for your GS Council.
- Step 6: Take Action: Take the lead to carry out your plan.
- Step 7: Educate and Inspire: Share what you have experienced with others.

## *A Message from the GSHOM Gold Award Advisory Committee:*

*We encourage you to explore many resources as you evaluate project ideas and formulate your Gold Award project plan. Our Committee has compiled this document based on our experience in meeting with scouts, leaders, parents, and community mentors who have visited the [girlscouts.org](http://girlscouts.org) site and have requested more tactical information regarding the Gold process. Our methods are, of course, in complete agreement with the GSUSA guidelines. This document is basically a written version of the in-person Gold training sessions we offer throughout the year. It thoroughly explains how the GSUSA guidelines are implemented within the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Council, providing an easily followed, step-by-step process for Gold success!*

To best address the most frequently asked questions, and to resolve the stumbling blocks that girls sometimes encounter, this document is organized into the following steps that lead you through the entire GSHOM Gold Award process. The steps aren't exactly the same as GSUSA, but we've listed them in parentheses so you can see it's all in here, and much more:

- Step One: Gold Award Pre-requisites
- Step Two: Find A Worthy Gold Project (GSUSA steps 1 – 4)
- Step Three: Complete the Project Proposal (GSUSA step 5)
- Step Four: GSHOM Proposal Review and Advisor Assignment
- Step Five: Initial Interview and Project Approval
- Step Six: Do and Deliver (GSUSA step 6 - 7)
- Step Seven: Your Final Report (GSUSA step 7)
- Step Eight: Celebrate!

## Step One: Gold Award Pre-requisites

The Gold Award process starts with these specific pre-requisites, which must be completed prior to submitting your Project Proposal:

- You must be a current registered member of Girl Scouts USA, affiliated with a troop or individually as a Juliette. Active membership status must be maintained throughout the process.
- You must complete your Silver Award and one Senior or Ambassador Journey, or if you haven't earned the Silver Award, complete two Senior or Ambassador level Journeys.
- The Gold Award is available to Girl Scouts at the Senior and Ambassador level. The Award process (including submission and sign-off of your Final Report) must be completed by September 30 after you graduate from high school.

By design, Journeys are an individual exploration into a contemporary issue, culminating with a Take Action project that gives a girl an opportunity to help others by applying what was learned during the Journey. The Discover, Connect, Take Action service learning model is applied in Journeys, in a manner that is often similar to how a girl approaches her Gold Award project. Girls discover new interests, connect with the community, and respond by taking action to solve an immediate issue.

**As a general rule of thumb, Journeys that are used as a pre-requisite for Gold should include at least 15 hours of discovery and connecting with the community, and a 6 – 8 hour Take Action project. A Senior or Ambassador Journey is a 'practice' project for your great Gold adventure, so give it the time it's due, learn from the process, and make a meaningful impact.**

You should keep a written log of your Journey activities, so you are prepared to discuss your accomplishments as you claim the embedded Journey Award (described near the front of each book) on college applications and resumes.

### ***Start a Gold Log Now: A tip that makes this document worth reading!***

*The 'minimum 80-hour goal' for a Gold Award includes the time you spend finding, researching and evaluating Gold ideas, and writing the initial plan for the project you end up choosing. Be sure to include time spent talking to your personal mentors, and time spent exploring options with organizations that interested you even if you didn't pick them for your project.*

*This is one of the major changes offered by the new Gold process, but you have to log it if you want it to count. Make a simple Excel spreadsheet or Word table, with headings for Date / Start Time / End Time / Time Spent / Activity Description and Outcome. Your Advisor will review it with you at your launch meeting, to confirm how much of the time (up to 10 hours) can be applied to your Gold Award project goal. Time spent filling out the Project Proposal paperwork and meeting with your Advisor cannot be included on a Gold log.*

***Start now, because time spent reading this document, and evaluating the ideas in it, counts on your log!***

## Step Two: Find a Worthy Gold Project

Finding the right Gold Award project idea can take some effort, but the 'ah-ha' moment you'll experience when you find the right thing makes it totally worth it! Here are a few tips from others who have gone through the search process:

**This is your project.** The Gold Award is your project, not your parents' or your scout leader's. You have complete ownership, you are the one doing the work and attaching your name to it, so it is ultimately your choice! You are about to make a big decision that will have a significant impact on your life and the lives of others. Take some time to reflect and get inspired. Start with yourself.

**Think about who you want to help, and how.** These questions may help you narrow the search. This is a good time for some quiet introspection about who you are and who you want to be.

*What inspires you? Is it something in your school, community, country, or the world?*

*Do you want your project to benefit children, animals, seniors, families in need, domestic violence victims, the pursuit of a cure for a medical condition, or something else?*

*What would benefit the community both immediately and long-term?*

*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?*

*Do you want to directly work with others, or work behind the scenes on a project that is delivered for their benefit? Do you want to work with your peers or with adults who can mentor you along the way?*

*What motivates, inspires, and interests others? Can you build a team to support your idea?*

*What's your favorite work environment and work style? Do you want to work outside, in an office, in your work room, in a classroom, independently or in groups, with your hands, with tools, with a keyboard, with your voice?*

**How will you demonstrate leadership?** If there is any issue that the Gold Award Advisory Committee struggles with the most, it's the definition of leadership in the context of a Gold Award Project. It is clearly a central characteristic of a worthy Gold Project, but how leadership is demonstrated varies greatly among the wide range of projects we see. It is expressed in planning, organizing, controlling, directing, delegating, and recognizing the contributions of others.

We are eager to hear your ideas for demonstrating leadership in your project! By far the most common method we see is by recruiting volunteers who can support you in the effort. If you are managing the activities of others for 20 – 40 hours of work (in addition to the 80 hours you are aiming for), we typically think that's a reasonable approach. That means that if you have 3 friends work for 4 hours to make posters that advertise a conference you're organizing, that's 12 hours of volunteer support to add in the appropriate column of your time log. It's easy to include others in your project, especially if you build that thinking into your original project plan.

**Be realistic.** It would be great if every Gold Award project could plant the seed for world peace, love, and understanding, but the award has goals and parameters for a reason. Your Gold Project should challenge you to stretch, to reach beyond your comfort zone, to experience the exhilaration of an important job well done, but most of all, we want it to be achievable. When looking for a project that is the 'right size', keep in mind the 80-hour goal for your project, and try to pull in other volunteers who can support you for 20 - 40 hours of additional support. By directing and delegating the work of others, you demonstrate leadership and build sustainability by spreading your vision and increasing awareness about the benefitting organization's mission and need. When you're thinking about Gold, focus on projects that are 100 – 120 hours in duration (at least 80 hours for you, and 20 - 40 for volunteers).

**Sustainability, legacy, and other buzzwords that matter.** We addressed the importance of leadership in a Gold project, and now it's the other big core characteristic: sustainability. You should think about it now, because you'll be asked about it later in the Final Report: "How will your project be sustained beyond your involvement?" This requires a very project-specific answer, but some general themes to consider are spreading the organization's message to a new audience, providing a permanent renovation or reusable product, teaching a new skill, increasing awareness, building self confidence or self esteem in the participants or recipients, removing a hazard, encouraging others to implement the same project in other places, providing resources for others to repeat the program . . . you've really got to figure this out in the planning stage, so you're not scrambling at the end to create sustainability. Your mentors, and the organization you're helping, are good resources for brainstorming a variety of effective and meaningful options.

**You've got to have a plan.** Stephen Covey, a renowned author of books about leadership and success, says "Begin with the end in mind." So simple, yet we rarely do it. The Gold Award is a perfect opportunity to act on this wisdom. Once you know what your project will be, draw out a simple time line. Think of all the steps that need to be done, and when you're going to do them. This will provide enlightening insights for you regarding how achievable this project really is, how much time it's going to take, how much help you're going to need and when, and the level of commitment you're signing up for. Need more inspiration? You might as well do it now, because you'll be asked for a plan when you fill out your Project Proposal. Later in this document, we walk you through each question on the Proposal form, giving hints and tips along the way. We give you a detailed example of how to do a Gold project plan on page 26, in the section called "A Page by Page Guide to Filling Out the Project Proposal". Make a plan: there is no better validation that you've picked a realistic project than it really fits your goals.

