



girl scouts
nation's capital

The **G** **ld** **Standard**



Wh...?

Where to Begin?

First, complete your Gold Award prerequisites:

*Complete two Journeys at the Girl Scout Senior and/or Ambassador level, **OR**

*Earn the Girl Scout Silver Award as a Cadette, and complete one Senior or Ambassador Journey

Next, read through the [Girl Scout Gold Award Guidelines](#). Go ahead. Set this down. It'll be here when you get back.

Now, flip through this booklet, *The Gold Standard*.

Don't forget, to register for a [Gold Award Workshop](#).

Finally, you're ready to tackle the [Gold Award Toolkit](#). This will walk you through the seven Girl Scout Gold Award Steps.

Why Read This?

samples
guidelines
paperwork
SCOOP
inside tips
don'ts
dos

What's My Timeline?

Each girl will set her own timeline. But here are some helpful dates:

5:00 pm, 1st working day of any month: proposals are due

5:00 pm, March 15: your final paperwork is due in order to be recognized in that year's In Your Honor ceremony and yearbook, and to be eligible for the Gold Award Scholarships

5:00 pm, September 30: when your final paperwork is due the year you graduate (or the Sept. 30 after you turn 18, if that's after you graduate)

Being a Leader



It's About Heart

Being a Gold Award Girl Scout is about more than a project. Your conduct toward everyone you're working with, whether they're part of your team or your audience, is what will determine whether you are a successful Gold Award Girl Scout. So use your head and your heart, follow these tips, and you'll be unstoppable!

write thank you notes

call or email people yourself

be okay with making mistakes

keep a friendly smile

don't be afraid to say "I'm sorry"

be a sister to every Girl Scout



Take Action!

A Gold Award Take Action Project...

...has national and/or global links

...is sustainable

...takes approximately 80 hours

...addresses an issue you care about

And that means *what*?

...has national and/or global links

Your issue may be as local as saving the ash trees in the town park. Now step back and look around. Forests across the country are being devastated by borer beetles, which are spread when people transport firewood. **Linked!**

...is sustainable

How will your project **stay alive** even when you're done? Will the education you've provided live on in people's memories and habits? Will someone else be able to pick up where you've left off?

...takes approximately 80 hours

80 hours of **your own time** starts with Girl Scout Gold Award Step One, Choosing an Issue, before you even submit your proposal. 80 hours is simply a recommended guideline, not a rule. Read more about counting your hours in the [Guidelines for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors](#).

...addresses an issue you care about

You care about. Not your grandma, dad, best friend or leader. **You**. So be brave. Take a stand. Find your passion.

Money and Safety

The Dirt on the Green

Remember that Girl Scout girls **cannot ask for donations**. Girl Scout adults can do so on your behalf and with your input. You can describe your project to others, write a letter or create a PowerPoint presentation, but **an adult has to do the actual “ask”** and sign any documents.

Troop money-earning hours, such as product sales and cookie selling, cannot be counted toward your project. This is because **troop money-earning hours are intended to support the troop’s goals**, whereas the Gold Award is an individual undertaking.

Remember that Girl Scouts **cannot raise money for another organization**.

All money earned and donated should flow through your **troop account**. See **Volunteer Essentials** for more details regarding money, and for information about donations of \$250 and higher.

Safety First

During your Gold Award Take Action Project, keeping yourself, your team and your participants safe is key! Make sure to ask yourself these questions:

- Do I have any volunteers or participants under the age of 18? If so, I definitely need to have **permission slips** for them.
- Have I thought about having any snacks or meals? What **food allergies** do my participants have? This is a great question to ask on permission slips. Once I read my permission slips, what allergens might I need to avoid?
- Are the activities I’ll be doing during my project, or activities like them, listed in the online **Activity Checkpoints**? If so, what do I need to do to ensure the safety of my project participants?
- Do ALL Girl Scout meetings and activities need a **first aider**?
No, but a first aider is required for:
 - Physically demanding activities.
 - Activities involving potential injury such as but not limited to hiking, camping, backpacking, bicycling, caving, climbing, horseback riding, skating, skiing, swimming and boating.



Red Flags

Below, you'll find a list of projects that just don't make the cut as Gold Award Take Action Projects.

