



Developing Your Gold Award

What is it?

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award that a Senior/Ambassador Girl Scout may earn. Someone once described the Girl Scout Gold Award as being "what you really want to be remembered for" in Girl Scouting. For many, the leadership skills, organizational skills, and sense of community and commitment that come from "going for the gold" cement the foundation for a lifetime of active citizenship.

In this booklet you will find helpful suggestions on the following topics:

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Note: This booklet contains a lot of information concerning the Gold Award. It is in your best interest to read this booklet thoroughly and ask questions-lots of questions-especially, when you are not sure what to do!

***Direct your questions to:
Girl Scouts Eastern Washington & Northern Idaho Gold Award Coordinator
509-747-8091 / 1-800-827-9478 / www.gsewni.org***

1 CHOOSING YOUR PROJECT

A successful Gold Award project has five characteristics: Vision, Passion, Longevity, Connection and Community Impact.

- **Vision:** Vision is about looking within the community and seeing a need - a need that is not being met.
- **Passion:** Passion is the difference between doing a project just to get it done and doing a project that comes from the heart.
- **Longevity:** Girl Scout Gold Award projects should have ongoing effects or be able to be continued or repeated after their completion.
- **Connection:** Connecting to those being served and to those who volunteer is another key ingredient.
- **Community Impact:** All Girl Scout Gold Award projects need to go beyond Girl Scouts to affect a larger community.

The Girl Scout Gold Award provides the opportunity for each Senior/Ambassador Girl Scout to put her leadership skills, career interests, and personal values together to serve her community. The project should be “uniquely you” reflecting personal goals, passions and interests. Choose a project that is needed and that is also a challenge to you.

Note: This is a *Leadership/Service Project*, not solely a *Service Project*.

Remember the difference between *Leadership* and *Service*:

- **Leadership:** involves working with and leading other people in an activity.
- **Service:** can be given alone.

The *Leadership* component takes time to evolve. Being a leader is a complex task that requires creativity, hard work and commitment. Leadership skills are learned through practice and experience and take time and patience to develop.

As a Senior/Ambassador Girl Scout carrying out your Gold Award project, you must demonstrate leadership skills while putting your community service project into action. Efficient organization, flexibility, good time management, and strong leadership skills will set the stage for success. Time and thought should go into choosing your project; you are more apt to follow through on something that is important to you. **Do not choose a project that has to be started immediately or will not allow for the six-week minimum approval process.** Your Gold Award is a unique learning experience that requires time for you to make thoughtful and well researched decisions. A number of

completed Gold Award projects are listed on line at the GSUSA website www.girlscouts.org as well as other council sites. These may give you some ideas for your own project.

Ask yourself the following statements to help you brainstorm for a project idea:

I am really interested in...

It would be great if...

My community could really use...

You are welcome to call the council office and discuss your project ideas and plans before you submit them in writing. Girls who do not fully explain their project plans and/or need further expansion to make their project worthy of a Girl Scout Gold Award may be asked to submit a more detailed outline before the Gold Award Committee can approve the start of their project.

Although group Gold Award Projects are not encouraged, a group project is possible if it is large enough in scope to allow for a portion of the project to be “owned” by each girl earning her Gold Award. Each girl must complete her own Project Proposal answering the questions based on her responsibilities for the project. Each girl must complete and log a minimum of 80 hours on her portion of the project.

2 PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

Once you have decided on a project/project idea, the work begins. Expand your idea by asking yourself:

What need does my project address?

Who will benefit from my project?

How can I help more people?

How can I make my project have a lasting effect rather than be just a one-time event?

How is leadership included in my project?

How can I learn more about the project topic?

Who else in the community can I involve?

Who should be my project consultant?

When is the best time for my project to happen?

Will my project be an event?

After answering the above questions you are ready to start planning your project.

Recap: You need to write out exactly what you plan to do and how you plan to do it. Think DETAIL.

List all the steps you can think of from beginning to end and the order you think they should happen. Be sure to include the following:

What materials or supplies do you think you may need?

Who will help you?

Where and when will the project happen?

How would you estimate spending your minimum of 65 hours?

If there will be a cost involved in implementing your project, how will you meet that cost?

If you are planning an event, consider the following:

How long will it be? Half Day? All Day? (Events must be a minimum of 4 hours in length.)

Who will attend?

What activities will it include?

Your Senior/Ambassador Girl Guide to Girl Scouting is a good reference. Also, don't forget to consult Safety Activity Checkpoints for additional information particularly concerning safety, money/budget, girl/adult ratios and publications such as flyers, brochures and posters. Share this information with your project consultant and advisor and include it in your project outline.