**What about team projects?** It's not that we haven't seen successful joint projects, it's just that we've seen so many unsuccessful ones. First of all, for a project to justify two Gold Awards, it would have to be a really huge project, and the bigger they are, the more complex and challenging they are. Regardless of how much you trust a friend, you don't want to trust her with this. We've seen major friend fall-out when two girls worked together to run a huge blood drive. They divided the work pretty evenly, and the girl who was responsible for the site, the medical staff, the cookies and juice, did a great job and had everything and everyone there and ready for the big day. The girl who was responsible for marketing the event was too busy with other activities and didn't get to it, so NO ONE CAME. Neither girl got the award, because there was no blood drive.

On the rare occasions that we allow joint projects, each participant must have specific independent responsibilities that demonstrate leadership and personal accomplishment. If you really want to pursue a team Gold Award Project, we strongly encourage you to contact your local Program Specialist for a pre-proposal discussion.

## A Few Pitfalls to Avoid...

There are projects that succeed, projects that fail, and projects that hang in limbo because there is some characteristic that keeps them from the finish line. When evaluating ideas, consider these scenarios and try to incorporate solutions into your project design that will avoid or remedy them.

**Access is in the organization's hands.** Regardless of how thoughtfully you plan, your project may run into delays if it requires frequent access to the organization's site, especially if their business model doesn't typically include this type of outside participation. In other words, look for organizations who frequently work with volunteers, especially those who have a dedicated resource to help you navigate working in their buildings, with their clients, or on their property when needed.

**Consider your budget and money earning options.** Almost every Gold project requires some money-earning activity or requests for donations of materials and supplies. Your Gold Award project is about the work you are doing to benefit the organization, not about raising money, so don't expect to spend more than 20% of your time in money-earning activities. Develop your supply list early in the process, and talk to your project mentors about sources for materials or in-kind donations. Most Gold projects have a money-earning goal that falls in the \$100 - \$250 range. What are the best money-earning ideas? Talk to your Advisor for advice about what works and what doesn't, and how to get the necessary approval prior to seeking funds. ***In order to receive approval for any money-earning activities you must participate in both the QSP/nut sale AND the cookie sale.*** If you are considering a grant, please contact your local Program Specialist before proceeding with the grant proposal.

**Go beyond collecting and money-earning.** Many Gold projects include gathering donations or collecting items, like conducting a book drive for a new children's reading nook at a free clinic. But collecting alone isn't a Gold caliber effort, you have to collect things with the intent of doing something meaningful and lasting with them. Keep in mind that Girl Scouts cannot fundraise for another organization as a Girl Scout. You cannot collect cash donations to give to the free clinic, but you can money-earn by conducting a can drive, hosting a carwash or bake sale, or making handmade greeting card sets. You can then use these funds to buy wood, paint, and books that you'll use to install the reading nook. You can also accept gift cards from stores to buy the supplies you need. Be ready to pursue these requests early in your project, because many require a multi-step approval process that could slow you down. Be sure to follow these up with a thank letter or note once your project is complete.

**Being the CEO means you have to be in control, and reach outside your comfort zone.** It's important to structure your project so you have control over your destiny. You will recruit volunteers to help you, but make sure that you are not relying on them in a way that they can cause the project to fail. A seminar that relies on a panel of experts to talk about a teen issue can only work if the experts prepare and participate as scheduled. Make sure your project team is strong and committed enough to carry the project through to successful completion. You must plan to recruit beyond your family members and scout troop. Reach outside your comfort zone by recruiting friends, fellow club members, and other outside resources to demonstrate your true leadership potential.

**Everyone needs to be on the same page.** Occasionally Gold projects flounder because they are inadequately defined, or do not clearly articulate achievable, concrete deliverables. Communication is a critical factor in having a successful experience, creating that win/win/win result that benefits the organization, their customers, and achieves the Gold outcome you are seeking. The next section helps you articulate a precise explanation of your project purpose and goals, thinking of your project in the context of a clearly defined outcome. Teaching a class, organizing a conference, or making a pre-determined quantity of a specific product are all characteristics that are easy to measure. You know when you start, and you know when you're done. Everyone needs to know what to expect, and how you're going to accomplish it. Corny but true: communicate and you'll be great!

**Your 15-Second Story: Start talking and listening.** Now that you have a rough idea of some of the characteristics you are looking for in a project and some pitfalls to avoid, talk to the adults you know who share your interest in community service. Ask the head of your local food pantry, director of a teen support center, leaders from your place of worship, adult scout volunteers, community leaders, coaches, school administrators, hospital staff, anyone who is dealing with the kinds of people or places you want to help. Start by asking them “How can I help?” and lead the conversation toward the project characteristics you are seeking. This is typically done through a phone call or an in-person meeting. Before you start dialing, think about your 15-second story, often called an elevator pitch. Here’s how it got that name:

*You’ve just developed the greatest software idea ever, but no one at the big companies will give you the time of day. Finally, a low-level developer at Microsoft agrees to see your demo. You fly to Redmond, Washington and walk into the massive Microsoft headquarters in a new business suit with your laptop tucked under your arm. You push the button for the elevator, the door opens, and who steps in beside you, but Bill Gates himself! He pushes the button for floor 15 and the doors close. You have 15 seconds to tell him your story. What do you say?*

A 15-second pitch gets right to the heart of the matter. You explain who you are (a Girl Scout working on your Gold Award), an overview of what you would like to do for them (I would like to install a child entertainment center in the waiting room of your free clinic), and why it would benefit them (so the children have something new and interesting to do while they wait). Then ask if that sounds like something they would like, and let them talk. Be flexible! If it’s not a fit, how could you modify this idea, or is there something else you could do for them?

**Advisors share their favorite project ideas.** Here is a list of successful projects from the last several years. We’ve grouped them into categories that may inspire you to find your perfect Gold idea.

**Extreme Makeover, Gold Edition:** Scouts are adopting rooms at domestic violence shelters, teen centers, and youth sanctuaries. They are converting bleak sleeping and meeting places into the welcoming haven they are intended to be. A renovation project is great for a scout who wants to design and decorate. It helps an important cause, rewards the residents for taking a bold step to change their life, has lasting legacy, and crosses cultural and diversity borders. We are also seeing great facility projects that include painting extensive murals in the educational wing of a church, providing a complete makeover of a special needs room in a local elementary school, refurnishing a church nursery, and redecorating a meditation room.

**Supplemental Learning for Elementary Students:** Scouts are spreading their enthusiasm for their favorite hobbies and activities by developing and presenting a variety of curriculums (dance, animal care, arts and crafts, musical instruments, recycling, foreign language and culture, nutrition, sports, etc.) to enhance the summer and after school programs for pre-school and elementary students in their local school districts. At the end of the project, the well-documented curriculum is packaged as a kit that can then be used by others to repeat the program in subsequent years.

**Child Activity and Reading Centers for Nonprofit Organizations:** Free clinics, community youth centers, churches, soup kitchens, and other facilities that serve needy families are pleased to offer activities and engaging distractions for their young clients. Scouts have adopted a small corner space in a waiting room or lobby, built shelves or installed brightly painted bookcases, designed murals, and converted the area into an inviting, well stocked reading and game area.

**Community Landscape Renovations:** We've seen some amazing outdoor landscaping projects including refurbishing the grounds around schools, developing outdoor classrooms, installing bocce ball courts and flower beds at a senior center, designing and installing a prayer garden at a church, placing a labyrinth in a community park, restoring the landscaping at the entrance of a historic cemetery, adopting a riverside park that needed extensive removal of invasive plants, installing a bird sanctuary and bat houses, and many more. If you like to work outdoors, these are great projects to complete over a summer when you have time to focus on Gold and have access to many friends who can be recruited to help.

