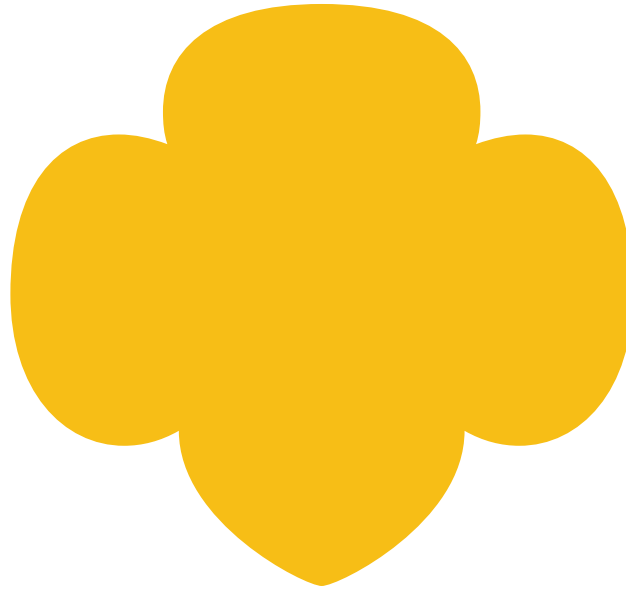




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Your guide to going Gold

How to become a Gold Award Girl Scout

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the mark of the truly remarkable. Through pursuing the Gold Award, Girl Scouts change the world by tackling issues they are passionate about to drive lasting change in their communities and beyond while they learn essential skills that will prepare them for all aspects of life. As a bonus, the Gold Award opens doors to a variety of scholarships, preferred admission tracks for college, strong networking and amazing career opportunities, and much more.

This guide offers a comprehensive overview of everything from planning to proposals and teamwork to time logs. So, whether you've been dreaming of your Gold Award since you were a Daisy or you're a new member in high school looking to make a difference, this guide is for you. Let's get going and let's Go Gold!

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Part 1: The Gold Award Defined

Curious about the Gold Award? Read on to learn more about what it means and how you'll lead lasting change in your community.

The benefits of becoming a Gold Award Girl Scout

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

Here are a few other reasons to Go Gold:

- Grow professional skills. Gold Award Girl Scouts become pros in team building, problem solving, project planning, and time management. These are invaluable skills that all professionals need—and all people value. You can highlight these experiences as you apply to schools, jobs, internships, and other opportunities.
- Earn scholarships. Many universities and colleges award [scholarships](#) to Gold Award Girl Scouts.
- Build your network. Gold Award Girl Scouts recruit and lead teams to do amazing things! This experience will give you a network of supporters that lasts a lifetime.
- Enlist at a higher pay grade when you join the military.

Key elements of the Gold Award

The Girl Scout Gold Award is a Take Action project that must include five elements. Your project must:

- address a root cause of an issue that you feel passionate about
- have a national and/or global link
- demonstrate leadership
- create a sustainable impact
- create a measurable impact.

What does “take action” really mean?

Taking action means working to understand the root cause of a problem so that you can develop a solution that continues to address that issue—even after your Gold Award project has been completed. Simply put, taking action goes beyond community service.



SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: Do this for you—not for anyone else! This isn't your parent's or troop leader's project. The Gold Award is an opportunity to harness your passion and put your ideas into motion. It's challenging. It's immensely rewarding. And it's entirely up to you.



SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: Once you've earned the Gold Award, you can proudly claim your Gold Award digital credential from Credly, our verification partner! You can display it on your social media profiles, including LinkedIn. This allows prospective employers, universities/colleges, military academies, and others to verify your achievement simply by viewing your profile.

What's the difference between community service and a Take Action project?

Take Action and community service projects are different, and both are essential to Girl Scouting. When you earn the Gold Award, you are transformed from living the Girl Scout Law to bringing it to life!

Community service projects are acts of kindness and important ways to help something or someone right now. They are commonly “one and done” activities. Performing community service almost always multiplies efforts that are already in place. Examples include collecting food for an existing food pantry, providing clothing or toiletries to people who have suffered a disaster, cleaning up a run-down playground, or picking up trash at a park, forest, or beach.

Girl Scout Take Action projects address an issue by tackling the factors that cause or contribute to it. As you may expect, these projects have a far-reaching impact. They are designed to change something for the better—forever.

Use this table to help determine whether an idea is a community service or Take Action project.

Community Service	Take Action
A short-term effort that helps something or someone fulfill an immediate need	A long-term project with sustainable and ongoing impact that addresses a root cause of an issue
Done FOR the community	Done WITH the community
Joining an existing effort to solve a problem	Creating a unique initiative to address an issue
Done as part of an existing team (usually as a volunteer)	Creating and leading your own team of volunteers
Working towards a goal that's set by others	Setting the goals and leading a team to achieve them



SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: Collecting, beautifying, decorating, and cleaning can be part of a Take Action project; however these activities are not stand-alone Gold Award projects. Stay focused on unique solutions with long-term relief.

What is a root cause?

Root causes are an issue's trigger—they identify why an issue is happening. Often, you'll have to look for the why in a lot of places in order to get to the root causes. Once you've identified your issue, you can create a “mind map” in GoGold, the Gold Award web app (learn more about [GoGold](#)). This will help you find its root causes. A mind map can help you understand what triggers your issue and will help you look further to find the root causes of those triggers.

ROOT CAUSE EXAMPLE: Rachel is passionate about ocean conservation. She asks why ocean pollution happens and lists several causes, including acid rain, soil runoff, and oil spills. She remembers witnessing the harmful impact of a major oil spill in her local ecosystem and decides to learn more about why oil spills happen. Rachel reaches out to experts and, after additional research, learns that a lack of safety protocols for oil storage is one of the root causes. She chooses to create a project that addresses how oil storage can be made safer to prevent spills.

Step 2: Investigate will walk you through how to use a mind map and then research your issue's root causes. When you're ready, visit Step 2 of GoGold to do it yourself!

How do I include a national and/or global link in my project?

Identifying a national and/or global link doesn't mean you need to travel or expand your project across the globe. It's likely that the issue you've been working towards addressing is relevant worldwide—it can be found in your own local, regional, or national community and across the globe, whether it's poverty, hunger, illiteracy, homelessness, or pollution.