Why so many rules, you ask?

Because a Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action Project is about creating the greatest impact possible. And you want to implement the best Take Action Project possible. Avoiding these simple traps will help you do just that!

What NOT to Do

-  **Canned Projects...**
...because a canned project is pre-designed and demands only that you implement someone else's project (ie—a blood drive or annual clean-up). A Gold Award Take Action Project requires you to act in a leadership position from the get-go, designing a sustainable service or advocacy project on an issue that you have carefully researched.
-  **Collection Projects...**
...because collecting items for an organization does not elicit the creativity or leadership required by the Gold Award.
-  **Fundraising Projects...**
...because Girl Scouts, whether girls or adults, are not allowed to raise money for other organizations.
-  **Girl Scout Inward-Focused Projects...**
...because the Girl Scout Gold Award is about reaching out to the community beyond the borders of the Girl Scout world.
-  **Group Projects...**
...because the Gold Award is about taking a stance on an issue that *you* are passionate about in the way that *you* think it can best be addressed. This doesn't mean that you won't be working with and consulting other people, just that you'll be the one calling the shots!

From Good to Gold

Putting together recruitment materials for a local non-profit organization.

to

Assessing your community's needs and approaching a non-profit to ask if you can partner with them to help fill those needs. Creating sustainable programming for that organization and training new volunteers to run the program.

Don't work alone!

Don't do a project focused on collection!

Volunteering to collect games and food at the mall for a teen center.

to

Creating a health access booklet for teens in the community. Arranging a teen health fair with various organizations presenting their services. Admission is canned goods for the teen center.

Writing a form letter to your senator to ask for better food options in schools.

to

Starting a Facebook group to advocate for school lunch reform. Working with students to teach them about healthy food decisions. Delivering the letters from these two campaigns to your member of Congress in person.

Don't be afraid to advocate!

Don't plan a project just for Girl Scouts!

Working with your troop to host Girl Scout Thinking Day.

to

Using your troop mates, as well as others in your community, as volunteers for a program promoting tolerance. Videotaping participants' insights and posting footage to a blog dedicated to building peace through relationships.

Adults

Troop/Group Volunteer

Your Girl Scout Troop Advisor. For Juliettes, this may be a parent. To show that you've been working together, this person's signature is required on both the proposal and the final report.

Project Advisor

An advisor who is neither your troop advisor nor your parent, and who is preferably outside of your Girl Scouting community. This person should have specialized knowledge that relates to your Gold Award Take Action Project. Signature is required on proposal and final report.

Girl Led

The Gold Award process is girl-led. That means that *you* are responsible for writing your proposal, turning in your paperwork, scheduling your presentation and contacting the Panel with any questions.*

Gold Award Panel Mentor

The Gold Award Panel will assign you a mentor. This mentor and/or the Gold Award Panel must approve your Take Action Project before you begin.

Teen Program Specialist

The GSCNC staff person who oversees the Gold Award process. Questions that cannot be addressed by your regional Panel Chair or mentor can be directed to the Teen Program Specialist at (202) 274-3336 or goldaward@gscnc.org

Gold Award Panel Chair

Each regional Gold Award Panel has a Panel Chair. Panel Chairs coordinate in-person presentations and are a resource for you when you have questions about the Gold Award process. Contact information for Regional Chairs is available at www.gscnc.org/GAP.html.

*Specific questions related to your project, from approval to implementation, must be asked by you. If an adult has general questions about the process, they may contact your regional Panel Chair or the Teen Program Specialist.

Gold Award Panel

Regional Panels

Six regional Gold Award Panels meet monthly to review Gold Award Proposals and have mentoring discussions with Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors who have turned in proposals.

City, State ... Location

Frederick, MD ... GSCNC Frederick Office

Leesburg, VA ... GSCNC Leesburg Office

Lorton, VA ... GSCNC Lorton Office

Waldorf, MD ... GSCNC Waldorf Office

Washington, DC ... GSCNC Connecticut Ave Office

Gold Award Panel Mentors

Your assigned Gold Award Panel mentor can help you with:

restructuring
your proposal
for the Panel

working through
the paperwork

ideas on how to
expand your
project

brainstorming
on
sustainability

troubleshooting
during
the project

finding your
global/national
link

ideas for
celebrating
your Gold
Award

solidifying your
idea or issue
into words



Proposal Submission

1) Upon completing Girl Scout Gold Award Step Four, move on to Step Five by turning in your proposal. This must be done by **5:00 pm the 1st of any month** by email, snail mail or in person at GSCNC's DC Office. If the 1st of the month is on a weekend, the deadline is 5:00 pm on the next business day (usually Monday). This is a **firm deadline**.

