For questions about the Gold Award contact:
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www.gssjc.org/goldaward

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The **Golden Eagle of Merit**, the highest award in Girl Scouting from 1916 to 1919, marked the beginning of a long tradition of using prestigious awards to recognize girls who make a difference in their communities and their own lives.

The Golden Eagle of Merit was first noted in the 1916 Handbook and was modeled after the British Silver Fish. Girls who received this award had to earn fourteen proficiency badges chosen from a list of seventeen. The Golden Eagle of Merit was redesigned in 1919 to the **Golden Eaglet**. Between 1918 and 1939, only 10,658 Golden Eaglets were awarded. According to the Girl Scout Collector’s Guide, Juliette Low determined that “the five requirements for winning the Golden Eaglet are character, health, handicraft, happiness and service, and that others will expect to find in our Golden Eaglets a perfect specimen of girlhood: mentally, morally and physically.”

In 1920 and 1928, the requirements to earn the Golden Eaglet were revised and reduced. Though there were fewer requirements needed to obtain the rank, the newly demanding standards emphasized practical application and a good turn. To earn the updated Golden Eaglet, a Girl Scout had to earn the rank of **Tenderfoot, Second Class Scout**, and **First Class Scout**. The rank of Tenderfoot was discontinued in 1963, but the pin remained and became known as the **Girl Scout Membership Pin** until a design change in 1980.

The **Curved Bar** was introduced in 1940 for Intermediate Girl Scouts who had completed the rank of First Class Scout. The Curved Bar helped an Intermediate Girl Scout prepare to be a Senior Girl Scout. To earn the Curved Bar, a Girl Scout had to achieve the rank of First Class Scout and complete four proficiency badges in topics such as agriculture,
diplomacy, and business. Starting out as a gold arc patch due to shortages of metal in World War II, the Curved Bar began being issued as a pin in 1947.

With the introduction of the four age-level program in 1963, the Curved Bar was discontinued as the requirements for the First Class Scout were considered challenging enough so as to render the additional award unnecessary.

The Girl Scout Gold Award was introduced in 1980 and became the highest award in Girl Scouts, replacing the First Class Scout. This new recognition helped girls focus on four areas: skill development, leadership, service and career exploration.

Since 1916, over one million girls have earned the highest award in Girl Scouts. On January 15, 2019 Sylvia Acevedo, chief executive officer of Girl Scouts of the USA, proclaimed that all who have earned the highest award in Girl Scouts can be recognized as Gold Award Girl Scouts, united by their similarities and their ideals, with all rights and privileges therein.

Girl Scouts of the United States (GSUSA) selects ten girls to be National Gold Award Girl Scouts. National Gold Award Girl Scouts creates Gold Award projects that demonstrates extraordinary leadership, has a measurable and sustainable impact, and addresses a local challenge related to a national and/or global issue. GSSJC can nominate 3 girls each year from our council to advance to GSUSA judging for this award.
Gold Award Basics

Gold Award Girl Scouts are the dreamers and the doers who take “make the world a better place” to the next level. The Girl Scout Gold Award is the mark of the truly remarkable—proof that not only can she make a difference, but that she already has.

Seniors and Ambassadors who earn the Gold Award tackle issues that are dear to them and drive lasting change in their communities and beyond. Think of the Gold Award as a key that can open doors to scholarships, preferred admission tracks for college, and amazing career opportunities.

The Benefits of Earning the Gold Award

★ Girls distinguish themselves in the college admissions process. Only five percent of Girl Scouts earn their Gold Award - image how much your application will stand out in the general applicant pool!

★ Earn college scholarships with the distinction. Scholarships are available on a National and local level. Our council’s Emerald Circle also awards scholarships to Gold Award Girl Scouts.

★ Jumpstart your military career by earning the Gold Award. Gold Award Girl Scouts are entitled to enlist at a higher pay grade when they join the military.

★ Be seen as a role model and distinguished leader.

★ Master time management skills. Girls learn to balance their academic studies and social life before living independently and present themselves as a stronger applicant in the job market.

★ Make the world a better place.