Research how other areas, communities, or countries address your issue. Seeing how other people and places implement solutions might inspire your actions and will absolutely show you a national or global connection. Consider reaching out, explaining your ideas, and asking for their advice, ideas, and even collaboration. You can use what you learn to inform your project. Plus, these kinds of partnerships can be excellent ways to ensure your project's sustainability.

NATIONAL AND/OR GLOBAL LINK EXAMPLE: For the past four years, Maria has volunteered at a local animal rescue group. It regularly operates at its maximum capacity and is unable to take in additional animals. Maria decides to tackle one of the root causes of this issue for her Gold Award. As she begins her research, she learns that animal rescue groups across the country share similar challenges and discovers various perspectives on animal welfare across the globe. Then, she reaches out to relevant animal welfare organizations to better understand the issue and to access the research that they have available. She decides to focus on a solution that she can implement at animal rescue groups in her community and share widely.

Visit Step 4 of GoGold to identify your issue's national and/or global link. Be sure to include research that backs it up!

How do I show leadership in my project?

It isn't a leader's job to do everything; rather, it's the leader's job to make sure everything gets done. You will demonstrate leadership by recruiting and engaging a diverse team of volunteers from your network and around the community. Share your vision to help align your team—you can also map out activities, set schedules, create a communication plan, and solve challenges if they arise.

Take Action projects require partnering with the community you're serving, so be sure to enlist appropriate individuals, groups, or organizations before, during, and after your project to ensure they are engaged with and benefit from your project. Ideally, your project will provide the community you serve with a much-needed solution, so they will help sustain your project.

LEADERSHIP EXAMPLE: Caitlin elevated her passion for theater to raise awareness about substance abuse issues among high school students. She reached out to her high school's drama club for volunteer actors and backstage crew members. She found volunteers within her Girl Scout troop to design and distribute promotional materials for performances.

At a local drug abuse education nonprofit, Caitlin learned about the extent of substance abuse in her town and found her project advisor. Her advisor connected her with volunteer educators who informed the educational components of Caitlin's project and hosted talk-backs after performances. Finally, Caitlin engaged other high school drama clubs to ensure that the program continued to reach her target audience.

Step 3: Get Help features important members of your team and the roles they might play. When you're ready, visit Step 3 of GoGold to list your team members and share how you plan to lead them as you implement your project.

What does a sustainable project look like?

Sustainability means that your project, as well as the work towards addressing your issue, carries on or continues even after you've done your part and earned the Gold Award. In a nutshell: you'll put a plan in place that ensures your Gold Award creates lasting change.

Sustainability is not one-size-fits-all. Here are three different ways you can ensure your project is sustainable:

1 Create a permanent solution ... and ensure it's used.

Short project description	How you know it's sustained ...
Brand-new girls wrestling team at your school	Get a letter of commitment from your school administration to sustain the team
Cultural competency club at a local community center	Provide a how-to manual with guidelines and your organization charter to the community center so they can maintain your project after you wrap up
Formal-wear lending boutique for military families	Establish a system for rotating and refreshing available items that outlasts your support

2 Educate others by inspiring them to change their attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors ... and prove the changes by using a measurement tool and either 1) putting a plan in place to continue the education beyond your involvement or 2) enacting a call to action.

Short project description	How you know it's sustained ...
Stress-relief awareness campaign	Collect pre- and post-surveys to measure change in your audience's knowledge and perceptions and enact a call to action, like a pledge, to track who commits to adopting new self-care habits
Reading workshops to promote early literacy	Collect pre- and post-surveys to measure how audience reading skills improve and share the curriculum with a community partner to continue literacy education
School recycling presentations	Collect pre- and post-surveys to measure increase in recycling know-how and enact a call to action, like an online tracking system to count the number of students recycling at the school and total pounds of recycled material annually



SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: When your goal is to change someone's mind, education can be a powerful tool. You can create and deploy a wide range of materials that will educate others about the issue you care about. We call this a "force multiplier" when someone makes a significant change to an attitude and/or behavior.

3 Advocate to change a rule, regulation, or law ... and engage others in your advocacy.

Short project description	How you know it's sustained ...
Protecting sea turtle habitats	Get others to take up the cause by signing a petition as part of a campaign to enact a law that protects the animals' habitats. Your advocacy is what matters—bonus points if you get a law passed, but even if you don't, you can still change minds and behavior along the way.

Visit Step 4 GoGold to plan your project's sustainability.

How do I measure my impact?

Your impact is measurable when you collect information or data throughout your project and use it to show that your actions have had a positive effect on the community and/or contributed to addressing your issue.

Think about what you can count in order to measure the effectiveness of your project. This means that you will need to set a goal or two! That way, when you measure your results, you'll know how effective your project was overall. Goals can feel intimidating, but remember, you're setting them for yourself—and they are adaptable.

You can begin demonstrating your impact by asking “how much?” or “how many?”

- You can count how many people your project helped, involved, or educated, or how many people changed their behavior or attitudes. You can also count the number of members in a group (social media or in person) or how many clicks, shares, views, or comments your website or posts received.
- If you are introducing a new concept to a group, you can use a pre- and post-questionnaire to measure how much they've learned or assess what behaviors they've changed.

Successful Gold Award projects have goals and measure true impact. Be confident in setting and measuring multiple goals, so you can understand the impact of each part of your project. And don't be shy about expanding your efforts as you go!

MEASUREMENT EXAMPLE: Nancy is creating a technology class for women in the prison system to help prepare them for future employment. She sets two goals: to reach 50 women in the prison system with her technology class by the end of the school year and to be sure at least 75% of the women feel like they have increased their tech skills. To measure her impact, she plans to use two metrics: she will track participation to ensure she serves at least 50 women, and she will circulate questionnaires before and after the classes to assess if her participants are increasing their tech skills. By consistently tracking her progress, she can adjust her plan to better meet her goals.

Visit Step 4 of GoGold to create your project's goals and outline how you'll measure your impact.



SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: While goals are important guidelines, they may change as you go along. It's OK—it's all part of the learning process. Collecting and analyzing data throughout your project will help you gauge the impact your project is having, make improvements and adjust your goals as necessary, and ultimately tell a compelling story about your Gold Award. If you think you need to change your goals after your proposal has been approved, reach out to your council contact for advice and support.