2) In-Person Presentation

*Register at www.gscnc.org/GAP.html for a **20 minute presentation**.

Registration is open for four weeks, is first come, first served, and closes at 5:00 pm on the 1st of the month.

*Arrive **15 minutes early** with a copy of your proposal and your Toolkit. Take a deep breath and relax.

*Give your **15 second pitch**, then enjoy a discussion with two or three Gold Award Panel members—not the whole Panel!

*Remember, you **don't need to be perfect**. The Panel members are excited to speak to you and want to help you succeed!

OR

2) Proposal Only

*GSCNC will send your proposal to the regional panel of its choosing.

*Choosing not to have an in-person presentation **will not affect** the Gold Award Panel's decision when they read your proposal. But it does mean interacting with the Panel in writing rather than in person, which can slow the approval process.

*The opportunity to respond to the Panel's questions and concerns in person may also help them to understand your proposal better.

****The Panel strongly encourages girls to schedule an in-person presentation.****

3) You will be assigned a **Gold Award Panel mentor** who will be able to answer any questions you have as you continue to work on your proposal and as you begin your project.

4) You will be **mailed and emailed** a letter detailing your proposal's status no more than ten business days after your proposal has been reviewed. The Panel will let you know that your project has been approved or will give you helpful suggestions as to what you need to do

Consider...

The Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal

Consider This: This is your chance to make an impression and tell the Gold Award Panel about your Take Action Project idea. Your Project Proposal allows the Panel to form their questions for you. The following is a guide to what type of information the Panel will be looking for in your proposal.

A: Describe the issue your project will address and who is your target audience. Remember your 15-second pitch.

CT: What will you actually be doing? What issue concerns you, who are you aiming to involve in addressing this issue, and how will you go about doing this? How is this project uniquely yours, and how will you be a leader throughout? Be thorough—this is the first thing the Gold Award Panel will read about your project!

B: Discuss your reasons for selecting the project.

CT: Why is this particular project of interest to you? How does it relate to your skills, interests, other community involvement, or future plans? What makes this project personal?

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

CT: What comes naturally to you that you plan to put into action? What's a bit harder for you that you plan to make stronger by stretching yourself during your Gold Award Take Action Project?

D: Describe the steps involved in putting your plan into action, including resources, facilities, equipment, and approvals needed. (Attach a detailed project plan.)

CT: What tasks do you need to complete? What are all of the resources you will need during your project? If you need transportation, how will you get there? If you need to transport others, how will you make that happen? Do you need to have any special training or to have others with special skills participate in your project? All equipment, supplies and approvals need to be planned out in advance. Don't make assumptions that others will help you—ask in advance or have a backup plan. Include a review of the relevant safety guidelines from Volunteer Essentials and the Activity Checkpoints. **Remember to attach your projected hours log!**

...This

E: Enter the names of people or organizations you plan to inform and involve.

CT: Beyond the team you put together, what is the name of each person or organization benefiting from and collaborating with your project? Who will you be informing of what you are doing? Example: I will contact the local Elks club to request help with my project. This is your target audience—see p. 2 of The Gold Standard.

F: Estimate overall project expenses and how you plan to meet these costs.

CT: How much money will you need to make your project a reality? How do you plan to earn money to cover the costs of your project? Even if you hope to have items donated, how will you come up with the money to cover the costs of items that are unexpectedly not covered by donations? What is your backup plan to cover all costs? Remember to attach your budget.

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

CT: Your evaluation needs to be something tangible. Will you have a participant survey? Will you interview participants/volunteers? Will you measure success by number of participants, by number of people benefited? Will your follow-up be immediately after the event, or later?

H: How will your project be sustained beyond your involvement?