**Programs for Peers:** There have recently been some very innovative projects that are designed to engage or help students at a Gold Scout's own high school. Scouts have:

- Launched websites that help incoming freshmen navigate the high school experience
- Started new clubs that support existing community organizations
- Conducted traditional (swing, foxtrot, etc.) dance classes and hosted a school-wide dance
- Built a system that links students to organizations that need service volunteers
- Established a school-wide peer-to-peer tutoring program that includes 'how to tutor' training and matches tutors with students

**Programs for Seniors:**

- Pairing high school students with seniors to write their life story using conversation guides and online tools
- Conducting technology classes at a senior center
- Hosting holiday parties at a veteran's hospital with decorations, tray favors, and costumed visitors

**More Programs for Children:**

- Installing a reading room at an inner-city youth center, with books on tape that are read by the older youth center participants who are idolized by the young listeners
- Developing a new sports curriculum for the community Parks & Rec organization
- Designing a children's guide and coloring book for a public garden; designing a youth historical guide for a local community
- Creating activity kits for patients at a children's hospital
- Developing the Lego Robotics program for local middle schools
- Building customized toys and musical instruments for a school for the blind

## Young Women of Distinction

Each year, GSUSA selects ten Girl Scout Gold Award recipients to receive this prestigious national recognition. The [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) site offers video clips and project descriptions for several years of Young Women of Distinction. Their work shares these characteristics: the projects are comprehensive, reach a large or at-risk audience, and would be applicable to many other communities. Here's a quick look at past winning topics:

- A website on human trafficking
- Sleeping pallets for the homeless
- Alzheimer's youth awareness and volunteer program
- A project to improve hospital hygiene
- Walk for Hope to combat child abuse
- High school career fair
- Holocaust stories
- Helicopter landing pad for a remote community
- Programs to help homeless
- Tutoring, job skills, and books for international refugees

**Project Planning Checklist** The answers to all of the questions below must be yes before you submit your plan to GSHOM for approval. The Gold Award Project Proposal form that follows asks for details about these topics:

- Will your project demonstrate your leadership skills?*
- Have you set your project goal and identified what you would like to learn?*
- Have you chosen your team? Have you discussed the project with them?*
- Have you created a budget for the project?*
- Have you created a plan to raise funds, if necessary?*
- Have you made a timeline for your project?*
- Does your project address a need in the local community and have you found national and/or global links?*
- Can your project be sustainable?*
- Does your project challenge your abilities and your interests?*

To find service-based organizations and opportunities in your community, check out your city, township, and county websites. Type your search criteria into the extensive Volunteer Match database at [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org).

**Need more inspiration?** Search through these sites to see what others are doing to address issues in their community and beyond.

[www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org)

[www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org)

United We Serve: [www.serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov)

Global Citizens Corps: [www.globalcitizencorps.org](http://www.globalcitizencorps.org)

Global Youth Action Network: [www.youthlink.org](http://www.youthlink.org)

Global Youth Service Day: <http://www.gysd.org/>

Learn and Serve America: [www.learnandserve.gov](http://www.learnandserve.gov)

Prudential: [www.spirit.prudential.com](http://www.spirit.prudential.com)

Taking IT Global: [www.tigweb.org](http://www.tigweb.org)

United Nations Millennium Development Goals: [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts: [www.wagggs.org](http://www.wagggs.org)

Youth Venture: [www.genv.net](http://www.genv.net)

## **Step Three: Complete the Project Proposal**

The last section of this document tells you how to find the online Project Proposal, and presents a detailed discussion with tips and tricks for filling it out quickly and completely.

Before you get to that, read through these next steps for an explanation of the rest of the Gold Award process. This will help you understand what to expect, and what will be expected of you.

## Step Four: GSHOM Proposal Review and Advisor Assignment

At least 2 months before you plan to start your project, your completed and signed Gold Award Project Proposal should be submitted by mail, or hand delivered, to your local GSHOM office Ypsilanti, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lansing or Saginaw. When your submission arrives at the GSHOM office, it is reviewed by a Program Specialist or a member of the Gold Award Advisory Committee. It is checked for completeness, quality and scope of project, leadership and sustainability.

In order to assure a consistent, fair, and unbiased process among all Gold candidates, Gold Award projects in each region are managed by GSHOM staff and the Gold Award Advisory Committee, comprised of experienced and trained adult volunteers. The staff and Committee operate independently from any leader or parent input, working directly with the Gold candidates to mentor them through the process within the guidelines set forth by GSUSA and GSHOM.

New Gold applications are presented to the Gold Award Advisors electronically or during monthly meetings. After your application is accepted by an Advisor, she will contact you to schedule an in-person, one-hour meeting at a place of your mutual choosing. It is important to keep in mind that these Advisors are volunteers who often have full time jobs outside of scouting. It is imperative that you respect their time and commitment by being prepared and on time for the meeting.

## Step Five: Initial Interview and Project Approval

You should bring the following items to your Advisor meeting:

- a copy of the Gold application that you submitted to GSHOM, 3-hole punched so it can be stored in the Project Workbook binder your Advisor will bring for you
- your log of pre-proposal work described on page 7 of this document (optional)
- pen or pencil
- paper for taking notes

Your Advisor will be giving you a binder of helpful information, including ideas for money earning, answers to frequently asked questions, realistic project expectations, and tips for success.

*The One Really Big Thing.* There is one thing that is the make or break requirement for a Gold Award project. Listen closely as your Advisor tells you about the...drum roll please...Time Log. All of your Gold work, from that meeting forward, gets registered in an Excel (or comparable) spreadsheet as you perform it. You MUST email or mail your Time Log to your Advisor on the schedule specified by her (typically monthly or twice monthly).

**Failure to send timely communications may result in suspension of your project, requiring a revised project plan and another launch meeting to restart.**

Time Logs are the one hard and fast rule of successful Advisor relations, and remember, it is her signature that you need to earn your Gold.

## **Step Six: Do and Deliver**

Now it's all about you, getting your project done. As you proceed, do you see some changes that should be made along the way? This is a natural and expected part of the process, so be flexible as you get more exposure to your organization's needs. Be sure to confirm any significant adjustments with your Advisor before you change direction, to verify that your project still meets the Gold requirements. Your Advisor is readily available by email and telephone, so don't hesitate to contact her as you move forward. And don't forget to submit your time logs!

Be sure to take photos as you go. Use your binder to store copies of flyers, handouts, receipts, contacts, correspondence, press coverage, and any work product you develop. These are important resources and records of your accomplishments, that can be used by others who want to review, repeat or continue your work. You will refer to these as you complete your Final Report, and you can use them to decorate your display board at the Gold Award Ceremony.

After watching your project unfold, Advisors are typically eager to visit your installation, attend your event, or talk to your client contact. Keep her informed of these opportunities to watch you shine!

## **Step Seven: Your Final Report**

After you and your Advisor agree that your project is finished, it's time to organize your documentation using the Final Report packet that your Advisor gave you at your Launch Meeting. Your final documentation will include a copy of your time log, a description of your project and the experiences you had along the way, and a few forms that support the recognition ahead of you. You will schedule a final sign-off meeting with your Advisor, where you both sign those documents and have a brief discussion about current plans for the upcoming recognition ceremony, press opportunities, and other events to come. Once you deliver a signed copy of your Final Report to your Council office, you have officially earned your Girl Scout Gold Award as of that day! That's an event that is truly worthy of celebration!