Part 2: Achieving your Gold Award

Now that you've learned about the Gold Award, you're ready to earn it—the greatest achievement in Girl Scouting! It may sound daunting, but we'll break it down into smaller, more manageable steps. Read on for more on how to get started. And remember: your council and the Girl Scout Movement will be there to support you every step of the way!

How do I know I'm ready?

You can begin working on your Gold Award proposal in GoGold after you've crossed certain items off your to-do list. You're ready when:

- You're in grades 9–12.
- You're a registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador.
- You've completed two Senior or Ambassador Journeys OR have earned a Silver Award and completed one Senior or Ambassador Journey.
- You feel compelled to do something meaningful that will make the world a better place!

How do I know what to do—and when?

REQUIRED GOLD AWARD ORIENTATION:

The GSSJC online Gold Award Orientation is required for all girls who plan to earn their Gold Award and must be completed prior to submitting their Gold Award Project Proposal. The self-directed training will give girls a comprehensive overview of the Gold Award steps and forms, tools for identifying and developing Gold Award projects that fall within the national guidelines, and GSSJC's processes for Gold Award applicants.

At the completion of the orientation, you should save the certificate of completion for your Gold Award project proposal.

After completing the online Gold Award Orientation, you will receive access to the Mentor Look Book. It is your responsibility to reach out to a mentor from the Look Book that you feel is a good fit for you and your project and ask if she has availability to work with you.

Optional but highly recommended workshops:

OLDER GIRL TAKE ACTION WORKSHOP

Join us for a Take Action workshop where we'll cover the differences between community service and Take Action and how to best plan a Take Action project. We'll also learn from each other by sharing examples and ideas! Come ready to brainstorm!

READY, SET, GOLD!

Are you a Senior or Ambassador wondering what it takes to be a Gold Award Girl Scout? If so, this virtual workshop is for you! Learn what makes a Gold-Award-worthy project, how to navigate the step-by-step process for approval, and meet the supporting team of mentors. A panel of recent GSSJC Gold Award Girl Scouts will host a question and answer session and share their tips on developing a successful project. Don't miss this opportunity to discover all the benefits of going Gold!

THE NEXT STEP: A WORKSHOP ON HOW TO PROCEED AFTER GOLD AWARD ORIENTATION

Now that you've completed Gold Award Orientation, you might be wondering what to do next. Join virtually with GSSJC Gold Award Girl Scouts and mentors to hear about successful projects, brainstorm project ideas, and get questions answered so you can take the next step in your Gold Award journey.

Timeline

When developing a timeline for your Gold Award, we encourage you to keep these important deadlines in mind:

March 31	Deadline for approval of Final Reports to be invited to that year's GSSJC Gold Award Ceremony.
July 1	Deadline for submission of Project Proposals for graduated high school seniors.
September 30	Deadline for submission of Final Reports for graduated high school seniors.

It is highly recommended that you do not wait until those deadlines and instead submit your Project Proposal and Final Report much earlier than that if possible.

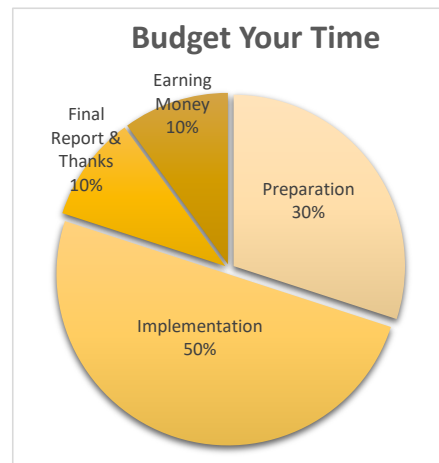
How much time does it take?

Plan to spend about 80 hours bringing your project to life. These hours will give you the time you need to properly plan and execute your project—though keep in mind that your schedule and other time commitments will influence how long it takes to complete your project. This is OK, whatever timeline you follow is just fine!

Use this chart—and the definitions below—as a guide to help you plan how to best invest your time for maximum efficiency and impact.

- Preparation (30–50%) includes time planning pre- and post-approval.
- Pre-approval (up to 25%) is the process of preparing your project plan before council review and approval. This includes some research, contacting possible community partners, investigating potential venues, finding prospective volunteers, and ultimately completing your project proposal.
- Post-approval (up to 25%) is the work of finalizing your research and locking in your logistics after your proposal is approved by your council. For example, you might contact your venue and set dates and times for workshops.
- Implementation (30–50%) is the process of leading and executing the plan you defined in your project proposal and making changes, when necessary, to achieve the project's goal. This includes training your volunteers, leading your team to do your project, and more!
- Earning money (5–10%) is optional, and only includes time you spend earning money for your Gold Award.
- Final report & thanks (5–10%) includes reflecting on your impact and appreciating your team, which are essential parts of the Gold Award, so make these a priority as you wrap up.

It's easy to forget an activity, email, or conversation, so use the "Track My Work" tab in GoGold to make sure you don't miss a thing.



What is the GoGold web app?

GoGold is a mobile-friendly web app you will use to track your progress towards completing the seven steps of the Gold Award—from idea to proposal, to taking action and final report—online!

You can use GoGold to brainstorm and submit your official Gold Award proposal as well as your final report. This system is designed with you in mind. It offers a lot more than just a place to upload documents.

GoGold takes you through each of the Gold Award steps while offering new ways to examine the issue you want to work on and its root causes, plan your project, set goals, map a timeline, and add your team members.

The functionality built into GoGold is going to save you time, too. The system includes options for your troop leader to virtually sign off on your prerequisites, like your completed Journeys or Silver Award, and for your project advisor to verify your proposal is ready for your council's review process. (We will tell you more about the role of a project advisor in [Step 3](#).)

Think of GoGold as an interactive, informative, and enormous filing cabinet up in the cloud—where every single Gold Award proposal and final report is proudly safeguarded and catalogued for all the Girl Scouts who are on this amazing journey.

What are the #1 tips to help me succeed?