★ Use your vision for change.
★ Tackle an issue, locally or globally.
★ Establish a lifetime network.
★ Create your community legacy with a sustainable solution to a problem.
★ Opportunity for national recognition with college scholarships, public speaking training and engagements or potential internships.

**Gold Award Pre-Requisites**

| ✔ | You're in **ninth**, **tenth**, **eleventh**, or **twelfth** grade |
| ✔ | You're a **registered Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador** |
| ✔ | You have completed **two Senior or Ambassador Journeys OR** earned the Girl Scout **Silver Award and completed a Journey**  

*Note:* Completing Journeys helps you build skills as you learn to show leadership through the Discover, Connect, and Take Action keys. Specifically, the Take Action project is important because it gives you a predetermined topic and is “practice” for when you do a Take Action project on your own with a project you choose (your Gold Award Project). However, the Journey’s Take Action Project cannot be combined with the Gold Award Project.

| ✔ | You have completed **GSSJC’s Gold Award Orientation**  
The Gold Award Orientation is available online. |

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**JOURNEYS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th>Ambassador</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It’s Your Story</td>
<td>Mission: Sisterhood</td>
<td>Bliss: Live It!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s Your World</td>
<td>GIRLtopia</td>
<td>One Voice, One World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s Your Planet</td>
<td>Sow What?</td>
<td>Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Think Like an Engineer</td>
<td>Think Like an Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>Think Like a Programmer</td>
<td>Think Like a Programmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Science</td>
<td>Think Like a Citizen Scientist</td>
<td>Think Like a Citizen Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td>Outdoor Journey</td>
<td>Outdoor Journey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Girl Scout Highest Awards are not cumulative. This means you do not need to earn one Highest Award to pursue another. Additionally, girls do not need to participate in product sales to earn their Gold Award, unless the girls need to do a money-earning activity or solicit for donations. If either of those are needed to fund the project, then participation in both of the most recent product sales is required.

**Gold Award Steps**

1. **Identify an issue.**
   Use your values and skills to choose a community issue that you care about.

2. **Investigate it thoroughly.**
   Use your sleuthing skills to learn everything you can about the issue you’ve identified.

3. **Get help and build your team.**
   Form a team to support your efforts and help you take action.

4. **Create a plan.**
   Identify the root cause of an issue, and then create a plan to tackle it.

5. **Present your plan and gather feedback.**
   Submit your Project Proposal via GoGold Online for approval.

6. **Take action.**
   Lead your team and carry out your plan.

7. **Educate and inspire**
   Tell your story and share your results.

**Time Commitment**

To earn the Gold Award, you should plan to complete a minimum of **80 hours** of planning, leadership, implementation, and reflection. While the hours suggested are a guide, in some cases girls successfully complete their projects in less than 80 hours, but in many cases, girls spend more than 80 hours.

You can start by planning the time in chunks, dividing it up by the steps. As a Girl Scout, you are committed to doing your very best with each step, but how much time per step is different for every Girl Scout, so the hours aren’t a rule. Each step you take toward making a difference in the world around you gives you a great chance to learn and grow, and that will make your award project an amazing one! See below for examples of items that count and don’t count toward your hour requirements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours that Count</th>
<th>Hours that DO NOT Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and research (about 10 hours can be counted before your project has been approved)</td>
<td>Pre-requisites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Travel time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Time spent preparing your Project Proposal and your Final Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Time spent on money earning activities (fundraising) that exceeds 15% of your total hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Time spent volunteering at an existing event or organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Team Size**

The Gold Award is an **individual** award. However, you will invite others to join your team to support your efforts and help you take action.

**Deadlines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Deadline for approval of Final Reports to be invited to that year’s GSSJC’s Gold Award Ceremony.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of Project Proposals for graduated high school seniors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of Final Reports for graduated high school seniors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

The Gold Award 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 Gold Award 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 report 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.

**GoGold Online**

GSSJC’s Gold Award process uses GSUSA’s online platform, GoGold Online. To get started, register for your **GoGold Online** account. GoGold will guide you along each of the seven
project steps and auto-save your progress. GoGold can also be accessed on smartphones and tablets. Please remember to contact your Gold Award Mentor and work with her on your Project Proposal before you submit your application to the council.