When you are satisfied with your project plan, you are ready to fill out your Project Proposal form. Be sure to include a Gold Award Event outline form with your project proposal if it includes an event.

3 INDIVIDUAL ROLES IN YOUR GOLD AWARD PROJECT

A) ROLE OF THE GIRL:

Read thoroughly and follow all guidelines and procedures in:

- The Girl Scout Guide to Girl Scouting for Seniors & Ambassadors
- Gold Award Girl Guidelines
- Developing Your Girl Scout Gold Award

****Please Note: Keep a copy of all paperwork for your records before turning in originals to the council office.***

Evaluate all of your paperwork with your project consultant and troop advisor for accuracy, neatness and completion before submitting it to the Council Gold Award Committee. Be sure to complete the prerequisites consisting of two journeys or one journey and the Girl Scout Silver Award.

Submit the Girl Scout **Gold Award Project Proposal** and any forms pertinent to your project to the Gold Award Committee.

If you plan to join an effort already in progress, you should create ways to make it your own.

If you plan to do work with another girl/group, everyone must have a well-defined role that stands on its own. The project must be broad enough in scope that each member of the team can bring her own leadership and vision to the effort. The scope of a group project needs to be large enough to require more than 160 hours of work and responsibilities. The work for each girl must equal a minimum of Gold Award Committee hours. Each girl must submit her project plan in her own words. The project plans for each member of the project team must be submitted for review at the same time.

Never be afraid to change your mind about your project. Minor changes should be discussed with your troop advisor, project consultant and the Gold Award Coordinator. Major changes must be approved by the council Gold Award Committee.

It is important that **YOU communicate** with the **Gold Award Committee** to avoid any misunderstanding. It is your responsibility to initiate communication via telephone, email, etc.

Don't be afraid to ask questions!

Girl Scouts Eastern Washington & Northern Idaho Gold Award Coordinator
509-747-8091 / 1-800-827-9478 / www.gsewni.org

IF YOU HAVE NOT HEARD FROM THE GOLD AWARD COORDINATOR

Upon completion of your Gold Award Project, fill out the following:

1. Project Completion Report
2. Time Log
3. Budget
4. Biography Form

Submit all forms and any other information to:

Girl Scouts Eastern Washington & Northern Idaho
Gold Award Committee
1404 North Ash Street
Spokane, WA 99201

DEADLINE: GSUSA deadline for submitting completion paperwork for the Gold Award is **September 30** following your graduation from high school.

Following notification that your *Completion Report* forms have been approved by the Gold Award Committee, you may schedule your Gold Award Ceremony. Congratulations!

B) ROLE OF THE TROOP ADVISOR:

Read **The Gold Award Adult Guide for Senior/Ambassador Girl Scout Advisors** and be familiar with the current requirements for the Gold Award.

Help girls and their parents to understand that the prerequisite requirements are designed to be a learning experience in areas that will later help them select and plan a successful Gold Award Project.

Respect each girl's abilities and recognize that everyone learns and matures at a different rate.

Provide experiences that will help girls recognize their respective strengths and weaknesses.

Help girls develop skills in organization, time management, and leadership by encouraging them to keep notebooks and calendars for record keeping, setting short and long term goals, providing opportunities for evaluating their progress and giving times for self-directed activities. Recommend that the girls keep duplicate records.

Advise girls of the significance of this achievement and help them to develop pride in their Gold Award work by encouraging quality. Remember you are an advisor, so the plan should revolve around the girls' interests.

After discussing requirements with them, help girls understand that you will only sign report forms that are neat, accurate, detailed, complete and have been submitted on time.

Assist the girls in locating outside resources and consultants to serve as consultants for their projects, but ensure that the girl initiates the contact.

Help girls to network within the Girl Scout community by encouraging them to attend service unit and council events to discover resources.

Encourage the troop to be supportive of those working on the Gold Award without centering troop life around the Gold Award requirements.

If girls work together on a project, be sure each girl has the opportunity and responsibility for planning, implementation and participation.

If the Gold Award Committee recommends changes to a project, help the girl make the necessary adjustments.

You are a partner in helping each girl to achieve her goal. In the process, each girl will know herself better, contribute to society, develop her leadership skills, hone her values, improve her relationships with others and to do and be her best.

C) ROLE OF THE PROJECT CONSULTANT:

Be willing to put in the time and effort to make this a successful partnership.