DO THIS	NOT THIS
Pull a team of volunteers together and put your leadership skills to work.	Do it all yourself with just a few or no volunteers.
Choose a project advisor who is an expert on your issue and willing to be involved.	Choose a parent or troop leader as an advisor.
Plan ahead and anticipate obstacles.	Wing it without a plan.
Break up your work into small, manageable bundles and assign each bundle a timeline.	Procrastinate or try to do it all at once.
Update your project advisor and council contact/Mentor and ask questions when needed.	Keep project progress, obstacles, and details to yourself until you submit your final report.
Document everything as it occurs so that the information you collect is accurate and honest.	Make up a timeline after you've finished the project or put together several small projects.
Measure your project's outcome—you can always look to your council contact/Mentor for guidance on collecting data, conducting surveys, and doing pre- and post-evaluations.	Complete your project with no real way to measure the impact you've made.
Make sure your project includes the five Gold Award elements.	Submit your project proposal without addressing root cause or including a national and/or global link, sustainability, measurability, or leadership.
Include detailed goals in your project proposal that show your anticipated impact.	Skip goal setting.
Do research to make sure any organizations you plan to work with want to sustain your project.	Assume that organizations need your help.
Create a dynamic project with measurable impact on a community.	Create a static website as the focus of your project or hold a one-day workshop.
Be original—this is your chance to shine!	Copy what others have done.

What are the seven steps to the Gold Award?

- ▶ Step 1: Choose an issue
- ▶ Step 2: Investigate
- ▶ Step 3: Get help
- ▶ Step 4: Create a plan
- ▶ Step 5: Present your plan
- ▶ Step 6: Take Action
- ▶ Step 7: Educate and inspire

Let's break it down with a description of each step and tips for success. You'll complete these steps using GoGold. When you're ready, [create a GoGold account and get started!](#)

Step 1: Choose an issue

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

Use the interactive question tree in GoGold to answer a series of questions that will help you explore how to merge your passions and skills to Take Action. It's easy! Simply answer the questions and GoGold will do the rest, compiling your responses into project themes that may interest you.

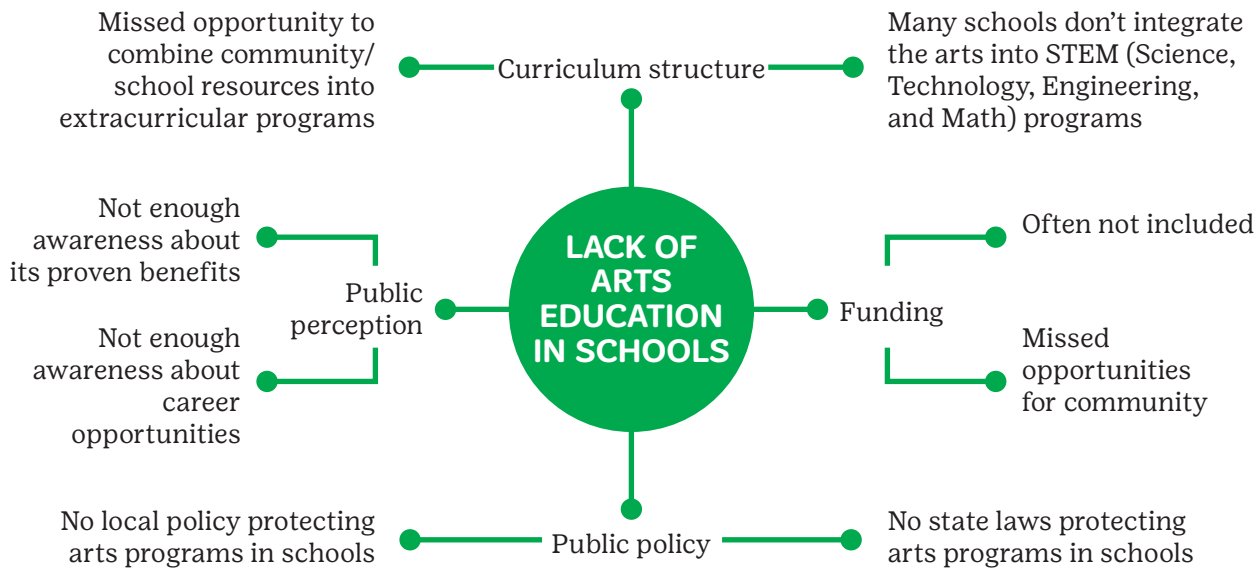
Why?	Who?	Where?	What?	How?
Why are you inspired? Do you care about poverty, women's rights, environmental sustainability, health and relationships, animals, human rights, veterans, sports, or something else?	Who do you want to help? The elderly, children, those less fortunate, nature, people with disabilities, or animals?	Where do you want to make an impact? Your school, neighborhood, city, state, country, or around the world?	What are your strengths and talents? Public speaking, math, community building, empathy, research, or people skills?	How do you want to make a difference? Will you change a law, lead workshops, start a club, develop curriculum, give presentations, teach a skill, or take action another way?

You can complete the quiz as many times as you want. And you'll leave the step with an issue or two you may want to explore further.

Step 2: Investigate

In Step 1, you identified a community issue or two that you're interested in exploring further. You'll need to trace back the issues to their root causes for your project and then connect with issue experts to plan your project. By addressing the root causes of your issue and involving your community in the solution, you'll be primed to make a sustainable impact.

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



Notice that the community issue “lack of arts education in schools” is placed in the center and that things that trigger it, like funding, public policy, public perception, and curriculum structure are explored further. When you explore further, you find root causes. In this example, the root causes are in the outer prongs. For example, the root causes of the public's perception of lack of arts education in schools include not enough awareness about proven benefits and not enough awareness about career opportunities in the arts.

Once you've identified root causes, take your research further to make sure:

- You've identified a real need in the community.
- You can make your project idea happen—it's realistic.
- You can learn about resources and develop a network beyond your friends and family to help you.

Get online. Check news and organizations' sites related to your issue. Explore how the media in other countries cover your issue.

Get reading. Find books that offer in-depth analysis of your issue, read your local newspaper, and look for magazine articles that offer different perspectives.

Interview experts. Talk to friends, neighbors, teachers, business owners, community partners, and others who can offer information or insight about the issue you've chosen.

Need help identifying organizations or people who have knowledge of your issue or finding an expert to interview? Click the help icon next to the “Research” tab in GoGold for suggestions, including a community map, a short list of thought starters, and interview tips.



SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: Before you meet with new people, get safety tips from your troop/group volunteer and always make sure your family knows who you're talking to or meeting with—safety first!

Step 3: Get help

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

Here are some important members of your team:

GOLD AWARD MENTOR

A mentor is a GSSJC volunteer who has been vetted, appointed, and trained to guide and support girls through the Gold Award process. Having a mentor is required. Your mentor works with you for the duration of your project. Their role is to help ensure that you are in compliance with the Gold Award guidelines and deadlines. They serve as a resource to you and will review materials you have prepared before they are submitted to the review board.

Once you complete the Gold Award Orientation and are ready, you must reach out to a mentor. Your mentor must be selected from the Mentor Look Book where mentors are identified by their experience, areas of interest, location, communication preference, etc. Please keep in mind that all mentors are volunteers. Be respectful of their time and be patient. Please allow at least 72 hours for them to respond to you.

PROJECT ADVISOR

Your project advisor is an adult you approach and invite to be on your team, who has some level of expertise in one or more areas of the issue your project addresses. Think of your project advisor as a professional consultant; they can guide you as you plan and implement your project. The project advisor does not design your project but does offer valuable insight, advice, and guidance.

Parents/guardians and troop volunteers cannot be project advisors. Sometimes adult siblings or family members such as aunts or uncles can be approved project advisors if they are experts on your issue. However, we strongly encourage you to reach outside your familiar circle and grow your network. The [Project Advisor Guide](#) will help your advisor understand their role and how they can support you.

Parents or guardians are amazing supporters! They can act as cheerleaders, sounding boards, and chauffeurs. They can also help you out with safety, transportation, and travel guidelines. The [Guide for Adults](#) lists helpful ways your parents or caregivers can help you; however, as we said above: parents/guardians cannot act as your project advisor.

GOLD AWARD MANAGER

The Gold Award manager is a GSSJC staff member who oversees the back-office end of the Gold Award program. She answers customer questions, manage

all official forms, reports, and correspondences. She also coordinates workshops, scholarships, events, and the annual GSSJC Gold Award Ceremony.

GOLD AWARD REVIEW BOARD

The review board consists of a group of volunteers who review and approve Project Proposals and Final Reports. They meet twice a month to review reports to ensure that the standards and requirements of the Gold Award are consistently and appropriately upheld. The review board then provides the Gold Award manager with detailed minutes of the meeting which will include approval for girls to begin their project and final approval for the girl to receive her Gold Award. They also provide feedback for girls whose projects were tabled and give suggestions for ways a girl can improve her project to meet Gold Award standards.

MORE TEAM MEMBERS

Troop volunteers and other Girl Scout volunteers can help make sure you've met Gold Award prerequisites and may also agree to be a part of your volunteer team. They can also review Gold Award funding, safety, and travel guidelines with you. The [Guide for Leaders](#) will get them started!

Friends and family may want to help you implement your plan. Troop sisters, relatives, friends, siblings, and cousins can all make terrific team members. Feel confident about giving them hands-on roles and delegating tasks to them, too! The [Guide for Adults](#) lists helpful ways your parents or caregivers can help you.

Use Step 3 of GoGold to keep a list of your confirmed team members. You're required to work with at least one adult volunteer—your project advisor, so be sure to list them first. Then, add at least three to five additional team members who are not your parent/guardian or troop members. From there, you can add as many others as you'd like!

Keep in mind that a good leader identifies specific team members with varied backgrounds and skill sets to assist with specific tasks associated with their project. While you may be inclined to primarily enlist your peers, adult support can help you form partnerships with organizations, access resources, and provide important safety measures (your council can help make sure you're covered). So, be ready to identify each volunteer's role and don't worry about missing someone—you can add more team members as you go along.



SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: When you expand your circle, you expand your impact. You may feel a little bit uneasy to approach and invite those outside your network to join your team, but remember to use your proposal as your guide to explain your plans. Chances are—they will be impressed!

Step 4: Create a plan

In Step 4, you'll bring together the work and research you did in Steps 1–3 to show how you will achieve your project's purpose. You'll work out the specific details of your project proposal, including a project description, proposed budget and timeline, and your thoughts on how the project will impact you, your target audience, and your wider community. You'll also define your project's national and/or global link, set goals to measure your impact, and plan how you'll sustain your project (refer back to [Part 1](#) for a refresher).

Provide as much detail as you can so your council can evaluate your timeline and proposed scope of work. Ensure you've clearly articulated your ideas and plans, identified your team, set clear goals, and determined how your impact will be measured so it can be easily understood and evaluated. The people reviewing your proposal may not know you personally; be specific so your vision is clear to them.

How do I earn money for my project? :

These are possible options for funding a Gold Award project:

1. Self-funding
2. Money-earning activities
3. Solicitation for monetary or in-kind donations

If you choose to participate in additional money-earning activities, in addition to the guidelines below, the following should also be reviewed to be sure that you are following council protocols:

- Volunteer Essentials
- Safety Activity Checkpoints
- GSSJC Policies and Operating Procedures (F-433)

SELF-FUNDING

- Self-funding includes a girl's own money, money from family or friends, and/or troop funds.
- Council-sponsored product program (Cookie Program and Fall Product) are the best way for girls to earn money to fund their Gold Award. The sales are beloved by the community and come with program, sales, marketing materials, and support that make it easy for girls to run a great business. In addition, the product sales program is a great opportunity to talk to people about your Gold Award. You might find that people want to volunteer for your project or support you in other ways.
- Anytime you are planning to use troop money, either from product sales or from other money-earning activities, remember that use of the funds **MUST** be a troop decision (girls, not leaders). Present your project plan and proposed budget to your troop and let them decide whether to give you the money you are requesting.
- Council prior approval or paperwork is not needed. Keep in mind that personal donations to a Gold Award project are not eligible for tax receipts. Any personal donations accepted are between a girl and the donor (i.e. family or friend). Since donations to the Gold Award are between the girl and the donor, remember that council cannot provide a copy of our 501c(3) letter or tax ID number.

MONEY-EARNING ACTIVITIES

Money-earning activities (MEA) are approved, girl planned activities to earn money. These are coordinated efforts to provide a product or service in exchange for money.