Please keep in mind that in addition to the project proposal and final report, GSSJC requires submission of supplemental forms, which can be found within Step 4 of GoGold. Additionally, your Gold Award Mentor must review each of these documents before you submit them to the Review Board via GoGold Online. Once the project proposal is reviewed by the Review Board you will be notified by the Gold Award Manager by email either informing you that your project has been approved or asking for necessary revisions. After completion of your project, a Final Report along with additional material uploads (including a required presentation) will be required before final approval of a Gold Award.

**GoGold Guide** – For step-by-step instructions on how to use GoGold Online, please review the GoGold Guide.
How to Ensure your Project is a Take Action Project

What Makes A Gold Award Project Rise Above?
You must ensure that your Gold Award project fulfills expectations of GSSJC and GSUSA by confirming it is a true take action project in lieu of a service project. Consider the difference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Take Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Addresses an immediate need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makes the community better for some people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Addresses the outcome/result of the problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not sustainable (long lasting or continuous)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does work <strong>for</strong> a community and/or organization</td>
<td>• Addresses a need immediate or otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Makes an overall improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Addresses the root cause of the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is sustainable after the girl has finished her project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does work <strong>with</strong> a community and/or organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consider what words are being used when the project is being discussed/described:

**Service projects** might use these words: help, support, collect, give, feed, care/give, follow, contribute, maintain, aid, for.

**Take Action projects** might use these words: envision, design, develop, organize, create, manage, evaluate, team-build, invent, produce, appoint or with.

**Take Action projects always attempt to identify the root cause of a problem instead of simply addressing the symptoms.**

**Root Cause:** The origin of the problem.
Examples of identifying the root cause of a problem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem:</th>
<th>Root cause:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kids can’t walk to school safely because there aren’t any sidewalks.</td>
<td>Lack of planning when the roads were built.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in homeless shelters often struggle in school.</td>
<td>Lack of stability and family resources, both financial and emotional.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Take Action Projects Must Be Measurable and Sustainable**

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

**Consider the following example of Gold Award Girl Scout, Alyssa:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The target audience(s) for my Gold Award is/are:</th>
<th>FBI, high school students and adults.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The skills, knowledge and/or attitudes my target audience will gain are:</td>
<td>Ability to identify human trafficking warning signs and the ability to advocate on behalf of potential victims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will know my target audience has gained the desired skills or knowledge because:</td>
<td>They can identify human trafficking warning signs and know how to help.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measuring My Gold Award Project's Success**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What my audience will learn/gain</th>
<th>How I will measure impact</th>
<th>When I will measure impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of warning signs</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>After watching documentary or presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to advocate on behalf of victims</td>
<td>Successful role play</td>
<td>During presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your goals should be detailed, relevant to your project, and include information that can be measured. They should also include a target date of completion. My Gold Award project’s goals are:

After meeting with her local district attorney during a school field trip and learning about human trafficking, Alyssa decided to explore and address this global issue through her Gold Award. She identified that this issue is not well known enough to be correctly identified, so she produced a documentary on domestic human sex trafficking that the FBI now uses for training purposes across the nation. Alyssa worked with the FBI and local law enforcement to identify their needs for training, as well as victim advocates from around the world to discover and share best practices. Once the documentary was completed, she traveled throughout her region to build awareness of human sex trafficking.

**Sustainable:** Your project is sustainable when it carries on or continues to have impact, even after you’ve done your part. In a nutshell, you create lasting change. You must make arrangements (such as collaborating with community leaders or partnered organization) to ensure that the project creates lasting change and is not a one-time event. This will look different for different projects.