Read ***The Girl Scout Gold Award Adult Guide for Senior/Ambassador and Developing Your Gold Award*** and be familiar with the current requirements for the Gold Award.

Respect each girl's abilities and recognize that everyone learns and matures at a different rate.

Advise girls of the significance of this achievement and help them to develop pride in their Gold Award by encouraging quality. Remember you are a consultant, so the plan should revolve around the girls' interests.

Help girls develop skills in organization, time management, and leadership by requiring them to keep notebooks and calendars for record keeping, setting short and long term goals, providing opportunities for evaluating their progress and giving times for self-directed activities. Keep duplicate records.

Help girls understand that you will only sign report forms in which are neat, accurate, detailed and complete and submitted on time.

If girls work together on a project, be sure each girl has the opportunity and responsibility for planning, implementation and participation.

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D) ROLE OF THE COUNCIL:

Provide program support through the resources set as *Developing Your Gold Award* document, Precious Metals workshops and all forms necessary to complete the Gold Award.

The Gold Award Coordinator will meet with the Gold Award Committee once a month to review and evaluate the girls' project plans and Completion Reports and to offer assistance as needed.

Notify the girls when their project plans and/or completion reports have been approved by the Gold Award Committee.

Make contact with the community agency benefiting from the project to ensure the agency understands its role and the role the girl plays in the Gold Award process.

Notify the Girl Scout store when a Gold Award has been earned.

Notify GSUSA when a Gold Award has been earned.

Notify girl's service unit, advisor and project consultant.

Make contacts to secure recognition for Gold Award recipients.

Mail letter of congratulations and Gold Award certificates to recipients.

E) ROLE OF THE GOLD AWARD COMMITTEE:

To review the girl's plan for achieving the Girl Scout Gold Award in accordance with GSUSA guidelines and her goals in relation to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Help every girl find success in her pursuit of the highest recognition in Girl Scouting.

Review and approve the Girl Scout Gold Award Completion Report, Time Log, Budget and Biography form.

Make recommendations about how project ideas can be amended, improved, expanded or changed to provide a sufficient challenge to the girl, to be more beneficial to the community or to meet GSUSA Standards or Council guidelines.

Be available to talk to and help girls with their project by lending support, encouragement, guidance, recommendations, and offering them an opportunity to share their projects' successes.

Nominate exceptional projects for consideration for the GSUSA Young Women of Distinction Award by the December deadline.

#4 HOW TO FILL OUT YOUR PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

The accuracy and neatness of information submitted on your forms is a reflection of the quality of work you intend to do or have completed. Your project will be approved faster, the more detailed, concise, clear and complete your application.

Type or neatly fill out the Project Proposal Form in black or blue ink. Make it neat and legible, filling in everything including all dates and signatures. (In other words, cross all your **t's** and dot all your **i's**!) Incomplete or illegible forms or discrepancies regarding requested information would result in forms being returned for correction. A prompt response, via a phone call or e-mail, to any and all questions regarding your project will also speed up the approval process.

Details are important! (Feel free to attach additional pages as needed.)

- Spell it all out (the committee may not know what certain initials or abbreviations stand for).
- Be specific; include the names and their positions if you are working with a particular organization(s).
- Give Girl Scout troop number(s) or service unit number(s) if working with Girl Scouts.
- If you are planning an event be sure to include a rough draft of your agenda/day outline including times. Use event outline form.
- Even if you do not have all the details, fill out the Event Outline form as completely as possible, ***How do you envision the event?*** This is only a rough draft to which you will make changes. This process will help the committee to see your vision.
- If your project includes making something, how many will you make?
- If there is a cost to your project, how will you fund it?
- Letters granting permission to use community facilities or property or permission to work with an established organization should be submitted with your proposal.
- Be as concrete as possible regarding the evaluation process you will use (i.e., questionnaires, visual changes, letters, items made or built, survey forms)

Things to Remember

If your project consultant is outside of Girl Scouts, have her/him contact the Girl Scout council for information on "The Role of the Gold Award Project Consultant," or give them a copy of the information about this role on page 8 of this booklet.

Remember, if your project will include use of fliers, booklets, or posters, they must be pre-approved by the council and should include reference to Girl Scout Gold Award and Girl Scouts Eastern Washington & Northern Idaho.

Forms are available on line at www.gsewni.org or you can call / e-mail the Gold Award Coordinator to be sure you are using the most current Gold Award forms.

Be sure to make copies of all your paper work and send or bring the originals to the Girl Scout Council Office. Your proposal will be reviewed at the next Gold Award Committee Meeting after receipt.

