



**GIRL SCOUT
GOLD AWARD
PROJECT GUIDE**

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

Girl Scout law

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout..

Going for the Gold

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest achievement in Girl Scouting and is achieved by fewer than one percent of all girls who join the Girl Scouts. Typically it takes two to three years of intensive work for a girl to complete the requirements, develop a Gold Award project, and complete the project itself. Information about the Girl Scout Gold Award and the requirements can be found in the following resource books: *A Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts*, pages 147-179; *The Guide for Cadette and Senior Girl Scout Leaders*, pages 48-49; and *Merest Projects for Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts*.

The five requirements to earn the Gold Award are:

1. Earn four interest project patches on topics related to your Gold Award project. See Interest Projects **for Cadette** and Senior Girl Scout **Interest Projects** book.
2. Earn the Career Exploration pin (for details, see pages 152-1 57 in **A Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts**).
3. Earn the Senior Girl Scout Leadership Award (for details, see pages **151-1 52** in **A Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts**).
4. Earn the Senior Girl Scout Challenge (for details, see pages **158-1 61** in **A Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts**. and
5. Plan and complete a Girl Scout Gold Award project (for details, see pages **167-1 73** in **A Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts**).

Requirements 1-4 may be completed in any order but must be fulfilled prior to submitting a Girl Scout Gold Award Application.

NOTE: Your accomplishments prior to bridging to the Senior Girl Scout level CANNOT count towards your Gold Award requirements, and you also must have completed the eighth grade. All work (i.e. bridging activities and Silver Award) must be completed before you begin your work as a Senior Girl Scout. /f you are in twelfth grade, you have until the end of September after you graduate from high school to complete your project and submit your Gold Award Project Final Report. After this date, you are considered an adult Girl Scout and are not eligible to earn the Senior Girl Scout Gold Award.

What makes it a Gold Award project?

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award in Girl Scouting. When comparing your Gold Award project with other special projects that you have done in the past, the Gold Award project should take “more time, effort, and imagination than it would have taken to achieve any other recognition available for girls in Girl Scouting.” As you try to come up with an idea deserving of your utmost time and energy, keep these characteristics in mind:

You should feel OWNERSHIP of the project that you will undertake.

This means that the project is one that is based on YOUR interests and *your* interests *alone*, not those of your parents or troop leaders or friends or fellow Girl Scouts. Ask yourself, do I love this topic enough to spend over fifty hours of my time working on it?

Your project must allow you to use your LEADERSHIP skills.

Remember when you earned service hours? Usually you were doing a task that someone else had planned and thought up, rather than one that you had developed yourself. As the director of your very own Gold Award project, the reverse is true. You will be the one doing the developing. You may even ask for service from other people to help you to achieve your goals. (And no, you do not have to do every single task involved in your Gold Award project! You can direct others to help you.) Along these lines, be careful if you want to take on a project that someone else has designed and carried out in previous years, such as a church service project. Carefully consider the question, How will I make it my *own*? When you have OWNERSHIP of a project, then you will also have LEADERSHIP.

Your project should meet a need in your COMMUNITY.

If your project involves the Girl Scout community (i.e. the Council, district, or service unit), some part of your plan **must** include the surrounding community. For example, if you are directing a Junior event as your project, you could invite girls who are not registered in Girl Scouting to attend, invite an organization in the community to present part of the program, or include a service project for event participants that will benefit the community.

The Gold Award project will require your COMMITMENT of at least 50 hours.

This is a minimum commitment; it will likely take over 50 hours to complete. Write down each step that you will take in doing your Gold Award project and approximately how many hours you will spend on each step. Do these add up to at least 50 hours? If not, you may need to enlarge the scope of your project.

Ownership, leadership, community involvement, and time commitment are all the building blocks of your Gold Award project idea..

Help! I don't know what to do to for my Gold Award project

Don't despair! You do not have to do what everyone else has done for the past five years just because you are unsure. Follow our easy five-step plan:

1. Inform yourself. Attend a Gold Award orientation. Read I this packet and your handbook. Talk to older girls in your service unit or district who have completed their projects.
2. Brainstorm ideas, according to your interests. Set a timer I for ten or fifteen minutes and write down every crazy idea that comes into your head. Then go back over your list when the time is up and see if anything grabs you. Remember, you will spend at least fifty hours with this topic, so it had better be something that really interests you.
3. Turn a great idea into a great project. Once you have an idea that really appeals to you, develop the I idea into a project by asking yourself these questions:
 - 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 can I put more of my talents to work?
 - How can I learn more about the project topic?
 - Who else in the community can I involve?
4. Contact your Gold Award council advisor for ideas and support. Your troop leader, service unit manager, or district chairman should have his or her number.
5. Ask your Gold Award council advisor about "ready-made" projects, that is, people who are looking for I a Senior Girl Scout to assist them with a special project or task that could become a Gold Award project.