**How to Ensure Your Gold Award is Sustainable:**

**Sustainability is having a plan, i.e.**
- An organization agreeing to continue your Gold Award
- Creating materials (ie: a binder, pamphlet, video, website, or social media campaign) to be used as a resource and/or to continue to engage others with your issue

**Sustainability is not YOU continuing your project or hoping someone else will. It’s also not:**
- A collection drive or make/donate project
- A fundraiser
- A standalone structure (ie: bench, mural, sign or garden)

**Example—Alyssa’s Gold Award:**
- Documentary that the FBI agreed to use for ongoing training purposes
- The awareness and tools her audiences gained by her presentations.
Step 1: Identify an Issue

A Gold Award Take Action Project requires that you draw on your experience, education, and personal values. To help you find an issue that YOU care about, we recommend that, as soon as your pre-requisites are complete, you start a profile on GoGold Online (www.girlscouts.org/gogoldonline). GoGold Online categorizes this section and asks you to answer the following questions to help you find an issue that you are passionate about

- **WHY** are you inspired... I care about... (options given)
- **WHO** do you want to help? (options given)
- **WHERE** do you want to make an impact? (options given)
- **WHAT** are your strengths and talents? (options given)
- **HOW** do you want to make a difference? (options given)
- Do any of these interest you? Select all that apply... (options given)
- GoGold will then summarize your results

**Girl Scout Property Projects**

You may decide to benefit a Girl Scout property (i.e. Girl Scout camp) if the Girl Scout property is the most logical beneficiary of the project. However, please keep in mind that all Highest Awards projects should always be “what, how, then who” projects. Meaning that a girl should first decide what she would like to do to make the world a better place, and then decide how she’ll tackle it and for whom.

If you find that the project can be carried out on a GSSJC property, you will also need submit the **Request to Conduct a Project on GSSJC Property** (F-208) for property approval, which you will include as a supplemental form with your Project Proposal. (**NOTE**: approval from the property does is NOT approval for your project. The Gold Award Review Board must also review and approve that your project meets Gold Award guidelines and standards).
**Girl Scout Property Example:**
A Girl Scout Senior is concerned about childhood obesity and wants to start a fun nutrition and exercise program for kids. After doing research, she learns about a kids fitness trail that features active challenges along the way and recruits her school basketball team to help her plan a trail and build the elements. As a CIT at her summer camp, she realizes that there campers who could benefit from her program, and she works with her camp ranger to build the trail and the camp chef to develop a cookbook for kids on healthy snacks and meals.

**Looking for more inspiration?**
- Browse GSSJC’s Highest Awards Yearbook to see what other girls from our council chose to pursue for their Gold Award.
- Visit GSUSA’s webpage to view the National Gold Award Girl Scout projects.
- Review the Theme Guide to help you narrow down your topic.
Step 2: Investigate it Thoroughly

In step 1, you identified issues you care about. Now, it’s time to dig deeper to find their root causes. This allows you to focus on a project topic that is achievable within the parameters of the Gold Award. Use the mind mapping tool on GoGold Online to explore root causes of the issue you’ve identified.

Consider the following example to narrow down your root cause:

Research
Once you’ve figured out some root causes. Then, take your research further to make sure:

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

Dig deeper. Jump online to research local organizations that address your issue. Or drive around in your community to scout out people and places related to your issue. You’ll be surprised what you’ll learn and see when you’re actually out in your community.

Need help identifying organizations or people who have knowledge of your issue or finding an expert to interview?
Start by making a community map. A community map highlights the people, things, services, organizations, and businesses in a given area with a focus on those who can help support your project.

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

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

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

- Who has knowledge and background of root causes on issues you’re interested in addressing?
- Who can help me access resources that will help with my project?
- Who may be good at thinking through solutions to challenges that arise as I plan and implement my project?
- Could one of these experts serve as a project advisor for my Gold Award project?
- Who may be able to offer financial or in-kind support for my project?
- Who may be able to help promote the issue and my project?

Contact those who can help. Decide who you would like to interview, contact them, and set up a date and time. Prepare, research, and learn all you can to come up with the right questions to ask. You can start with sample questions like these, but be sure to add your own:

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

Conduct the interview. Find a quiet place where you can give your full attention and agree to turn off your cell phones. Be sure to briefly describe your project. Keep questions simple and related to the issue at hand. When you’re done, thank your interviewees for their time and ask if you can share more about your project as it develops.
Step 3: Get Help & Build Your Team

The Gold Award is an individual project, but it is also a leadership project. It must demonstrate interaction with others in a leadership capacity. Additionally, working in a group will help you make a bigger impact and cover more ground than you would on your own.