## **Step Eight: Celebrate!**

Projects completed and signed off by February 1 of a given year will be included in the annual Girl Recognition Ceremony, or similar recognition event in your region. This prestigious event is typically held in the spring at a venue large enough to accommodate the 500+ attendees who are there to acknowledge your accomplishment. Prior to the event, typically in February, you will be invited to a rehearsal meeting to hear about your speech parameters (yes, you'll be giving a 2 – 3 minute speech in front of 500 people!), expectations of what to wear, ideas for your display board, who to invite and how, and opportunities to get the word out to the press, media, and political office holders in your community.

This event may sound a bit intimidating, but it's all about celebrating YOU! You couldn't hope for a more positive and welcoming environment, where people are there to lift you up and clap 'til their hands hurt!

# Gold Award Tips, Tricks and Tools

*In this section, you will find tools and ideas to help you brainstorm, make decisions, phone calls, hold an interview and many other things you may need to do as you prepare your project proposal. These pages do not need to be turned in with your Project proposal, but if you are stuck, it may help you to spend some time in these pages.*

## Decision Making Tips

You are about to make a big decision that will have a significant impact on your life and may even change it forever. Take time to reflect and get inspired. Start with yourself by answering the questions below on a separate sheet of paper.

Think about potential targeted audiences...

Youth	Animals	Organizations	Adults
The Environment	Elderly	Your Community	Other...

What are your interests/hobbies?

Sports	Theater	Collecting	Art
Special Organizations	Reading	Shopping	Dance
Creative Writing	Volunteering	Religious Activities	Science
Traveling	Music	Outdoors	Math
Crocheting/Knitting	Something else?		

Think about the following questions. If you are stuck on what to do, answering these questions can help you find what you are passionate about.

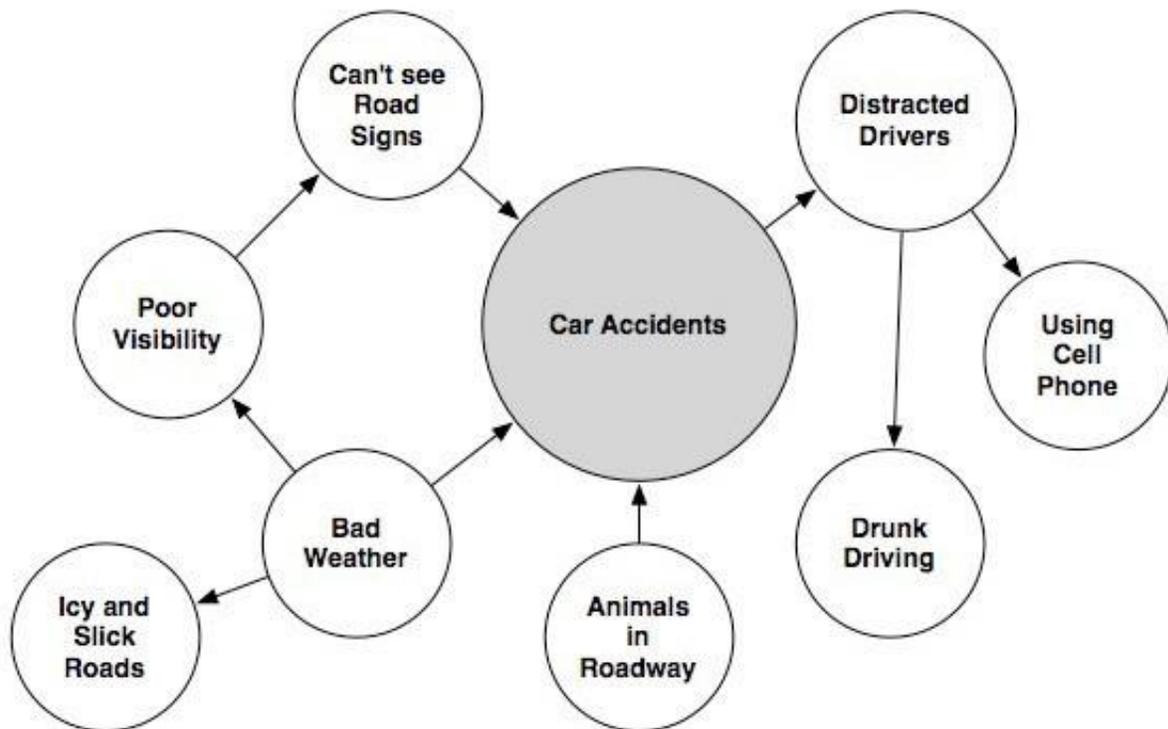
1. What inspires you? Is it something in your school, community, country or the world?
2. What motivates you into action? Is it people, events, activities or places?
3. What skills, talents and strengths do you have to offer?
4. How do you want to make a difference? As an advocate for justice? A promoter of environmental awareness? As a trainer, or coach? As an artist, actor or musician? As an organizer of petitions or campaigns? As an entrepreneur?
5. What motivates, inspires and interests others? Can you build a team to support your idea?
6. What would benefit the community both immediately and long-term?
7. Check back through your Girl Scout Leadership Journey(s). What interested you that you might be able to translate into a Gold Award project?

## Brainstorming Tips

There are lots of ways to brainstorm. Check with your language arts teacher for different techniques, or search online for other brainstorming possibilities. Below is one technique you can use. To create your own brainstorm diagram like the one shown here, use one of the issues facing your community and follow these instructions:

1. Write the community issue in the middle of the paper, or anywhere that works for you.
2. Think about what some of the causes of this issue could be. In this example, one of the main causes of car accidents is bad weather.
3. Try connecting the different causes you come up with to each other and to the main issue. How do the causes connect to each other?
4. This activity will help you come up with the different ways to approach a problem, as well as different ways you might go about addressing it.

### Example



## Ways to Investigate

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

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

## Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge\* for All Girl Scouts

- I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number(s), parent's or guardians' work address/telephone number(s), and the name and location of my school without the permission of my parent or guardian.
- I will tell an adult right away if I come across or receive any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I will always follow the rules of Internet sites, including those rules that are based on age of use, parental approval and knowledge, and public laws.
- I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents or guardians. If my parents or guardian agree to a meeting, I will arrange it in a public place and bring a parent or guardian along.
- I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parent or guardian.
- I will talk with my parent or guardian so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide on the time of day that I can be online, the length of time that I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.
- I will not use the Internet to collect money for Girl Scout products, and I will follow all safety guidelines related to Girl Scout product sales.
- I will practice online "netiquette" (good manners) at all times when online.
  - I won't spam others.
  - I will not bully nor will I tolerate bullying (and I will always tell a trusted adult if this is a problem).
  - I won't use bad language.
- I will be guided by the Girl Scout Promise and Law in all that I do online.

Signed,

Girl's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*The GSUSA Online Safety Pledge is based upon the Online Safety Pledge developed by the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#). (Revised 2010)*



## Interview Tips

Find out what you need to prepare and conduct an interview.

1. **Make arrangements:** Start by deciding who you would like to interview, contact that person and set up a date and time to meet.
2. **Preparation:** Gather research and background information to help you formulate questions to ask the interview subject(s). Use these sample interview questions to get you started and then add some of your own. If you need help choosing an issue, you'll want to ask the following types of questions:
  - What are the biggest challenges/problems that you have faced or are facing?
  - What do you think is the cause of these issues?
  - What will it take to address these issues?
  - Are there any resources available to do that?
  - What do you consider to be the strengths of the community?

If, on the other hand, you've already chosen an issue, move ahead to the interview.

3. **Conduct the interview:** Bring a notebook to take notes. Here are some tips:
  - Find a quiet place where you'll have each other's full attention and agree to turn off your cell phones.
  - Start by thanking the interviewee for her/his time and then briefly describe your project.
  - Keep questions simple and related to the issue at hand. Do your research. Preparation is key!
  - Send a thank-you note to everyone you interview within a week of the interview. Mention the possibility of a follow-up interview.
4. **Review information and set up a possible follow up interview:** Your interview is over. Now what? Now sift through the information to find what's relevant to what you are working on. If there are some gaps that you need to fill, contact your interview subject(s) to get more information and to find out whether or not you have your facts correct. Remember to check and recheck your facts!