Sample Gold Award projects

The following are some actual projects that girls have completed.

One girl took over an existing district service project and made it her own, coordinating a year-long baby shower to benefit two large county hospitals. First, she updated a flyer to send out to all troops, which included information about how each troop could plan a special baby shower, including decorations, favors, games to play, etc. At the baby shower, the troops collected and made items to give to the hospitals. She suggested program opportunities for every level. She consulted another person to design a participation patch for girls to receive. She attended meetings at every level to recruit participants. She spoke with hospital representatives to determine what items they needed. She involved students at several schools. At the end, she had collected, sorted, inventoried, and delivered over 6,000 items.

Two Senior Girl Scouts designed a baby-sitting handbook for both new and experienced baby sitters. First, they designed and distributed a questionnaire for troops in their area to see what kinds of information they needed. Then they decided which topics they would include in the book and divided the topics for research. One of the girls took a course on child development, and the other researched existing materials. They both learned how to use desktop publishing and took turns typing in their sections and proofing each other's work. They donated their booklet to the county library, their service unit, and the Council.

One Senior Girl Scout took over the leadership of an existing senior event. She chaired the girl planning board meetings to develop a theme, program, location, and cost for the program. She contacted community organizations for assistance with the event workshops and invited adjoining councils to send girls to the weekend. In conjunction with the adult chairman, she developed registration and publicity materials. She coordinated a service project for the event, in which ultimately over 800 children's books and magazines were collected for donation to local literacy projects.

Another Senior Girl Scout traveled to Mexico, where she conducted on-site research about the California gray whales. She recorded this information in a written and photographic journal. Then she compiled her observations into a booklet that discusses the habits and characteristics of these whales as well as the human impact on their existence. She shared this information with her peers when she returned and donated the book to the library for troop use.

Other starting points for projects:

Organize a water safety course and develop either a brochure, booklet, or videotape of the course.

Organize a food drive and donate the products to a food pantry (other suggestions to collect and donate to food pantries: hundreds of children's Easter baskets, hundreds of turkeys for Thanksgiving or Christmas).

Offer reading awareness workshops at bookstores in a local mall or library, featuring volunteers reading to children.

Learn sign language and volunteer to work with hearing impaired children or teach several workshops on sign language and make a brochure, booklet, or videotape of the workshop.

Involve your community in a "Clean Up Your Community" day.

Write and produce a play on an issue that is important to you and your community.

Plan and coordinate a school or community event that celebrates cultural differences.

Research the history of your area and produce a photographic and written document of it for donation to the local library and schools.

Applying: As easy as 1,2,3....

After you have come up with a great idea for a project, you must consider a few guidelines and procedures in the actual application process. Follow these steps:

Contact your Gold Award council advisor.**One grape or the whole bunch: Group projects**

Most Gold Award projects are completed by girls individually. Occasionally however, a group of Senior Girl Scouts wishes to work collectively on a project.

Most Gold Award Advisory Committees ask that **no more than three girls** work together on a project, unless the circumstances are very special or the project is extremely large. Whatever the number of participants in a group project, the guidelines are still the same. Each girl must have ownership and leadership of a certain part of the project, and each girl must complete a minimum of fifty hours.

Approach the group project as if each person were individually tackling different aspects of the same goal. For example, if you would like to work with two of your fellow troop members on a service unit weekend, perhaps one person would be in charge of publicity, registration, and recruitment, one person in charge of program activities, and another in charge of facilities and materials. Each girl

must provide a list of her separate duties when she submits her application. The work done by each person must be as carefully planned and thought out as if it were hers alone. Therefore, the bulk of the hours spent working on the project should be from each girl working individually, with minimal overlapping of hours with the others.

If necessary, take training BEFORE you begin your project.

All adults and girls who want to direct an event take “Event Training,” and those who want to direct a day camp take “Day Camp Director’s Training”. Written proof that you have taken these trainings should be submitted with your Gold Award application. Be aware that these trainings are not offered every month.

Choose a project mentor/consultant.

Your mentor/consultant is your main advisor for your project. This person can be your leader, co-leader, a troop committee member, a community leader, a parent, a Gold Award Advisory Committee member, and/or an expert in the area of your project. According to ***A Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts***, if the mentor/consultant role “is filled by your troop leader or parent/guardian, you must seek guidance from a content expert for at least part of your project.” This means that if you chose your leader or parent as your mentor/consultant, you must ask a second adult with expertise in the subject area of your project to be another resource for guidance. For example, if your project is to write curriculum and present a workshop on crime prevention, you could have an expert from a law enforcement agency advise you on your project.

