

Gold Award FAQs

Can individually registered girl members or Juliettes earn the Girl Scout Gold Award?

- Any Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador can begin work on earning the GSUSA Gold Award as long as they meet membership requirements and complete all of the prerequisites.

Are girls required to take training to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award?

- Yes, everyone who wishes to pursue their Gold Award is required to take the [GSHCC Take Action: Gold Award training available in gsLearn](#). This training must be completed before you submit your project proposal. You will become familiar with the process of earning the GSUSA Gold Award, and fully understand the requirements. These provisions help to ensure that every member who wants to earn the Gold Award will be given the greatest chance of success.
- If a Girl Scout pays close attention to the training and uses the information provided to brainstorm a project and fill out all of the sections in her proposal, she will be more likely to need less or no feedback before they begin on their project. There can be several rounds of feedback and changes before a project is approved if all of the standards are not met with an initial proposal submission.

Can Girl Scouts meet with someone in the Highest Awards department to discuss questions and for help in brainstorming a project?

- Yes, we offer 30-60 minute Q&A sessions for troops or Service Units after each attendee has completed the online Take Action Gold Award training located in GS Learn. All Q&A sessions are virtual unless you arrange for 10+ Girl Scouts and their adults to attend an in-person session. [Requests for these can be made on the Training by Request Form](#).
- We also offer Virtual Office Hours on Wednesdays from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. The link and calendar for these Zoom meetings can be found on the [Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Hub on Rallyhood](#). These Zoom links are placed here to ensure the safety of those who attend.
- You can also email Awards@girlscoutshcc.org to contact a Highest Awards staff member.

Why must girls complete Journeys before earning a Girl Scout Gold Award?

- This is a GSUSA national requirement. Earning one of Girl Scouts' highest awards challenges girls to be their best. Journeys let Girl Scouts experience what they'll do as they work to earn the highest awards in Girl Scouting. They'll discover an issue they're passionate about, connect with experts in their community, and take action to make the world a better place. The skills Girl Scouts gain while working on Journeys help them develop, plan, and implement Take Action projects for their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award.

Do you have any advice on how to generate higher-quality projects?

- Complete the Take Action: Gold Award training in GS Learn, which includes advice from Gold Award recipients.
- Girl Scouts and their advisors must understand the difference between a one-time community service project that is done FOR your community and a Take Action Gold Award project that works WITH your community, and is sustainable.
- Check out videos from Girl Scouts who have earned their Gold Award on [YouTube](#).

Who can be a project advisor?

- [A project advisor](#) is an adult who chooses to be on a Girl Scout's Gold Award team and is an expert on the issue the girl's project addresses. Parents, caregivers, or troop leaders of girls pursuing their Gold Award cannot be advisors. Adult siblings and family members like aunts and uncles can sometimes be advisors if they are experts on the issue the Girl Scout is exploring. However, we encourage Girl Scouts to branch outside of their families. You can find this information on Step 3, page 14 in the GSUSA guidelines, [Your Guide to Going Gold](#).

Who can be a Troop/Group Volunteer?

- A troop/group volunteer is an adult who works with the Girl Scout to navigate Girl Scout policies, council requirements, fundraising, and other parts of the project that require Girl Scout knowledge and not necessarily subject matter knowledge. Once a Girl Scout identifies an issue, the troop/group volunteer might help them identify a person in the community who could be a great project advisor.

What are the money guidelines that girls and troops need to follow?

- All of the established guidelines found in Volunteer Essentials should be followed by troops and girls working on their Girl Scout Gold Award projects. Of particular importance are these:
 - Girl Scouts may not raise money for any other organization in their roles as Girl Scouts. This means that Girl Scout Gold Award projects may not be about raising money for someone else. This is a guideline that is necessary to protect the non-profit status of our organization.
 - Girl Scouts may raise money or request donations for their own Gold Award project expenses but need to follow all safety guidelines. Girls must have an approved Girl Scout Volunteer or parent or guardian with them at all times during any Girl Scout activities, and only adults may ask for donations on behalf of a girl's project. Girls may explain the project to another adult, but then an adult – the leader, project advisor, or parent – has to actually ask for any donations of goods or services.
 - Fundraising sites like GoFundMe are not allowed for Gold Award Projects.
 - You may apply for a Gold Award grant from our council by filling out this [form](#).

What is a Gold Award Grant, and who can apply?

- Need help funding your project? GSHCC has a fund for that! Girls have the opportunity to apply for “seed money” for their Gold Award project. This grant money can be used to help jumpstart the project, purchase supplies, or reserve event space. If you are interested in applying for the grant, you must fill out the Go Gold Grant application.
- Financial assistance is available for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors who are currently pursuing their Girl Scout Gold Award. They can apply for this grant only after their project proposal has been approved. Each year, \$5,000 will be allocated to Girl Scouts in our council through the GSHCC Go Gold Grant. Girl Scouts can apply for up to \$500 in funding, but awards will be based on need, availability, and other factors.

