The Girl Scout
Gold Award

Adult Volunteer Guide

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors can earn. Your role, whether you're a troop/group volunteer or a project advisor, is to encourage Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors to think critically, be open to multiple perspectives, investigate thoroughly, work cooperatively, and identify resources within and beyond their local communities. You are supporting girls as they develop into leaders for today and tomorrow.

This guide is intended to be used with the Guidelines for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors which are posted on the Girl Scouts of the USA Web site at www.girlscouts.org.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is designed to be completed by an individual girl. To earn the award, each girl must complete two Senior or Ambassador journeys or complete one Senior or Ambassador journey and have earned a Girl Scout Silver Award. After completing either of these requirements, a minimum of 80 hours is suggested to complete the steps to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award.

Tips for the Troop/Group Volunteer

At this level, Girl Scouts are on their honor to uphold the Standards of Excellence. These standards respect the skills and talents that Girl Scouts bring to making a difference in world and provide a challenge that inspires girls to learn what they can accomplish by doing their very best.

Steps	Standards of Excellence	Coaching Tips
1. Choose an issue: Use your values and skills to identify a community issue you care about.	▪ Live the Girl Scout Promise and Law. ▪ Demonstrate civic responsibility.	▪ Provide a listening ear. ▪ Give constructive feedback.
2. Investigate: Research everything you can about the issue.	▪ Use a variety of sources: interview people, read books and articles, find professional organizations online. Remember to evaluate each source's reliability and accuracy. ▪ Demonstrate courage as you investigate your issue, knowing that what you learn may challenge your own and others' beliefs. ▪ Identify national and/or global links to your community issue.	▪ Before the online investigation starts, suggest taking the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge at www.girlscouts.org/internet_safety_pledge.asp. ▪ Recommend ways to expand the project beyond the local community. For example, talking to and involving people from organizations that offer help to people on a national and global level (such as the Red Cross and Doctors without Borders).
3. Get help: Invite others to support and take action with you.	▪ Seek out and recognize the value of the skills and strengths of others. ▪ Respect different points of view and ways of working. ▪ Build a team and recruit a project advisor who will bring special skills to your Take Action project.	▪ Working with a team will help make a bigger impact and cover more ground. Although this is an individual project, other Girl Scouts, neighbors, classmates, and friends can help. ▪ Make sure that either you or a family member is aware of times and places and who the interview subjects are. ▪ A network is a great thing. Share pointers on how to create an effective network.
4. Create a plan: Create a project plan that achieves sustainable and measurable impact.	▪ Lead the planning of your Take Action project. ▪ Work collaboratively to develop a plan for your project that creates lasting change.	▪ Provide guidance on project sustainability. Here are suggestions: education and raising awareness, holding workshops and hands-on learning sessions, collaborating with community groups to ensure the project lasts. ▪ Suggest using creative ways to support the project. If money is required to complete the project, please adhere to money-earning guidelines in *Volunteer Essentials*.

5. Present your plan and get feedback: Sum up your project plan for your Girl Scout council.	▪ Submit a Project Proposal to your council that is concise, comprehensive, and clear. ▪ Describe your plan, including the Girl Scout Leadership Outcomes you want to achieve and the impact you plan to make on yourself and the community. ▪ Articulate your issue clearly and explain why it matters to you. ▪ Accept constructive suggestions that will help refine your project.	▪ Suggest using the tools and tips in the toolkit in preparing the Project Proposal. ▪ Provide constructive suggestions. Project Proposals are submitted to councils. The Council (or the council's Gold Award Committee) approves the project.
6. Take action: Take the lead to carry out your plan.	▪ Take action to address the root cause of an issue, so that your solution has measurable and sustainable impact. ▪ Actively seek partnerships to achieve greater community participation and impact for your Take Action project. ▪ Challenge yourself to try different ways to solve problems. ▪ Use resources wisely. ▪ Speak out and act on behalf of yourself and others.	▪ Conducting interviews on the chosen issue is an important part of this step. Play the interviewee to help synchronize the timing and the flow of the interviews.
7. Educate and inspire: Share what you have experienced with others.	▪ Reflect on what you have learned when you present your Girl Scout Gold Award Final Report to your council. ▪ Summarize the effectiveness of your project and the impact it has had on you and your community. ▪ Share the project beyond your local community and inspire others to take action in their own communities.	▪ Be available for any questions that might arise as during sharing or reflection. ▪ Suggest using the tools and tips in the toolkit to prepare the Final Report.

Tips for the Project Advisor

A Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor is chosen by a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador to help plan and implement her project. As the project advisor, you provide guidance, experience, and expertise to the girl as she works to complete her Take Action project.

Your primary responsibilities include:

- Partnering with a girl to support her in completing her Take Action project
- Understanding the steps to the Girl Scout Gold Award and the Standards of Excellence required for each step

Girls will start working on their project by first searching for issues that they care about, and then investigating how they can narrow the focus of the issue that they have chosen, enlisting the help of others in the community, and working collaboratively to create and implement their plan.

Before girls can start working on their project, they must submit a Project Proposal to their council for approval. Girls will seek your expertise in developing and implementing the project ideas.

Girl Scout Gold Award projects require the following:

- Makes a lasting difference in the local community, region, or beyond.
- Puts the Girl Scout Promise and Law into action.
- Includes provisions to ensure sustainability.
- Identifies national and/global links to the girl's selected issue.
- Inspires others.

If you require additional assistance at any time during the award process, contact the group/troop volunteer, the local Girl Scout council staff person who manages the awards or the council's Girl Scout Council Gold Award Committee. They will provide you with background information about Girl Scouts, including policies and information about any learning opportunities.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

In Girl Scouting, Discover + Connect + Take Action = Leadership. The entire Girl Scout program, regardless of the exact topic, is designed to lead to leadership outcomes (or benefits) that stem from these three keys.

- **Discover:** Girls will understand themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world
- **Connect:** Girls care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.
- **Take Action:** Girls act to make the world a better place.

It's not only about the activities girls do, however, but the processes they use to do them that builds leadership. The Girl Scout processes promote the fun and friendship that have always been so integral to Girl Scouting.

- **Girl-led:** Girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how, and why of their activities.
- **Learning by doing:** Girls use a hands-on learning process that engages them in continuous cycles of action and reflection that result in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills.
- **Cooperative learning:** Through cooperative learning, girls work together toward goals that can be accomplished only with the help of others, in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration.

When Discover, Connect, and Take Action activities are girl-led and involve learning by doing and cooperative learning, girls achieve the desired and expected short-term outcomes. This ultimately results in Girl Scouting achieving its mission of building "girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place."

Through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, girls gain specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, and values in Girl Scouting. Girls reflect on the impact they have had and how the experience has helped to strengthen their leadership skills.

The following are the fifteen outcomes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience:

Discover outcomes:

- Girls develop a strong sense of self.
- Girls develop positive values.
- Girls gain practical life skills.
- Girls seek challenges in the world.
- Girls develop critical thinking.

Connect outcomes:

- Girls develop healthy relationships.
- Girls promote cooperation and team building.
- Girls can resolve conflicts.
- Girls advanced diversity in a multicultural world.
- Girls feel connected to their community, locally and globally.

Take Action outcomes:

- Girls can identify community needs.
- Girls are resourceful problem solvers.
- Girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally.
- Girls educate and inspire others to act.
- Girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world.

For more about The Girl Scout Leadership Experience, go to www.girlscouts.org/gsle.