Recruiting your Team
Think about people who can help you put your project into action and who will stick it out until the project is complete. Anyone can be on your team but should expand to all areas of your life (not just family or Girl Scouts). Consider reaching out to classmates, teachers, friends, and experts from organizations and businesses. The Review Board will also be looking to ensure that you have enough volunteers to do the work required to complete your project.

Adult Roles in the Gold Award Process
Girl Scouts is a “by girls, for girls” experience. All activities must be girl-led. However, to be successful, each Gold Award Candidate needs to interact with and receive support from several adults. Each adult has a different role.

Gold Award Mentor
A Gold Award Mentor is a GSSJC volunteer who has been vetted, appointed, and trained to guide and support girls through the Gold Award process. Having a Gold Award Mentor is required. Your Gold Award Mentor works with you for the duration of your project. They serve as a resource and review materials you have prepared before they are submitted to the Review Board. Their role is helping ensure that you are in compliance with the Gold Award guidelines and deadlines. Once you complete the Gold Award Orientation, you will be contacted by a mentor. You may choose to work with this mentor, or select one from the Gold Award Mentor Look Book where mentors are identified by their experience, areas, of interest, location, communication preference, etc. Please keep in mind that all Gold
Award Mentors are volunteers. Be respectful of their time and be patient. Please allow at least 72 hours for them to respond to you.

**Gold Award Review Board**
The Gold Award 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 that were tabled and give suggestions for ways girls can improve her project to meet Gold Award standards.

**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 orientations, scholarships, events, and the annual GSSJC Gold Award Ceremony.

**Project Advisor**
The Project Advisor is someone who gives expert or professional advice specifically related to the girl’s chosen project. The advisor may be associated with the organization that the girl is working with or may have professional knowledge about the topic or skill of the project. The Project Advisor is not to aid in the design or development of the project. Your advisor is there to provide encouragement, expertise, and to be a sounding board for you. It is your responsibility to keep your Project Advisor aware of any information or conversation you might have with members of the Gold Award Committee. Neither Troop Leaders (current or former) nor family/relatives are permitted to be their Girl Scout’s Project Advisor.

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**Additional resources for Project Advisors:**
This may be the first time that your Project Advisor is introduced to the Gold Award. It’s your job to help educate them on the what the standards/guidelines of a Gold Award project are. Consider sharing the “The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Project Advisors” handout with your Project Advisor as a starting point. You may also consider using the email template when first contacting your Project Advisor as a jumping-off point but be sure to add your own voice and thoughts!
**Troop Leader**

Troop Leaders are another valuable resource to girls pursuing the Gold Award. In many cases, the Troop Leader is the first person that the girl notifies that she’s ready to go Gold! There are a lot of ways that the Troop Leader can support girls as they become Gold Award Girl Scouts including:

- Helping girls understand the value of going Gold
- Provide encouragement, but not pressure
- Help girls understand the prerequisites
- Get to know the safety and fundraising guidelines
- Introduce parents/caregivers to the Gold Award
- Dedicate a few minutes of meeting time to updates on girls’ Gold Award projects
- Help girls make community connections
- Brainstorm ways your troop members can support one another

**Troop Leaders** – For more information on how you can support and guide girls in your troop to the Gold Award, please view “The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Leaders” handout.

**Parents/Guardians**

The Gold Award is the highest award in Girl Scouting. It represents a girl’s commitment to herself and to her community and allows her to focus on leadership, career exploration, personal development, and her passions. It takes many hours of preparation, planning, and hard work to accomplish the goals that she has set.

Parents and guardians play a significant role in supporting a girl’s path toward the Gold Award. However, it should be the girl’s decision whether to pursue her Gold Award, as it MUST be the girl’s project.

Parents and guardians should not be taskmasters. However, they can assist a girl by:

- Get to know more about the Gold Award, including taking the online Gold Award Orientation or by reviewing GSSJC’s materials on our Gold Award website.
- Discussing project ideas with her, to help her identify her passions
- Encourage – but don’t pressure.
- Help her develop a network of contacts that can provide insight, skills, and resources.
- Acknowledge that she is capable and that she can assume leadership and responsibility in her own way.
• Prompt her to take the lead in working with her council, project advisor, and team.
• Let her grow by working through challenges she encounters along the way.
• Recognize that her project is as unique as she is, so don’t compare her – or her project – to other girls and their Gold Awards.
• Be a cheerleader from the sidelines and help when asked.
• Celebrate big-time as she’s honored as a Gold Award Girl Scout.