What is the submission deadline for proposals to be reviewed?

- You may submit your proposal at any time. Gold Award proposals are reviewed on a rolling basis based on when the proposal is submitted. Ensure you give yourself ample time to complete the online Gold Award proposal. Do not wait until the last minute to begin. It can take up to three weeks to receive approval or feedback. You should plan to submit your proposal at least six months before you wish to finish your project and submit your final report, but one year is encouraged. You must have time to complete a minimum of 80 hours on your project.

Does time spent working on the proposal count towards a girl’s final hour tally?

- Yes, the proposal is considered a part of the planning process and can, therefore, be included in a girl’s final hour tally. However, Girl Scouts can only include 15-20 hours of planning time towards their final tally, including time writing the proposal.

Do Girl Scouts have to complete a proposal before starting their project?

- All Gold Award projects must have a proposal submitted for review and approved by council staff before you begin working on your project. You create this proposal by following the steps in your Go Gold account. A maximum of 20 hours can be spent on research and planning before the proposal is approved. Any hours spent working on the project outside of research and planning will not count toward your total hours required.

How many hours should it take to earn a Gold Award?

- No two projects are alike, so the time to plan, share, and complete a project will vary depending on the scope of the project, team, and community support. The quality of the project should be emphasized over the quantity of hours necessary to complete it. However, after fulfilling the required Journey, the minimum number of hours for a Gold Award is 80 hours. Note that time spent working on Journeys does NOT count for the project.

What counts as hours?

- Any time when you are working on your project, you can count it as hours. Brainstorming, finding an advisor, and speaking with your mentor all count as hours. Up to 25% of your hours can come from fundraising. At least 20% of your hours should come from leadership and working with others. Helping another girl in your troop with her project does not count as hours. You want to spend most of your hours working with your community and team, creating your project.

Can a troop or group work together on a Gold Award?

- The Gold Award is designed to be an individual leadership experience. This is not to say a girl cannot involve her peers in the execution of her project. Each person must plan and develop their own project. Again, once the planning is complete, she can then involve her peers in the execution of the project, but no two Girl Scouts can earn an award for the same project.

What happens when a girl moves to a new city, state, or country while she's in the middle of her award project? Can she still earn her award?

- Yes, but she may need to seek special permission. We advise a girl in this situation to work with her new council and/or Overseas Committee to complete the project. And we encourage councils and Overseas Committees to be flexible and serve girls' best interests.

What about girls with disabilities? Is there a different set of requirements for them?

- No. Because the Gold Award work is to be done to the best of a girl's ability, there really is no need for special requirements for girls with disabilities. We encourage advisors to be flexible and to work with the girl individually as she earns her award. Accommodations can be made with consideration of any special needs.

How do you define "sustainable" when it comes to the highest awards?

- Simply put, a sustainable project lives on in the community after a girl's involvement ends. How do girls achieve that? They might focus on education and raising awareness. Or they might develop workshops and hands-on learning sessions that inspire others to keep the project going. Working with local government, community groups, nonprofit agencies, civic associations, and/or religious organizations can also help ensure the project lasts beyond the girl's involvement.
- Sustainability means that the project, as well as the work put toward addressing the issue the Girl Scout has chosen, carries on or continues even after the Girl Scout has done their part and earned their Highest Award.

Does my Gold Award project need to be sustainable?

- Yes, the project must include a sustainable aspect, and the sustainability must be made clear in both the project proposal and the final report. For the Gold Award: the Girl Scout will put a plan in place that ensures their Gold Award creates lasting change.
- Sustainability is not one-size-fits-all. Review three different ways Girl Scouts can ensure their projects are sustainable on pages 6–7 of [*Your Guide to Going Gold*](#).

How does a Girl Scout measure project impact?

- A project is measurable when a Girl Scout collects information or data throughout their project and uses it to show that their actions have had a positive impact on the community and/or contributed to addressing their chosen issue. Learn more on page 7 of the [*Your Guide to Going Gold*](#).

When is the project Final Report due?

- All Final Reports must be received by Girl Scouts before March 1st to be honored in the same year's Highest Award Ceremony. If we receive your Final Reports after that date, you will be part of the next year's June Ceremony. Many Gold Awardees are honored in the year after they graduate from high school. If you are already in the 12th grade, the last day that you can submit your report is September 30th, after you graduate from the 12th grade. On October 1st, after you graduate, you will be counted as an adult in the Girl Scout world and no longer eligible to earn your Gold Award.

Can Girl Scouts begin working toward their awards the summer after they bridge (transition) from one Girl Scout level to the next?

- Yes, you may begin working on your Gold Award plans and submit your project proposal the summer after you graduate from the 8th grade.