## Phone Call Etiquette Tips

- Be friendly and courteous.
- Identify yourself, stating your first and last name clearly.
- Be clear about the purpose of your call.
- Ask if this is a convenient time to talk and if not ask when a better time would be.
- When leaving messages
  - Slow down when you state your name, area code and phone number.
  - Leave a time that is best for them to get back to you.

## Business Letter/Email Tips

When writing a business letter or email use these tips to help get you started:

- Double check the spelling of the name of the person you are addressing.
- Be concise and to the point.
- Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Read what you have written before you send it and have someone else proof it as well.
- Answer/reply swiftly.
- Do not write in CAPITALS.
- Do not use text/online abbreviates (ex. ttyl, LOL, idk!).
- Always include a subject that is meaningful for emails.

## Your Support Team

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

You may choose to engage in a collective project with other Girl Scouts, but remember each member of the team must have a distinct portion of the project. Each girl must put in a minimum of 80 hours on the project. Written documentation to this effect must be submitted with your Gold Award Report Project Proposal.

## Finding Your Team Members

**The Troop/Group Leader** is the adult who works with an ongoing troop or group. One who supports and challenges Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors to strive for excellence. They supports girls in developing their leadership skills, achieving a lasting impact in the community. Once a girl identifies her issue, the troop/group leader might help her identify a person in the community who could be a great project mentor.

**The Gold Award Advisor** is a volunteer member of the Gold Award Advisory Committee and cannot be your parent or troop/group leader. The advisor is someone who can provide additional ideas, materials and resources to support your efforts. This individual will be assigned to you by the Gold Award Committee after they receive your Project Proposal paperwork.

**The Project Mentor** is an individual who is chosen by a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador to help plan and implement her project.

- A parent should not be the mentor because the girls are encouraged to connect with their community.
- The Project Mentor expands the network of adults and provides expertise for a girl's project.
- The Project Mentor is typically someone from the community who is knowledgeable about the issue and who can provide guidance, experience and expertise along the way.
- The Project Mentor should be identified in the planning phase before the Girl Scout Gold Award
- Project Proposal is turned into the local regional center.

The Gold Award Advisory Committee is there to support Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors as they go through the process of earning their Girl Scout Gold Award. The Advisory Committee is typically comprised of community members, educators, key volunteers and young women who have earned their Girl Scout Gold Award. The committee works with designated GSHOM staff.

**Youth and School Groups** are a great source for volunteers to help you complete your project. National Honor Society, your 4-H club, Key Club, etc. are all organizations that require their members to complete a certain number of service hours. Many high schools also require service hours for graduation.

**Government and Community Organizations** may already be addressing the issue that you've chosen to address with your project. Some organizations have a volunteer corps to which you may be able to reach out.

## Tips for the Gold Award Project Mentor

Please go over this section with your Project Mentor and provide them with a copy. This will allow them to know what is expected of them as they help you plan and implement your project.

A Girl Scout Gold Award Project Mentor is chosen by a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador to help plan and implement her Gold Award Project. As the Project Mentor, you provide guidance, experience and expertise to the girl as she works to complete her Gold Award project.

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

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award in Girl Scouting and is earned by Girl Scout Seniors (9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> grade) and Ambassadors (11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade). Someone once described the Gold Award as being “what you really want to be remembered for in Girl Scouting.” The Gold Award Project is the culmination of a Girl Scout’s career. Their project should fulfill at least 80 hours of planning and implementation.

### *Girl Scout Gold Award projects require the following:*

- Makes a lasting difference in the local community, region or beyond.
- Puts the Girl Scout Promise and Law into action.
- Includes provisions to ensure sustainability.
- Identifies national and/or global links to the girl’s selected issue.
- Inspires others.

Before girls can start working on their project, they must submit a Project Proposal to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. Girls will seek your expertise in developing and implementing their project ideas.

### *As the Project Mentor, your primary responsibilities include:*

- Partnering with the girl to support her in completing her Gold Award project
- Understanding the steps to the Girl Scout Gold Award:

#### Prerequisites:

- Earned the Silver Award and complete ONE Girl Scout Journey  
OR
- complete TWO Girl Scout Journeys

#### The Gold Award Project:

1. Choose an issue
2. Investigate
3. Get Help (this is where you, the Project Mentor, come into the picture)
4. Create a plan
5. Present your plan and get feedback
6. Take Action
7. Educate and inspire

If you require additional assistance at any time during the award process, contact the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and speak with the local Program Specialist at (800) 49-SCOUT. They will provide you with background information about Girl Scouts, including policies and information about learning opportunities.

## Your Other Team Members

List the names of individuals and organizations that you plan to work with on your Girl Scout Gold Award project. This is a preliminary list that may grow through the course of your project.

Possible Team Members	Relationship to You	Role

## Project Planner

Use these questions to help you outline the best use of your time and talent, your resources and your team's talents. Making the most with what you have – that is your challenge.

1. What is your project? Why does it matter? Who will it help?
2. What are the possible obstacles?
3. Aside from your team, troop/group leader, advisor and project mentor, who else do you need to help with your project?
4. What supplies will you need?
5. If necessary, how will you earn money?
6. Will you need additional insurance for non-Girl Scout participants if holding an event as part of your project? If so, who will you be purchasing for and approximately how many participants?
7. How will you measure your success as you go?
8. The difference I intend to make in my community is...

## Proposal Checklist

Remember, you need to submit a proposal and receive approval on your project before you can begin working. Use these questions to make sure you've dotted your i's and crossed your t's. The answers to all of the questions below must be yes before you submit your plan for approval.

1. Will your project demonstrate your leadership skills?
2. Does your project affect the community at large and not the Girl Scout Community?
3. Will your project be at least 80 hours of work?
4. Have you set your project goal and identified what you would like to learn?
5. Have you chosen your project team?
6. Have you discussed the project with your team?
7. Have you created a budget for the project?
8. Have you created a plan to earn money, if necessary?
9. Have you made a timeline for your project?
10. Does your project address a need in the local community and have you found national and/or global links?

- 11. Will your project be sustainable?
- 12. Does your project challenge your abilities and your interests?

### Sustainability Tips

Girl Scout Gold Award projects are not “one shot” – they create lasting change. You can ensure a lasting project by setting clear timelines, collaborating with community organizations, building alliances with adult professionals, and keeping good records. Sustainability often involves influencing others to pitch in. Here are some examples of sustainable projects.

Example:

- **Community issue:** Food waste from school lunches poses a danger to the environment.
- **Root cause:** No community composting or recycling program.
- **Take action:** Create a food-waste composting program for the school.
- **Making the solution sustainable:**
  - Work with school officials to find biodegradable plates and cups to use in the cafeteria.
  - Work with town/state food waste officials to ensure the system is in place.
  - Implement a plan in your school to separate their cafeteria waste into composting, recycling and trash bins. (Farmers can use the compost to fertilize crops, improve the quality of the soil, decrease soil runoff and so on.)
  - Get a commitment from school administrators to carry on when your project is complete.
- **Making your project bigger (national and/or global link):** Recruit students at schools in the area to develop the program and/or contact local and state officials about adopting the program.
- **Global link:** Find out how people in other parts of the world deal with food waste in schools. What kinds of programs do they have in place? How can you learn from this?

### Budget Planning Tips

Start by figuring out what you need and where you can get it for little or no cost, if possible. If it’s not possible, think about how much it is going to cost and how you can cover those expenses. Many projects are possible when you concentrate on the issue at hand. Use your influence and leadership skills to come up with ways that you can make a difference that might not include earning money. Remember to also include your plans/goals for the annual cookie program and QSP/nut program.

List the steps to achieve your goal.	What resources and materials will you need?	Where can you get the resources and materials?	What will the cost be?	How do you plan to cover these costs?

# The Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal

Now we're circling back to what we started to discuss in Step 3: Project Proposal on page 13...