Tips for choosing a mentor

Give some serious thought to the selection of your project mentor/consultant(s). You need to choose a primary mentor/consultant who will receive copies of all letters that we send to you. If your primary mentor/consultant is your parent or troop leader, you will also need to choose at least one additional mentor/consultant who has expertise in the field in which you are working. Even if your primary mentor/consultant is not your parent or troop leader, you may seek extra input or advice from additional people. You may decide to have one primary and several additional mentor/consultants. In choosing who will advise you in your project you may want to consider the following factors:

The Gold Award project gives you an excellent opportunity to get to know people outside of your immediate circle of acquaintances. There are many professionals who would be delighted to serve as consultants for your project. Making connections in the community is not only a vital skill to develop, it may serve you well as you move closer toward your career goals.

What kind of person would you like your mentor to be? This is your opportunity to show off and shine, so you may want to find a person who will guide you without telling you what to do, who will allow you to make your own decisions, and who can support and encourage you without giving advice.

Who has expertise in an area that will be useful for your project? This person could be a very valuable resource for you.

If you do decide to use your parent or troop leader as your primary mentor/consultant, will you be able to separate the work that you do for the Gold Award from your personal relationship?

Remember, the Gold Award is your responsibility and yours alone. You want to be able to feel that you accomplished it due to your own will and discipline and not someone else's.

Consider what funding is needed to complete your project.

Your project should not rely on securing a grant or raising large amounts of money. Remember you can not raise money for other organizations. All fund raising activities **must** be approved by the Council.

Obtain written approval from other entities involved, and submit this with your application.

Examples: a day camp director's approval if you will be working at a day camp, a service unit manager's for a service unit weekend, or a teacher's if you plan to use school facilities.

Submit your original application to the Council SIX WEEKS BEFORE YOU WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN YOUR PROJECT.

If you would like to have your application considered in a certain month, you must submit your original and copy by the first of that month. Be sure to keep a copy of all paperwork for yourself.

Start your project ONLY AFTER receiving an approval letter.

Though you may have to do some initial investigating to fill out your Gold Award application, only those hours accumulated after you receive approval can count toward the time requirement. The only exceptions are required council trainings that must be completed before a Gold Award project plan can be approved.

Plan ahead for your ceremony, and submit your final report at least two months in advance.

For special ceremonies, such as a Senior Recognition Event, Older Girl Banquet or a Statewide Gold Award Ceremony, a Gold Award candidate's final report must be approved two to three months prior to the ceremony date to be eligible to participate in that ceremony. Again, you need to provide ample time for yourself to plan and invite any special guests if you plan your own ceremony.

Gold Award checklist

This checklist is designed to help you through the many steps required in planning and coordinating a Gold Award project. It is NOT intended to substitute for a careful reading of the pages in this packet, attending a Gold Award orientation, or consulting frequently with your Gold Award district advisor. We encourage you to do all of these, too.

REMEMBER:

Keep a copy of EVERY paper you submit for your records!

When applying to do a Gold Award Project:

____ If needed, take appropriate training(s).

____ Contact and speak with district advisor about basic information and questions about Gold Award project.

____ If it is a service unit event, district event, or day camp, obtain written approval from district chairman, service unit manager, or day camp director, and send it in with Gold Award application.

____ Send original copy of Gold Award Application.

____ Begin working on your project ONLY AFTER receiving approval letter from the Council.

After finishing your Gold Award Project:

____ Send final report to the Council (after completing your project with a minimum of 50 hours from the time the approval letter is received).

Directions for completing hour log

Your hour log is a written record of your project and should be treated as if it were your most cherished diary. Each time that you spend some time working on your project, be it fifteen minutes or five hours, mark it down on your hour log. Some girls carry a notebook with them so that if their hour log is not handy, they will still have a written record of their time that they can later enter on to the hour log.

FILL OUT THE HOUR LOG AS YOU GO ALONG. If you try to reconstruct your hours when you are filling out your final report, you may have very little success in doing so. Be as detailed as you possibly can with your log. Have an adult initial next to each entry. This will most likely not be the same adult for each task. You might have your parent initial next to "Phone calls to other troops from home - 30 minutes," a teacher next to, "Printed flyer at print shop - one hour," and your mentor/consultant next to "Presentation at senior citizens' home - two hours."

You may include transportation time to and from events, in running errands, etc. You may not include any time spent completing Gold Award paperwork. You and your mentor/consultant should sign at the bottom of the form when you are finished with your project. Be sure to total your hours on the last row.