CT: How will your project continue to have an impact in the future? How will your project stay alive even when you're done? Will the education you've provided live on in people's memories and habits? Will another person or group be able to pick up where you've left off?

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

CT: How will you spread the word about your project to people in the community? If you make a display, where will you put it? If you make a video, where and when will it be viewed? If you create a web site, how will people find out about it? This is your wider audience—see p. 2 of The Gold Standard.

Proposal Pieces

Proposal Plus+

When submitting your Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal, make sure to also include:

- GSCNC Project Proposal Supplement Form** (p. 17)
- A letter of endorsement**
This formal, signed letter (think letterhead!) should come from the organization you plan to work with. For the purposes of the Gold Award, an “organization” may be a school, park, nature center, religious community/place of worship, etc.
The letter, often written by the Project Advisor, does not need to be lengthy, but should include a statement supporting your plan to earn the Gold. Not working with an existing organization? This mandatory letter may be written by your Project Advisor.
- A projected hours log**
Part of the detailed project plan, Question D in the Project Proposal, the hours log should give a step-by-step account of how you plan to spend your time during the Gold Award Take Action Project.
- A proposed budget**
An addendum to your estimated expenses, Question F in the Project Proposal. This may be a document or spreadsheet and should show your planned expenses and how you intend to pay for them.
- Original signatures**

Month 1							Month 2						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	submit Proposal	2	3	4	5	6					email edits to GAP	2	get email from GAP Mentor
7	8	9	10	meet w/ GAP	12	13	4	research your issue further	6	7	8	meet w/ troop leader to edit	10
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	email more edits to GAP Mentor	15	16	17
21	22	23	24	status: Resubmit to Mentor	26	27	18	get Approval from GAP Mentor!	20	21	22	Begin Gold Award Step Six	24
28	meet w/ advisor to edit	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	

The Gold Award Project Proposal should be submitted **six to eight weeks** before you intend to begin your project. This **sample** calendar gives you an idea of the

Proposal Status

Approved

The project meets all expectations and may be started upon receipt of letter, or upon verbal notification by the Gold Award Panel.

Some projects may be “approved with caution,” when the Panel has included a comment or reminder to ensure a successful project.

Approved with Clarification

The proposal is sound but is missing some limited information.

The requested information can be submitted directly to your Gold Award Panel mentor. These projects do not have to be reviewed again by the entire Panel. You can begin your project once you have received final

Resubmit to Mentor

As written, the project does not meet the standards of a Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action Project.

The idea itself may be good, but the project is missing a key element. You may not show your individual mark on the issue, you may need to define your leadership, or the Panel may question the project’s scope.

Projects designated as resubmits have potential, but they must be developed to address the areas of concern raised by the Panel.

Your Gold Award Panel mentor should be consulted as you consider how to further develop this project, and she will then give final approval to begin the project.

Denied as Submitted

Project does not qualify as a Gold Award Take Action Project.

Canned, collection, fundraising, Girl Scout inward-focused and group projects will also be given this designation.

While projects that are denied cannot be restructured to qualify as Gold Award projects, the issues behind the projects can lead to new project ideas. Consult with your Gold Award Panel mentor for support and suggestions. Your

Don't Despair!

Your proposal status does not judge you as a person. It's just the Panel's way of making sure

The Finish Line

Where to End?

First, once you've finished your Gold Award Take Action Project, take time to reflect on your experiences and share what you've learned.

Next, fill out the Gold Award Final Report and complete the Hours Log, both found in the Girl Scout Gold Award Toolkit.

Now, ask for a formal letter of recommendation (think letterhead!), which you'll then mail to GSCNC with your final report.

Don't forget, to go over the forms and reflect on your experiences with your Troop Volunteer and your Gold Award Advisor. Make sure that both adults sign your Final Report! Also consider checking in with your Gold Award Panel Mentor so she can hear about your project and read your paperwork.

Finally, once everyone has read and signed your Final Report, send it back to GSCNC, Attn: Gold Award Panel, 4301 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite M-2, Washington, DC 20008. Make sure to include:

- your hours log
- a formal letter of recommendation
- a recent school photo for the Gold Award Yearbook

Recommendation Letter Tips:

*ask for letters from organizations and people you've worked closely with

*give your recommender a copy of your final report, relevant materials, and a resume if you have one; give her plenty of time to write the letter

*ask for letters from more than one person, as these will be a great resource when you are applying to college or for a job

Why Finish?

college
privilege pride job applications
honor self-esteem
internships prestige

What's my Timeline?