Important Notes:

- The girl(s) must receive council approval prior to the money-earning activity.

MONEY-EARNING ACTIVITY FORMS	
Request for Permission to Undertake MEA (To be submitted after you've received approval on your Project Proposal)	F-32A
MEA Project Evaluation (To be submitted after the MEA)	F-32B
Guidelines for MEA Projects	F-32C
MEA FAQ	F-32D

- In order to be eligible, the girl(s) must have participated in the last two product sales.
- The girl(s)/parent/troop leader may not fund raise for another organization.

Suggested Money-Earning Activities	NOT Approved Money-Earning Activities
Pet sitting, dog washing or walking service Car wash Yard sale Raking leaves, weeding gardens Babysitting at local meetings Delivery service Birthday party service Ironing or laundry service Collection of recyclable materials Put on a play, fashion show, talent show, karaoke night, family dance, game night or costume party	Games of chance, raffles, casino nights Receiving a percentage of sales from a business during a specific time frame Any activities conducted on the Internet Activities with income which exceeds the project's needs Raising money for another organization, including walk-a-thons, tele-a-thons, coupons or coupon booklets, home demonstration products, etc. Funds being retained by individuals as their property Any money-earning activities conducted by a girl with outstanding debt to council or aided by other girls/ adults with outstanding debt Bake sales

MONETARY OR IN-KIND DONATIONS

For Gold Award projects, girls may solicit for monetary or in-kind donations. Non-monetary in-kind donations refers to soliciting for supplies needed for your project (i.e. soliciting a hardware store for lumber). Soliciting for a gift card from a store for the supplies needed would also be appropriate.

Important Notes:

- The girl(s) must receive council approval prior to the solicitation.

CONTRIBUTION/SOLICITATION REQUEST FORMS	
Contribution/Solicitation Request Form	F-30A
(To be submitted after you've received approval on your Project Proposal)	
Contribution/Solicitation Request Process	F-30B
Contribution/Solicitation FAQ	F-30C

- In order to be eligible, the girl(s) must have participated in the last two product sales.
- The girl(s)/parent/troop leader may not use “Go Fund Me” or other crowd-sourcing platforms to raise money for their projects.

Because GSSJC is a nonprofit organization, there are specific rules on how donations can be acquired. The IRS's tax codes state that only adults may complete the “ask” for the donation. However, GSSJC encourages the girl to be a part of the planning process through budgeting, composing ask scripts/inquiry letters, etc. Although adults must make the specific request for donations, girls can be present to answer questions, give a presentation, and provide justification for why they need the donation, By doing so they will build valuable knowledge of finances and leadership!

Step 5: Present your plan

You'll know you're ready to submit your proposal to your council for review and approval when you can confidently check all the boxes below:

- You've met the prerequisites (see “How do I know I'm ready?”)
- You've created a unique project.
- You've chosen an expert project advisor (Step 3: Get Help).
- You've engaged a team of volunteers who will take action with you.
- You've addressed the root cause of an issue .
- You've tackled your target audience's needs.
- You've set clear goals. You can say, “Here is the change I want to make, the plan i have to make it, and here's how I'll know I have done so.”
- You've designed a sustainable project.
- You've identified a national and/or global link.
- You've developed a realistic budget and identified the resources you need to carry out the project.
- Your project will take at least 80 hours to complete.
- You have the skills to get started.
- You've created a plan to inspire others about your project and its impact.

Before you submit, be sure to upload any additional files GSSJC requires and download a copy of your proposal to keep for your records. Then, get your troop leader/volunteer to verify that you completed your prerequisites and obtain project advisor support of your proposal before submitting it. You'll be able to use GoGold to send an email request for verification that they can complete online in just a few clicks.

GSSJC has a specific review and approval process, so be sure to check in with your mentor for next steps before you submit your plan to council.

PROPOSAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

At this step, you will present your Project Proposal to the GSSJC Review Board for approval. Remember, this will be done through GoGold Online. In addition to the GoGold Project Proposal, GSSJC requires the following documents to be submitted:

GSSJC Checklist
This form will help confirm that you have all the necessary paperwork for your proposal in order. This will also include yours and your mentor's digital signatures.
Letter(s) of permission – if applicable
This is a letter giving you permission to complete your Gold Award project at a facility or organization. If you are working at more than one location, you will need a permission letter from each location.
Letter(s) of Agreement for Donation – if applicable
If applicable, you will need to submit a letter of agreement from any organization stating that they accept the donation(s) from your project.
Proof of Gold Award Orientation
You must submit a copy of your Gold Award Orientation certificate, card, or letter verifying your completion. Please keep in mind that your Gold Award Orientation expires after two years. For example, if you complete your Gold Award Orientation on January 1, 2020 you have until January 1, 2022 to contact a mentor and begin your project before it expires.
Silver Award Letter – if applicable
If you earned the Silver Award as part of meeting your pre-requisites, it is required that you upload your congratulatory letter from council. If you misplaced this, please reach out to your mentor to request another copy.
Request to Conduct a Project on GSSJC Property – If applicable
If your project plans include working at a GSSJC camp or other property, then you must submit your approved Request to Conduct a Project on GSSJC Property Form verifying that you have received permission.

Before you submit, your mentor **MUST** review your Project Proposal as well as the required supplemental forms above. On Step 5 of GoGold under the Preview tab you have the option to download a PDF version of your report. After your mentor gives you approval, you must also request verification from your Troop Leader (verifying your Journey(s)) and from your project advisor. This is done through GoGold and will result in your Troop Leader and Project Advisor receiving an email and given the option to approve. Please keep in mind that you cannot submit your report until these verifications have been received. Please be sure to keep in touch with your troop leader and project advisor to give them the heads up. Once you've received all required verifications and signatures, including yours and your mentors on the GSSJC Checklist, you're ready to submit!

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Review Board meets twice a month to review Project Proposals and Final Reports. The deadlines for girls are the 1st and 15th of each month. The expectation is that you inform your mentor that you are ready for review by the 1st or 15th so that she can review your report and if she feels you are ready, she will sign your checklist and inform the Review Board that you are ready for review. Please keep in mind that the Gold Award committee is comprised of volunteers. Be considerate of their time and do not request for your report to be reviewed outside of the timeframe that is given. Please plan accordingly.