**Parents/Guardians** – For more information on how you can support your Girl Scout, please view “The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Adults” handout.
GoGold Online is a very helpful resource when you arrive at Step 4. It has tools and tips for setting goals, planning for obstacles, ensuring sustainability, and setting budgets. In this step, you will need to answer questions that explain EXACTLY what you plan to do for your project. Be as detailed as you can. GoGold will ask you about the following on step 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Gold Award title &amp; estimated timeline</strong></th>
<th>This is where you name your project and develop your estimated timeline.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td>You will be asked to identify the theme(s) your Gold Award will address.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue</strong></td>
<td>You will be asked to describe your issue and share the reasons you selected your project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Root cause</strong></td>
<td>Remember, the root cause is the origin of the issue. You will be asked to identify the root cause of your issue and how you plan to address it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target audience</strong></td>
<td>You will be asked to detail the impact your Gold Award will have and on what target audiences. You will also be asked to identify what skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes your target audience will gain and how you will know they gained it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global</strong></td>
<td>Your project has a national and/or global link when you can explain how it connects to an issue that is relevant worldwide. Remember: local to global to local. Global issues don’t just happen “somewhere else.” You can address a global issue that is evident in your local and/or national community, like poverty, hunger, illiteracy, homelessness, or climate injustice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measurable</strong></td>
<td>Remember, the success of the project can be determined based on the number of people the project helped, the number of people who were involved, any reduction in the community’s need and other concrete numbers. Measurable projects allow a girl to demonstrate her impact through data and other information. She can use numbers to say, “Here’s how I know I made a change.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustain</strong></td>
<td>Keep in mind that your project is sustainable when it carries on or continues to have impact, even after you’ve done your part. In a nutshell, you create lasting change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan</strong></td>
<td>This will help you determine how much time should be allotted to each part of your project, as well as decide your estimated date of project completion. List step-by-step what it will take to reach your goal. Be as specific as possible so that you can put together a timeline and draw on your team to help you reach your goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td>You will be asked to estimate your project expenses and explain how you plan to meet these costs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Funding your Gold Award Project**

**There 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 make 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 our 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). Because 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** .................................................. F-32A
    (To be submitted after you’ve received approval on your Project Proposal)
  - **MEA Project Evaluation** .................................................................................. F-32B
    (To be submitted after the MEA)
  - **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 fundraise for another organization.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested money-earning activities:</th>
<th>NOT approved money-earning activities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Pet sitting, dog washing or walking service</td>
<td>• Games of chance, raffles, casino nights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Car wash</td>
<td>• Receiving a percentage of sales from a business during a specific time frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yard sale</td>
<td>• Any activities conducted on the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Raking leaves, weeding gardens</td>
<td>• Activities with income which exceeds the project’s needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Babysitting at local meetings</td>
<td>• Raising money for another organization, including walk-a-thons, tele-a-thons, coupons or coupon bookletes, home demonstration products, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Delivery service</td>
<td>• Funds being retained by individuals as their property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Birthday party service</td>
<td>• Any money-earning activities conducted by a girl with outstanding debt to Council or aided by other girls/ adults with outstanding debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ironing or laundry service</td>
<td>• Bake sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collection of recyclable materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Put on a play, fashion show, talent show, karaoke night, family dance, game night or costume party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 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 may make the specific request for donations, girls can be present to answer questions, give a presentation, provide justification, etc. for why they need the donation, and by doing so they will build valuable knowledge of finances and leadership!
Step 5: Present Your Plan and Gather Feedback