Think about presenting your proposal in person if possible. That way questions can be asked and answered on the spot. You may call the Gold Award Coordinator for date and time of the next Gold Award Committee Meeting.

#5 THE APPROVAL PROCESS – HOW IT WORKS...

The Girl Scout Gold Award Committee meets once a month to address all project proposals, project revisions and project completion reports received. The approval process can take time so be sure to allow for this by submitting your project proposal as far in advance of your proposed start date as possible

(6 weeks minimum).

It is rare that a project is denied, but often a project idea may need some additional clarification, changes, deletions or expansions before approval is given to start the project.

Possible responses from the Gold Award Committee:

1. **Project is approved as submitted.**
(You will receive an e-mail letter stating that you may begin your project. Go for it!)
2. **Project is approved pending clarification.** You will receive a letter stating what needs to be clarified before your project can be approved to begin. Some questions may need to be answered, or an explanation, definition or clarification of some portion of your project proposal is needed. Often this can be done via e-mail or phone. Upon acceptable clarification, you will receive a letter stating that you may begin your project.
3. **Project needs changes and/or expansion in order to make it “Gold Worthy.”** You will receive a letter with an explanation and/or suggestions as to areas or directions you may want to explore in reshaping your project idea in order to make it an acceptable Gold Award project. (Re-submit Part III “Girl Scout Gold Award Project Plan” of the Project Proposal with your new improved version of your project. It will be reviewed by the committee and responded to again in one of the four possible ways.)
4. **Denied as submitted.** A project may be denied based on the following: does not comply with GSUSA Safety Activity Checkpoints, may be too simple, or it has been previously implemented at the same agency or site, is not an original project or is a project currently in place. Don't give up – brainstorm another idea!

Presenting Project Proposal:

Presenting your project proposal to the Gold Award Committee in person often streamlines the process as questions can be answered or clarified directly, or alterations/expansions can be brainstormed on the spot. However, an in person presentation is not required.

Remember you must have approval before starting your project.

Time Log entries prior to your approval date will not count towards your minimum of 80 hours.

Minor alterations to your original plans nearly always happen, but if your project changes substantially, new approval will be required. Contact the GS office quickly and do not invest your time on a project change until you have approval from the Committee for the change.

Completion Report:

Once you have finished your project your completion report will need to be approved. You are always welcome to make an in-person presentation of your completion report to the Gold Award Committee which would expedite the process as you are able to give a more detailed description of your project. Arrangements can be made through the council office regarding the next available Gold Award Committee meeting. PowerPoint is accessible at the council office if you wish to use it.

Always remember to keep in touch with the Gold Award Coordinator at the Girl Scout office as you proceed with your project. Never hesitate to ask questions. Communication is “key” to your success!

#6 COMPLETION REPORT – SENDING IT ALL IN...

Upon completion of your project, you must submit the following:

- Girl Scout Gold Award Completion Report
- Girl Scout Gold Award Time log
- Girl Scout Gold Award Budget
- Girl Scout Gold Award Biography form
- Other Material substantiating your completed project

Please include anything that will show the work, leadership and time commitment you have put into your project. Your project will receive faster final approval the more documentation you include.

Completion Report: Very important to have ***completely*** filled in with your answers attached. Do not limit yourself to one or two sentence answers. Remember to give detailed responses.

Time Log: Should reflect how you spent your time and must include Leadership of Others. Time spent on planning, preparing, organizing, actual service and evaluating the project are all items to include. Phone calls to community organizations, resource people and peers who are helping you on your project count towards time on your log. Work parties that you may have organized to prepare for your project count toward time on your log. If you have spent time on a portion of your project that was not successful (i.e., phone calls or time spent trying to secure a resource person or supplies), please include that time also – it still counts toward your project. Please remember to include time spent evaluating your finished project (i.e., evaluation surveys for participants). If your project was an event that you organized, your time log should reflect an event that was at least a portion of a day (i.e., all morning, all afternoon or all day).

Girl Biography: Completely fill out the Biography form and include a close-up picture of yourself that will be used for the local newspaper and the council's publications (graduation or school pictures work great for this). Please e-mail an electronic copy to the Gold Award Coordinator.

Other Materials: items you may want to submit with your completion report include but are not limited to:

- Photos of your project in progress
- Journal or scrap book
- Sample evaluation tool (i.e., survey form for participants)
- Sample approved flyers, posters, brochures, etc.
- Letters of thanks from benefiting community organization
- Reference letter from your project advisor stating your accomplishments during your project

Any of the items listed above will be returned to you upon your request.