1st of the Month	If you submit your Project Proposal by the 1st of the month and your mentor feels that it's ready for the Review Board (doesn't require any changes), then it will be reviewed by the Review Board on the 2nd Sunday of that month (pending extenuating circumstances such as holidays, office closures, unexpected review meeting rescheduling, etc.)
15th of the Month	If you submit your Project Proposal by the 15th and your mentor feels that it's ready for the Review Board (doesn't require any changes), then your Project Proposal will be reviewed by the Review Board on 4th Sunday of the month (pending extenuating circumstances such as holidays, office closures, unexpected review meeting rescheduling, etc.)

You MUST receive council approval before beginning your project. After the Review Board meeting you will receive two emails, one from GSSJC with a congratulatory letter and additional materials & one from GoGold Online telling you that your proposal has been approved and you can move to the next step.

Step 6: Take Action

Once your proposal is approved, it's go time! Lead your team to carry out your plan. Log your hours and track your income and expenses as you put your proposal into action. Use the Experience Log to upload photos, videos, and/or text posts showing your project in action. These posts will be shared with your council when you submit your final report in Step 7.

Check the "Summary" tab in Step 6 of GoGold for an overview at any time.

WHAT IF I NEED TO MODIFY MY PROJECT?:

If you need to modify your project after it has been approved by the Review Board, then these modifications must be approved PRIOR to continuing with your project. As soon as you are aware of the need for a change, notify your mentor. If the change is minor, (e.g. location or project advisor), request an amendment form from your mentor. Your mentor must approve and sign off on this form prior to submission of your final report. If the change is more significant and impacts the scope of your project as it was approved by the Review Board, then the Review Board must also review and approve your change PRIOR to implementation. Finally, if the change involves a new project concept altogether, then you will need to submit a new Project Proposal for approval.

Step 7: Educate and inspire

Once you have wrapped up your project, it's time to educate and inspire others! You've worked hard on your Gold Award project and now it's time to showcase it and encourage other Girl Scouts to go Gold. This will also give you the opportunity to practice your public speaking skills.

Your presentation to Girl Scouts is an opportunity to tell others about your Gold Award including the impact of your project, what the Gold Award is, and what you learned. Your presentation is NOT part of the sustainability of your project.

The Gold Award Presentation Form, which includes all the details of this requirement, is available on GoGold Online and requires that you get pre-approval from your mentor before you present. This form will be submitted as a supplemental form.

FINAL REPORT REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Once you've completed your presentation, it's time to start organizing your paperwork to present your Final Report to the GSSJC Review Board for approval. Remember, this will be done through GoGold Online. In addition to the GoGold Final Report, GSSJC requires the following documents to be submitted.

- ▶ GSSJC Checklist. This form will confirm that you have all the necessary paperwork for your final report in order. This will also include your and your mentor's digital signatures.
- ▶ Gold Award Presentation. This form includes digital signatures from you, your mentor and a Girl Scout volunteer or staff who observed your presentation.
- ▶ Publicity Form. This form is required even if you do not wish for GSSJC to seek publicity on your behalf (there is an option for no Publicity). If you would like publicity, please pay careful attention to the photo requirements.

Before you submit your Final Report, your mentor MUST review your Final Report as well as the required supplemental forms above. On Step 7 of GoGold under the Preview tab you have the option to download a PDF version of your report. After your Mentor gives you approval, you must also request verification from your project advisor. This is done through GoGold and will result in your project advisor receiving an email and given the option to approve. Please keep in mind that you cannot submit your report until the verification has been received. Be sure to keep in touch with your project advisor to give them the heads up. Once you've received all required verifications and signatures, you're ready to submit!

WHAT'S NEXT?

Please remember the following deadlines when submitting your materials to your Mentor for initial review before submitting to council:

1st of the Month	If you submit your Project Proposal by the 1st of the month and your mentor feels that it's ready for the Review Board (doesn't require any changes), then it will be reviewed by the Review Board on the 2nd Sunday of that month (pending extenuating circumstances such as holidays, office closures, unexpected review meeting rescheduling, etc.)
15th of the Month	If you submit your Project Proposal by the 15th and your mentor feels that it's ready for the Review Board (doesn't require any changes), then your Project Proposal will be reviewed by the Review Board on 4th Sunday of the month (pending extenuating circumstances such as holidays, office closures, unexpected review meeting rescheduling, etc.)

After the Review Board meeting you will receive one of two possible emails. If approved, you will receive an email from council with a congratulatory letter and additional materials & one from GoGold Online telling you that your Final Report has been approved. If your project has been tabled, then you will receive an email from council with detailed feedback on the necessary revisions before resubmission.

When your final report is approved, you're officially a Gold Award Girl Scout!

Celebrate and be sure to thank your project advisor, your team, and all the other people who helped you along the way!

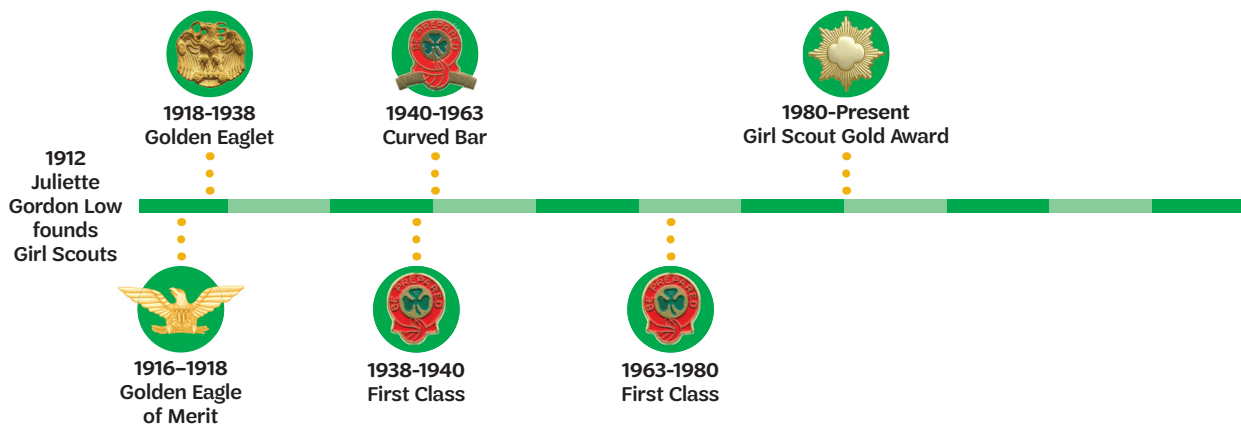
Congratulations—you're a Gold Award Girl Scout!