Project Proposal
At this step, you will present your Project Proposal to the GSSJC Gold Award 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GSSJC PROJECT PROPOSAL SUPPLEMENTAL FORMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GSSJC Checklist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This form will help confirm that you have all the necessary paperwork for your proposal in order. This will also include yours and your Gold Award Mentor’s digital signatures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter(s) of permission – if applicable</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a letter giving you permission to complete your Gold Award project at their facility or organization. If you are working at more than one location, you will need a permission letter from each location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter(s) of Agreement for Donation – if applicable</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If applicable, you will need to submit a letter of agreement from any organization stating that they accept the donation(s) from your project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proof of Gold Award Orientation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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 Gold Award Mentor and begin your project before it expires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silver Award Letter – if applicable</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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 Gold Award Mentor to request another copy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before you submit, your Gold Award 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 Gold Award 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?**

Please keep in mind the following timeframe for considering when to submit your materials to your Gold Award Mentor for review before submitting to council:

| 1st of the month | If you submit your Project Proposal by the 1st of the month and your Gold Award 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 Gold Award 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 Tuesday 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

Congratulations! Your project was approved and you are ready to take action to implement your project. There are four major components to keep in mind as you work on your project: **communication, tracking hours, your budget, and documenting your experiences.**

**Communication**
As with your application process, all communication with the Gold Award Committee and/or the Gold Award Manager is your responsibility and must be completed by YOU (the girl). Your parents, Troop Leader, or Project Advisor SHOULD NOT act on your behalf. YOU must communicate with them. The Gold Award Committee does NOT keep your Troop Leader or Project Advisor informed or updated on changes or communications with you.

You must keep in contact with your Project Advisor. The advisor is a key resource for you as you implement and complete your Gold Award project. In addition, you should also communicate with your Gold Award Mentor regarding your project on a regular basis.

**Changes to your Approved Project**
Any changes to your approved project must be approved PRIOR to progressing with any revisions. As soon as you are aware of a necessary minor change, stop, and submit the addendum form to your Gold Award Mentor. If you are completely changing your project, you will need to submit a new Project Proposal for approval.

**Hours**
The Gold Award is a minimum 80-hour project. It is incredibly important that you keep track of your hours on your project – you do not want to reach the end and have to remember everything you did.

**Methods for Keeping Track of Hours.** You are **required** to complete a Time Log via GoGold Online and can do so on an ongoing basis. However, if you’d prefer you may also
track in another way and transfer to GoGold later. Here are a few ideas that have worked for other girls, but the most important thing is to choose a method that is most convenient and easy for you.

- Notebook (paper and pen)
- Time tracking apps, such as Hours (iOS) or Timesheet (Android)
- Excel spreadsheet
- Google Sheets

**Budget**

GoGold Online will require that you submit your income and expenses via logs. On the Income Log, it will ask how you funded your project including: date, source of funding, and the amount. On the Expense Log, it will ask you track the expenses that supported your Gold Award project by asking: the date, company, and amount. Be as detailed as possible.

**Experiences**

GoGold Online will ask you to share photos, videos, and/or text posts showing your project in action! These posts will be included on your Final Report which will be reviewed by the Review Board. This is a valuable way for you to document and showcase your hard work.

**Event Planning** – If holding an event is part of your Gold Award project, then you are required to take the Event Planning for Girls Home Study. This guide is free and full of helpful information and suggestions on how to carry out a successful event. To obtain this, please ask your Gold Award Mentor.

If you create any flyers, pamphlets, brochures, etc. related to your Gold Award project it is required to have the Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council and United Way logos which you can obtain from your Gold Award Mentor. It is also important for you to identify that it’s for your Gold Award project. You must also get these materials approved by the Gold Award Manager before distributing them. If you are seeking approval, please email goldaward@sjgs.org.
Step 7: Educate and Inspire

Now it’s time to read over your notes and spend some time reflecting on your experiences. Then tell your story and share your results!
Required Presentation
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 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.

You may do your presentation in one of the two forms:
1) Front of the room presentation
2) Exhibit Presentation

In either case, you must follow these requirements:
- The event must have at least 12 people in attendance.
- The audience must include Girl Scouts (girls).
- The event can be done in a Girl Scout setting or other setting so long as it still meets criteria above.
- Details of presentation:
  - Front of the room presentation: must present for at least 3 – 5 minutes
  - Exhibit presentation (i.e. trifold): must include people visiting your exhibit and you standing by your display available to speak about it and answer questions.
  - You must have a pre-approved Girl Scout volunteer or Girl Scout staff to sign off on the completion of your project.