5:00 pm, March 15: Meet this final paperwork deadline in order to be included in that year's GSCNC award ceremony and yearbook, to be eligible for GSCNC Gold Award Scholarships, and to be eligible for other Gold Award honors.

5:00 pm, September 30: When your final paperwork is due the year you graduate. If you turn 18 after the September 30 of your graduation year, you





Celebrate!

In Your Honor is the official GSCNC celebration that recognizes our newest Gold Award Girl Scouts. The event is held each year in May to recognize those girls who earned their award during the 12 months from March to March. Every Gold Award Girl Scout who turns in her completed Final Report by 5:00 PM on March 15th is recognized at this event.

The **Women's Advisory Board** supports the Girl Scout Gold Award. Girls who are working toward the Gold are invited to annual **Dine-Arounds**. These Dine-Arounds are special meals reserved for a limited number of girls hosted by leading women in our area. They are a unique chance to gain insight from successful women and to network with fellow Girl Scouts.

Young Women of Distinction is the designation given by GSUSA to the top ten Gold Award Girl Scouts in the country each year. Girls self-select to apply to GSCNC for this honor and GSCNC chooses which applications to send to GSUSA. The nationally recognized Young Women of Distinction are then honored at a ceremony held in Washington, DC or at the GSUSA National Council Session.

The **Gold Award Scholarship** is a \$1,000 educational scholarship that is awarded annually to at least ten GSCNC high school seniors who have earned the Gold Award. The annual application deadline is March 15th.

Upon completion of the Girl Scout Gold Award, you become a member of the **Gold Award Alliance**, a sisterhood of all past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award or prior similar awards. As a Gold Award Girl Scout you are also eligible to become a member of the **Gold Award Panel**.

My Notes



GSCNC Project Proposal Supplement Form

The submission deadline for this form, along with the rest of your Project Proposal as outlined below, is **5:00 pm on the first working day of the month** to be reviewed that month. Projects received after the deadline will be reviewed the following month. **Please submit this form at least 6-8 weeks prior to your proposed project start date.**

Your Project Proposal and Supplement Form may be sent as an email attachment to goldaward@gscnc.org, or mailed to GSCNC, Attn: Gold Award Panel, 4301 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20008. Please retain a copy of your paperwork for yourself and your advisors. Faxed submissions will not be accepted. For clarity, GSCNC strongly recommends that your submission be typed.

Projects are reviewed by the Gold Award Panel during the 2nd week of the month, with the option for an in-person presentation. To schedule your presentation, please visit www.gscnc.org/GAP.html. The deadline for registering for a presentation is the same as the deadline for submitting your proposal. Notification of action is both mailed and emailed no more than ten business days after your proposal has been reviewed. Please do not call or email GSCNC for information on action. **You may not, under any circumstances, begin the Take Action part of your project (Girl Scout Gold Award Step Six) until you receive council approval.**

When submitting your Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal, make sure to also include the following, all of which is due by 5:00 pm on the first working day of the month:

- GSCNC Project Proposal Supplement Form (this form)
- A letter of endorsement
- A projected hours log
- A proposed budget
- Original signatures

Please note: You are expected to read p. 12 of *The Gold Standard* for more information on these requirements.

Do you have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or is there any way that GSCNC can make the Gold Award process more accessible for you? Please explain. (Question Optional)

Please describe how your project can be linked to a national or global issue:

Please address the safety precautions, found on p. 4 of *The Gold Standard*, that are relevant to your project:

Honor Code for Gold Award Girl Scouts:

I understand that by choosing to embark on earning my Gold Award, I am promising not only to develop and implement a project which benefits my community, but also to uphold the values of Girl Scouting. A Gold Award recipient is a model Girl Scout and her actions reflect upon girls across the country. As a model Girl Scout, I will live by the Girl Scout law. I will be honest, considerate, respectful of myself, others, and authority, and personally responsible for what I say and do.

Signature of Girl Scout: _____



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