When you and the contact you're going to serve find common ground about the scope of your project, it's time to move forward with your application paperwork and set expectations for timing. Your next step is to complete your Project Proposal, a 6-page application submitted to the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Council. An Advisor will be assigned, you'll have a launch meeting, and then you're good to go. That process adds about 8 weeks before you can start your project, so you better get crackin' on the Proposal! Here's a step by step guide to make it easier, faster, and complete.

## Finding and Downloading the Proposal

The GSHOM website is the source for the Proposal Form. We included a hard copy of it at the end of this document, but if you go to the [www.gshom.org](http://www.gshom.org) site, you can download a fillable PDF, which is easier and neater than hand writing it.

Copy this url into your browser to get the proposal, then download it to your system (be sure to download it or your data won't be saved). Save changes frequently as you write.

<http://www.gshom.org/girlscouts/awards/goldaward.html>

Another option is to use an electronic version. To do this:

1. Go to the national [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) website.
2. Click on **Our Program** on the home page.
3. You'll see a drop down menu. Drag your mouse to **Highest Awards** and click.
4. On this page ([http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest\\_awards/gold\\_award.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest_awards/gold_award.asp)), click on **Gold Award**.
5. Here, there is a link to the **Gold Award App**. The app will require you to create a profile before you can begin entering your information. As you work your way through the app, you will answer all the questions in the proposal. Once you are finished, your answers will be used to populate a Proposal Form.
6. You will then have the option to print the form and mail it, or email it to [awards@gshom.org](mailto:awards@gshom.org) with "**gold award proposal**" in the subject line.

Although a hard copy of the 7-page proposal is included at the end of this document, we encourage you to use the fillable PDF, or the Gold Award App. If you use the hard copy, you must print neatly with blue or black ink so photocopies are legible. As explained in the step-by-step instructions, there is not adequate space to enter answers to the essay questions. Those should be attached in a separate document.

# A Page by Page Guide to Filling Out the Proposal

Here are hints and tips compiled by the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Gold Award Advisors, that will help you understand what we're looking for and save you from getting stuck wondering what to say.

*We really don't expect you to be able to read the thumbnail snapshots of the pages. They are just here so you know you're in the right place. For reference, full size pages are at the back of this document. Be sure to download the Project Proposal from the GSHOM website as described on page 26 of this document.*

## Proposal Page 1:

- Fill out your personal information.
- List an email address that someone actually checks and will alert you of a message. If you have an email account but don't use it, consider using your parent's account for this purpose. Advisors communicate through email, so you need to supply an active address.
- Include the phone number that you want your Advisor to use when she calls you to set up your launch meeting. Supply a home number and a cell number if possible. Please consider that you will be working on a professional project. Your Advisor, the organization you are helping, volunteers, and suppliers will be calling you. You should have a voicemail message that is friendly and appropriate.
- The Troop/Group Volunteer is your leader, or adult advisor if you are a Juliette.
- The Project Mentor is the name of the contact you are working with at the organization you are helping. The last two lines ask for his/her organization and contact information. If this does not apply to your project, leave it blank and you can discuss it with your Advisor at your initial interview.

## Proposal Page 1

**Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan  
Gold Award Project Proposal**

Be sure to:

- Print, or type, in blue or black ink.
- Do not begin your project until you have received GSHOM approval.
- Use additional paper if you need more room.
- Make a copy of this proposal to keep for your own records.
- Mail or drop-off a completed and signed copy of this Project Proposal to your local GSHOM Regional Center.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preferred Method of Communication (circle one):      email      phone  
 Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School: \_\_\_\_\_ City of School: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent or Guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Troop/Group #: \_\_\_\_\_ or  Juliette Years as a Girl Scout (counting this membership year): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Troop/Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Troop/Group Leader Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Girl Scout Gold Award Project Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Project Mentor's Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
 GSHOM Gold Award Training Date Attended: \_\_\_\_\_ Training Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Drop off, or mail, your Project proposal to your local GSHOM Regional Center:

GSHOM All IN: Gold Award Tribal/Anishinabe Regional Center 444 James L. Hart Pkwy/Tribal, MI 48197 (734) 714-5140 (800) 497-2855	GSHOM All IN: Gold Award Jackson Regional Center 4402 Francis Street Jackson, MI 49203 (517) 754-5243 (800) 497-2855	GSHOM All IN: Gold Award Kalamazoo Regional Center 601 West Maple St Kalamazoo, MI 49005 (269) 343-1516 (800) 497-2855	GSHOM All IN: Gold Award Lansing Regional Center 1222 Turner Street Suite 200 Lansing, MI 48205 (517) 659-9400 (800) 497-2855	GSHOM All IN: Gold Award Saginaw Regional Center 5470 Davis Road Saginaw, MI 48604 (907) 759-2855 (800) 497-2855
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**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**      Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

GSHOM Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sent to Gold Award Advisory Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Gold Award Project Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

## Proposal Page 2»

### Proposal Page 2, Prerequisites:

- This section requires your leader's signature to verify that you completed the Journey(s).
- The Silver Award Completion Date can be approximate, just make sure you've got the right year so we can check it with the Council records.

### Proposal Page 2, Your Project Team:

- This table is asking you to think about who you are going to include in your project. You're not going to be held to it, but we just want you to think about who can help. The first line would be the contact at the organization you are helping (the Mentor's Organization you listed on page 1).
- Please include at least six resources.

**Gold Award Prerequisites**

Earn the Silver Award and complete ONE age-appropriate Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador Journey

-OR-

Complete TWO age-appropriate Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador Journeys (Each Journey you complete gives you the skills you need to plan your Gold Award project)

Senior/Ambassador Journeys Completed	Date Completed	Troop/Group leader's Signature
1.		
2.		

OR

Girl Scout Silver Award Date of Completion and Topic	
Council where you earned the Silver Award	

Your Project Team List the names of individuals and organizations that you plan to work with on your Girl Scout Gold Award project. This is a preliminary list that may grow through the course of your project.

Team Members	Relationship to You	Role

2

Here are examples for other fields:

1. Uncle Steve / Carpenter / Help build shelves
2. Youth Group / St. Joseph's Parish / fundraising and painting
3. Boards 'R Us / Lumber retailer / material donations
4. Swim Club / Mytown High School / book drive and sorting

## Proposal Page 3

**15 Leadership Outcomes**

The following is a list of Girl Scouts' 15 Leadership Outcomes. When thinking about your project which ones do you think you will develop through this project?

Discover:

- D1. I will develop a stronger sense of self.
- D2. I will develop positive values.
- D3. I will gain practical life skills.
- D4. I will seek challenges in the world.
- D5. I will develop critical thinking.

Connect:

- C1. I will develop healthy relationships.
- C2. I will promote cooperation and team building.
- C3. I will resolve conflicts.
- C4. I will advance diversity in a multicultural world.
- C5. I will feel more connected to my community, locally and globally.

Take Action:

- T1. I will identify community issues.
- T2. I will be a resource/problem solver.
- T3. I will advocate for myself and others, locally and globally.
- T4. I will educate and inspire others to act.
- T5. I will feel empowered to make a difference in the world.

\*Want more information on the Girl Scout Leadership Outcomes? Visit [www.girlscouts.org/education/outcomes/transforming-leadership.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/education/outcomes/transforming-leadership.asp).

Feel free to contact your local Regional Center to check out a Transforming Leadership Book.

**Gold Award Project Description**

Proposed Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** The following questions ask you to describe your project, the issue you plan to address and the audience you intend to reach. This is the information used to give pre-approval to your project before it is assigned to a Gold Award Advisor. Please answer each question with a minimum of 5-6 complete sentences. If you need to retype the questions into another document, or if you need to add pages, feel free to do so. The more detail you can provide in your answers, the easier it is for someone unfamiliar with your project to understand what you plan to do and how you plan to do it.

Describe the issue your project will address and who is your target audience.