The Gold Award Presentation Form is available on GoGold Online and requires that you get pre-approval from your Gold Award Mentor before you present. This form will be submitted as a supplemental form.

Final Report
Once you’ve completed your presentation, it’s time to start organizing your paperwork to present you’re your Final Report to the GSSJC Gold Award 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 FINAL REPORT SUPPLEMENTAL FORMS

- **GSSJC Checklist**
  This form will help confirm that you have all the necessary paperwork for your final report in order. This will also include yours and your Gold Award Mentor’s digital signatures.

- **Gold Award Presentation**
  This form includes digital signatures from you, your Gold Award 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 Gold Award 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 Gold Award 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. Please 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 keep in mind the following timeframe for considering when to submit your materials to your Gold Award Mentor for review before submitting to council:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st of the month</td>
<td>If you submit your Final Report by the 1st of the month and your Gold Award 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.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th of the month</td>
<td>If you submit your Final Report by the 15th and your Gold Award Mentor feels that it’s ready for the Review Board (doesn’t require any changes), then your Final Report will be reviewed by</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After the Review Board meeting you will receive two emails. If approved, you will receive one 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 be given detailed feedback on the necessary revisions before resubmission.

Once approved... CONGRATULATIONS! Celebrate your accomplishment! You took on the challenge and made a difference in your world. Don’t forget to thank your team and take advantage of the numerous opportunities that becoming a Gold Award Girl Scout offers.

**After Earning Your Gold Award**

⭐️ **Gold Award ceremonies**

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@sigs.org. GSSJC honors Gold Award Girl Scouts annually at our Gold Award Ceremony. For example, girls that earned their Gold Award between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020 will be invited to that year’s ceremony. If a girl earns after that time, she will be invited to the following year’s ceremony.

⭐️ **Publicity**

We wish to share your success with the Girl Scout family and the community. In order to do so, you must indicate this on the Publicity Form and include two recent photographs. We will highlight your accomplishments in an upcoming issue of *The Golden Link* and forward information to the council Communications Department to include in local publications. NOTE: The announcement of your Gold Award achievement will not appear in *The Golden Link* if you do not submit the Publicity Form and photos.
★ Certificates & pins
You will receive a certificate from GSUSA and GSSJC within 8-12 weeks of earning your Gold Award. Your Gold Award pin is a gift from the council to you. We must have all completed paperwork to give you your pin. You or your parent (or any other person that you designate) may pick it up for you. Please set up an appointment to pick up your Gold Award pin by contacting the Gold Award Manager at 713-292-0209 or email goldaward@sjgs.org.

★ Congratulatory letters
You will also receive a congratulatory letter from the President and First Lady which will be mailed to you with your certificates within 8 – 12 weeks of earning your Gold Award.

★ Digital credentials
Girl Scouts who earned their First Class, Curved Bar, Golden Eaglet, or Golden Eagle of Merit, are a part of the Gold Award Girl Scout family. To make it official, you may obtain a digital credential for you to display on LinkedIn (and other digital platforms) to show that you earned the highest award in Girl Scouting. Now you can display your award with pride and show the world—and potential employers—that you can triumph over any challenge that comes your way!

★ Scholarships
You will receive a handout on scholarship opportunities, many of which are only available to Gold Award Girl Scouts. You are also encouraged to seek additional scholarships through GSUSA or colleges you are interested in attending (many colleges offer scholarships for Gold Award Girl Scouts).

★ National Gold Award Girl Scouts
Every year, ten exceptionally inspiring Girl Scout Gold Award recipients are chosen as National Gold Award Girl Scouts. This honor is given to Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors whose Gold Award projects demonstrated extraordinary leadership, had a measurable and sustainable impact, and addressed a local challenge related to a national and/or global issue. These young women are taking matters into their own hands and being the change the world needs!

The National Gold Award Girl Scout application process is done through GoGold Online! GSSJC will notify eligible Gold Award Girl Scouts when the application is open.