You've earned the Gold Award, the most highly regarded award in the world for girls. It's the mark of the truly remarkable. Becoming a Gold Award Girl Scout marks an important milestone in your Girl Scout career. The same vision, commitment, and leadership that brought you through the Gold Award process will now carry you to new heights. This will distinguish you on scholarship applications, college admission essays, and on your résumé—forever. What you have earned will set you apart, in all the best possible ways!

In addition to accomplishing this challenging personal goal, you can now join an esteemed group of Girl Scouts who share this distinction.

From its beginning in 1916, the greatest achievement in Girl Scouting has been a symbol of excellence and leadership that recognizes the extraordinary efforts of extraordinary girls. While the Gold Award has gone by many names, now all Girl Scouts who earned the First Class, Curved Bar, Golden Eaglet, or Golden Eagle of Merit are part of the Gold Award Girl Scout Family (see [GSUSA's proclamation](#)). Its timelessness has inspired generations of young women to find greatness inside themselves and share their ideas and passions with their communities and the world. Congratulations on joining this network of talented and inspirational women!

You've joined history—welcome to the Gold Award Girl Scout family!



Share your accomplishment with the world!

How many other teenagers can say they led a team that tackled an issue in their community to create lasting change? We know you can say it! You stand out in a crowd—own it!

Now that you're a Gold Award Girl Scout, it's time to leverage your accomplishment and share your passion:

- Capture the skills you gained. Remember all the things you learned while earning the Gold Award. Things like project management, team building, public speaking, and resource development are real-life skills that need to be highlighted. Make sure you add your new skills and competencies to your future applications and résumés.
- Apply for scholarships. When applying for scholarships (and you should be!), you'll want your Gold Award to be a highlight. The work that goes into earning it will show you as a well-rounded, community-minded, forward-focused can-doer! Be sure to review these [specific scholarships](#) designed just for Gold Award Girl Scouts.
- Expand your network. Think of all the people you met and engaged with while working towards the Gold Award. Keep all those contacts and add them to your professional social media accounts, like LinkedIn, whenever possible. Those individuals will be proud to be connected to you, and the Girl Scout Gold Award, forever.
- Get paid more. If you join the military, you can enlist at a higher pay grade.
- Get the job. Highlight your Gold Award on your résumé—as well as all of the skills you gained while earning it. Don't underestimate the power of a Girl Scout alum, or sister Gold Award Girl Scout, receiving your résumé or application!

RÉSUMÉ TIPS:

Describe what the Gold Award means for anyone who may not be familiar with it (ideally one sentence or less). For example:

- Earned the Girl Scout Gold Award by planning and executing an 80-hour service-learning project and managing a team of volunteers and community partners
- Quantify, quantify, quantify! Include measurable outcomes from your project to tell about your leadership experience and impact. Instead of saying:
- Developed a robotics program for girls
- Try something more powerful, like:
- Created a robotics curriculum that reached 80 girls—90% of whom reported an increased interest in STEM careers
- Partnered with two school districts to add the curriculum to 10 school clubs
- Implemented a social media strategy to educate girls on STEM opportunities, achieving more than 5,000 impressions in total

List skills that you developed in pursuing your Gold Award. Shine a light on transferable skills like project management, communication, strategic planning, research, budget oversight, fundraising, team building, and social media marketing.

Elevate your online story. If you created a website as part of your Gold Award, consider adding a link. You can use a free URL shortener to make the link memorable.

Gold Award ceremony

We strongly encourage you to have a special ceremony to celebrate your achievement. Your ceremony may be private, with family, with your troop, part of another meeting related to your interests, part of a larger ceremony, or a council function (i.e. council ceremony). If you plan to have your own ceremony rather than participate in a council ceremony, you may inquire about borrowing a banner. The Girl Experience Department at the Houston Girl Scout Center has two Gold Award banners that feature the Gold Award logo available on loan. The use and return of each banner operate based on your honor as part of the Girl Scout community. If you are interested in using a banner, please contact the Gold Award manager at goldaward@sjgs.org.

GSSJC honors Gold Award Girl Scouts annually at our Gold Award Ceremony which is typically held in May. All girls who earn their Gold Award before March 31 may participate in that year's ceremony. For example, Girl Scouts that earned their Gold Award between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022 are invited to participate in the May 2022 Gold Award Ceremony. If a girl earns her Gold Award on or after April 1, 2022, then she is invited to attend the following year's ceremony in May 2023.

Our resource roundup for Girl Scouts

Here you'll find a roundup of internet resources that will help you become a Gold Award Girl Scout. We recommend referencing this list as you work on your project,

[Ready To Get Started? Create a GoGold Account](#)

[FAQs \(GoGold Account Required\)](#)

Building a Team and Network

[The Gold Award Guide for Project Advisors](#)

[The Gold Award Guide for Adults](#)

[The Gold Award Guide for Troop Leaders](#)

Designing and Carrying Out a Project: Gold Award Girl Scouts Share their Wisdom on YouTube

[Go for the Gold—Tips from Gold Award Girl Scouts](#)

You're a Gold Award Girl Scout! What's Next?

[Search the Scholarship Database for Opportunities for Gold Award Girl Scouts](#)

[Share your Project on the Girls Changing the World Map](#)

A special thank you to Girl Scouts San Diego for creating the guide that inspired this national template and to the 2020 Highest Award Council Thought Partners—Girl Scouts of Alaska, Girl Scouts of Central Texas, Girl Scouts of Connecticut, Girl Scouts of Nassau County, Girl Scouts Northeast Texas, Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois, Girl Scouts of San Geronio, Girl Scouts of Southeast Florida, Girl Scouts of Maine, and Girl Scouts of Western Ohio—for informing the updated Gold Award Guidelines for our Movement at every step.