3

## Proposal Page 4

Discuss your reasons for selecting this project.

Outline the strengths, talents and skills that you plan to put into action. What skills do you hope to develop?

Describe the steps involved in putting your plan into action, including resources, facilities, equipment and approvals needed.

List names of people or organizations that are going to be part of your project. These people should already be aware of your proposed project idea.

Estimate overall project expenses and how you plan to meet these costs. Be sure to also fill out the attached Gold Award Proposed Budget Form.

4

## Proposal Page 5

What methods or tools will you use to evaluate the impact of your project?

How will your project be sustained beyond your involvement?

Describe how you plan to tell others about your project, the project's impact and what you have learned (articles, Web site, blog, presentations, posters, videos and so on).

Is there anything else you would like to share about your project?

5

### Proposal Pages 3, 4 & 5:

- These outcomes provide an overview of the key goals of Gold Award projects. Read through the list and check all that apply. Projects rarely meet all outcomes, but your project should fulfill at least two in each section.
- Name your project, but don't fret over the title. You can change it before it goes public in the ceremony program. You need a 'working title' for right now.
- Enter a Proposed Start Date that is at least 8 weeks (2 months) from the date you plan to submit this Proposal. It has to arrive at Council, be reviewed by the Program Specialist, be assigned to an Advisor who calls you to set a meeting, and the two of you must meet before you can start the project. Eight weeks is a reasonable timeframe for all of that.
- The data entry fields on this page are way too small for adequate answers, so you have to open a new Word (or other word processor) document and type the questions from pages 3 and 4 into it, answering each one as suggested below. Please type the question so others reading your document don't have to flip back and forth to figure out what you're responding to.
- When you're done answering the questions, print the document and attach it behind page 4. You need to keep this original page 3 because it's got your title.
- Read on for more advice on how to answer each question quickly and succinctly.

### Page 3, Question #1: Describe the issue your project will address and who is your target audience. Remember your 15-second pitch.

There are two really important questions in this section, and this is one of them. Your answer should be constructed so a person who has never heard of this organization can understand what it is, what you'll be doing for them, and why.

This can be done in three paragraphs (longer if you really need it, but not necessary).

- In paragraph 1, describe the organization you are helping: *The Waterloo Park is a Mytown city treasure that has been neglected over the past decade. It is used by residents to . . .*

- For your second paragraph, describe what you are going to do: *For my Girl Scout Gold Award Project, I plan to renovate the landscaping at the entrance, clean and repair the fountain, and install a bocce ball court. . .*
- Paragraph 3 tells why this is a good thing: *My project will make the park a more usable and valued resource for . . .*

**Page 4, Question #1: Discuss your reasons for selecting this project.**

This is a 'gut check' question. If you can't answer this pretty easily, you may want to reconsider if this is the right project for you. We're looking for 2 - 4 summary sentences about what led you to select this work.

**Page 4, Question #2: Outline the strengths, talents, and skills that you plan to put into action. What skills do you hope to develop?**

Express your personal answer in 2 - 4 sentences.

*How To Create a Word Table . . .*

*The next page uses a Word Table to organize a project plan. You can use any word processing program you prefer, or use whatever means you wish to neatly list your tasks and timing. We're much more interested in content than format!*

*If you are using Word, here's a quick tutorial for a Word Table, in case you're not familiar with how to do it:*

1. *Click 'Insert' in the menu bar at the top of your Word doc.*
2. *Click 'Table', then 'Insert Table', and enter the number of columns (2) and number of rows (15), click 'OK'.*
3. *Drag the center line of the table, the one that divides the two columns, over toward the right as shown in the sample on the next page, so you have a wide column on the left, and a narrow column on the right.*
4. *Use the 'Layout' tab to add or delete rows as needed.*

**Page 4, Question #3: Describe the steps involved in putting your plan into action, including resources, facilities, equipment, and approvals needed. (Use the Proposed Timeline on page 7):**

OK, this is the other biggie. Here is your chance to show us that you've thought through what you're going to do. By formatting your answer into a simple table, you can clearly list the steps and when you plan to accomplish them. You're not going to be rigorously held to this, but it shows us that you understand what's ahead of you.

Here's a sample, although you'll need to put in your own activities and dates. Except for pre-proposal hours you may have logged as described on page 7 of this document, nothing counts for Gold until you meet with your Advisor. You cannot earn Gold Award credit between the time you submit your Project Proposal and the time you have your Advisor initial interview, so plan to start your first activity 8 or more weeks after you submit your Proposal. (This sample time line is based on a renovation project for the dining facilities at a homeless shelter.)

Activity	When
Meet with my Advisor to launch my project.	By April 30
Meet with my shelter contact to finalize the project plan and goals. Make any modifications, and submit the final version to my contact so we're all on the same page. Take lots of photos of the work site, and wall measurements.	May
Make a complete list of donations needed, supplies to be gathered or purchased, work to be done, volunteers needed, and write a detailed description of my final deliverables.	May
Create a flyer or tri-fold brochure that describes my project, the organization that it will benefit, and how people can help, including material donations I am looking for (paint and paint supplies, fabric for curtains, etc.). Print a few flyers, and create a pdf for electronic distribution. Email it to my Gold Advisor.	May
Recruit volunteers to help with a fundraising can/bottle drive. Write a donation request letter to retailers (Meijer? Home Depot?), and deliver it to them in person with a copy of my flyer. Submit money earning permission forms to my Gold Advisor.	June
Conduct can/bottle drive. Distribute flyers to participants so they know what cause they are supporting.	June
Purchase fabric for curtains (if not donated) and sew curtains for dining hall. Make a poster-size mock-up of the mural we will paint on the dining walls. Acquire wall paints and all painting supplies, hopefully through donations or with more money earning if necessary.	July
Recruit volunteers to paint at homeless shelter. Schedule the painting events with my shelter contact, and schedule the volunteer team.	July
Repair plaster and paint background color on dining hall walls. Draw out major mural components. Take before and after photos.	Early August
Finish fine mural details. More photos.	Mid August
Gather supplies for table decorations. Work with after-school Kids Club program to make the centerpieces. More photos.	September
Deliver centerpieces and install curtains. Take lots of photos. Walk through with contacts to make sure they are happy with the work.	October
Write thank you notes to all participants and donors.	October

Each project plan looks vastly different from others, but they typically share the common elements of clearly confirming your intentions with your project contact at the organization, making a marketing flyer to help tell your story, GSHOM-approved money earning activities, volunteer recruitment and management, implementation, getting feedback, and thanking your team.

***Page 4, Question #4: Enter the names of people or organizations you plan to inform and involve.***

This was already done on page 2 of the proposal, so you can skip it by typing this as your answer: “See table on page 2 of this Proposal”.

***Page 4, Question #5: Estimate overall project expenses and how you plan to meet these costs.***

Make a list of the major components of your project. After each item, include a note regarding how you hope to acquire it. Do you intend to seek donations, or cover your expenses through money earning activities? What kind of money earning activities will you conduct? Provide a brief explanation of your plans regarding materials, supplies, and other expenses. This will likely change as you proceed with the project. Keep your Advisor in the loop as your plan evolves.

***Page 5, Question #1: What methods or tools will you use to evaluate the impact of your project?***

This answer is very project specific, but here are a few things to think about:

- 1) Nothing beats getting constant feedback from your project advisor and other contacts at the organization you're serving.
- 2) Is there some sort of response form or 5-question survey that could be distributed to those who are affected by your project? Could you hang a poster on the wall asking for feedback?
- 3) Is there a visible or measurable impact your project has on the community it's serving? (i.e.: the renovated dining hall is now a much brighter and more welcoming environment)
- 4) Try to think of creative ways to get feedback.

***Page 5, Question #2: How will your project be sustained beyond your involvement?***

A Gold project must live on after you finish it. This is where you address the sustainability issue, a very important characteristic of the project. In the case of the dining hall renovation, the scout distributed flyers creating new awareness of the important work the shelter is doing, and the project itself created a long-lasting, positive improvement in the environment of the dining room. Is your project something that can be expanded on or repeated by others? If so, who is a good target audience for ongoing involvement: your community's scout organization, your church youth group, any clubs at school? Did your project involve teaching people a new skill? Can you leave behind a binder with a CD that provides the opportunity for others to repeat the process?

***Page 5, Question #3: Describe how you plan to tell others about your project, the project's impact, and what you have learned (Web site, blog, presentations, posters, videos, articles, and so on).***

In addition to your flyers and the volunteer team who got directly involved in the work, how else can you spread the message about your Gold Award and the organization it serves? Local papers and online news services are always looking for human interest stories and photos. Post your project on Facebook and other social media.

***Page 5, Question #4: Is there anything else you would like to share about your project.***



# How to Submit Your Project Proposal

***Please print 3 copies of your Proposal. One is for you to keep in your Project Workbook binder described on page 14. Two copies should be submitted to GSHOM at least 2 months before you want to start your project. One will go on file, and one will go to your GSHOM Gold Award Advisor. Be sure to have your Leader or Troop Volunteer sign all three of them on page 2, and your signature is required on page 7.***

Proposals can be mailed or submitted in person to the addresses provided on page 1 of the Project Proposal form.

The GSHOM Program Specialist will review your Project Proposal and contact you with any questions or requests for further information. Proposals are typically distributed to Advisors within 30 days of receipt. Your Advisor will contact you to set an initial interview.

Please see [Step Four: GSHOM Proposal Review and Advisor Assignment](#) and [Step Five: Launch Meeting and Project Approval](#) on page 14 of this document for more information about the Advisor process.

You should take a minute to check in on your proposal 2 weeks after submitting your proposal. If you are not contacted within **two weeks** after submitting your Proposal, please contact your local Program Specialist serving your area.

*The GSHOM Gold Award Advisory Committee is comprised of adult volunteers who believe in the value of the Gold Award, and we believe in you! We are here to support you, and look forward to honoring your efforts and celebrating your success at an upcoming GSHOM Gold Award ceremony.*

*Best wishes for an enjoyable and fulfilling Gold Award experience!*

# Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Gold Award Project Proposal



Be sure to:

- Print, or type, in blue or black ink.
- Do not begin your project until you have received GSHOM approval.
- Use additional paper if you need more room.
- Make a copy this proposal to keep for your own records.
- Mail or drop-off a completed and signed copy of this Project Proposal to your local GSHOM Regional Center.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Preferred Method of Communication (circle one):      email                  phone

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ City of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Troop/Group #: \_\_\_\_\_ or  Juliette Years as a Girl Scout (counting this membership year): \_\_\_\_\_

Troop/Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Troop/Group Leader Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Girl Scout Gold Award Project Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Project Mentor's Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

GSHOM Gold Award Training Date Attended: \_\_\_\_\_ Training Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Drop off, or mail, your Project Proposal to your local GSHOM Regional Center:

**GSHOM**  
**ATTN: Gold Award**  
**Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor**  
**Regional Center**  
444 James L. Hart  
Pkwy  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
(734) 714-5140  
(800) 497-2688

**GSHOM**  
**ATTN: Gold Award**  
**Jackson Regional**  
**Center**  
4403 Francis Street  
Jackson, MI 49203  
(517) 784-8543  
(800) 497-2688

**GSHOM**  
**ATTN: Gold Award**  
**Kalamazoo Regional**  
**Center**  
601 West Maple St  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
(269) 343-1516  
(800) 497-2688

**GSHOM**  
**ATTN: Gold Award**  
**Lansing Regional**  
**Center**  
1223 Turner Street  
Suite 200  
Lansing, MI 48906  
(517) 699-9400  
(800) 497-2688

**GSHOM**  
**ATTN: Gold Award**  
**Saginaw Regional**  
**Center**  
5470 Davis Road  
Saginaw, MI 48604  
(989) 799-9565  
(800) 497-2688

## FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

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

GSHOM Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sent to Gold Award Advisory Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Gold Award Project Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

## Gold Award Prerequisites

Earn the Silver Award and complete ONE age-appropriate Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador Journey

-OR-

Complete TWO age-appropriate Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador Journeys (*Each Journey you complete gives you the skills you need to plan your Gold Award project*)

Senior/Ambassador Journeys Completed	Date Completed	Troop/Group leader's Signature
1.		
2.		

OR

Girl Scout Silver Award Date of Completion and Topic	
Council where you earned the Silver Award	

Your Project Team List the names of individuals and organizations that you plan to work with on your Girl Scout Gold Award project. This is a preliminary list that may grow through the course of your project.

Team Members	Relationship to You	Role

## 15 Leadership Outcomes

The following is a list of Girl Scout's 15 Leadership Outcomes. When thinking about your project which ones do you think you will develop through this project?

Discover:

- \_\_\_\_\_ D1. I will develop a stronger sense of self.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D2. I will develop positive values.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D3. I will gain practical life skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D4. I will seek challenges in the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D5. I will develop critical thinking.

Connect:

- \_\_\_\_\_ C1. I will develop healthy relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C2. I will promote cooperation and team building.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C3. I will resolve conflicts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C4. I will advance diversity in a multicultural world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C5. I will feel more connected to my community, locally and globally.

Take Action:

- \_\_\_\_\_ T1. I will identify community issues.
- \_\_\_\_\_ T2. I will be a resourceful problem solver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ T3. I will advocate for myself and others, locally and globally.
- \_\_\_\_\_ T4. I will educate and inspire others to act.
- \_\_\_\_\_ T5. I will feel empowered to make a difference in the world.

\*Want more information on the Girl Scout Leadership Outcomes? Visit [www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/outcomes/transforming\\_leadership.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/outcomes/transforming_leadership.asp).

*Feel free to contact your local Regional Center to check out a Transforming Leadership Book.*

## Gold Award Project Description

Proposed Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Directions: The following questions ask you to describe your project, the issue you plan to address and the audience you intend to reach. This is the information used to give pre-approval to your project before it is assigned to a Gold Award Advisor. Please answer each question with a minimum of 5 – 6 complete sentences. If you need to retype the questions into another document, or if you need to add pages, feel free to do so. The more details you can provide in your answers, the easier it is for someone unfamiliar with your project to understand what you plan to do and how you plan to do it.*

Describe the issue your project will address and who is your target audience.

Discuss your reasons for selecting this project.

Outline the strengths, talents and skills that you plan to put into action. What skills do you hope to develop?

Describe the steps involved in putting your plan into action, including resources, facilities, equipment and approvals needed.

List names of people or organizations that are going to be part of your project. These people should already be aware of your proposed project idea.

Estimate overall project expenses and how you plan to meet these costs. Be sure to also fill out the attached Gold Award Proposed Budget Form.

What methods or tools will you use to evaluate the impact of your project?

How will your project be sustained beyond your involvement?

Describe how you plan to tell others about your project, the project's impact and what you have learned (articles, Web site, blog, presentations, posters, videos and so on).

Is there anything else you would like to share about your project?

# Gold Award Project Proposed Budget

## Proposed Revenue

Source:	\$

## Proposed Expenses

Speakers/Special Guests	\$
Paper/Printing (i.e. fliers, invitations, binder pages, etc.)	\$
Insurance ( 11¢ per non-Girl Scout; \$5 minimum)	\$
Film Development/Picture Printing	\$
Food/Beverage	\$
Postage/Shipping	\$

<i>Program Materials &amp; Supplies Total Cost</i>	\$
Item 1:	\$
Item 2:	\$
Item 3:	\$
Item 4:	\$
Item 5:	\$

<i>Other/Miscellaneous Total Cost</i>	\$
Item 1:	\$
Item 2:	\$
Item 3:	\$
Item 4:	\$
Item 5:	\$

<b>GOLD AWARD PROJECT BUDGET TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>
----------------------------------------	-----------

