



The Girl Scout Gold Award: A Guide for Leaders

How can girls earn the Gold Award?

The first step for girls is to take the GSNorCal Gold Award training. A recording of this training can be found on our [main Gold Award page](#), or you can sign up to attend a [live webinar](#). We also strongly recommend that girls review the other resources found on the main page. After girls have completed the training, they can complete an online proposal through [GoGold Online](#)—our national web app that guides girls through the seven steps to earning the Gold Award. They need to make sure they list themselves as part of our Northern California Council.

What are the core components of earning the Gold Award?

A girl first identifies the root cause of a community issue she's passionate about. She then designs and implements a **Take Action** project that addresses a significant need in the community and has long-term benefits. The girl must show leadership by guiding a team of volunteers who support her project, which must be sustainable and measurable with a national and/or global link.

Here's more on that:

- **Sustainable** projects continue to have an impact after the Girl Scout has completed her part.
- **Measurable** projects enable 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."
- A Gold Award project has a **national and/or global link** when a Girl Scout can explain how her project connects to an issue that is relevant beyond her own community. Examples: poverty, literacy, women's rights, environmental sustainability.

What resources are available to help girls and caregivers understand the Gold Award?

Check out GSNorCal's [main Gold Award page](#) for the fundamentals and links to all of our other resources. These include:

- The GSNorCal Gold Award packet
- Expert-written Trailhead articles
- Gold Award coaching videos from GSUSA

We recommend that Girl Scouts start by reviewing the Gold Award packet, then read "Community Service Projects vs. Take Action Projects" and "How to Choose a Girl Scout Gold Award Project."

What is the time commitment behind earning the Gold Award?

Gold Award projects require a commitment of at least **80 hours** from Girl Scouts, though the girls themselves design the timelines. In some cases, the work is completed over the course of 6-months, and in others, over a year. Although 80 hours is the minimum hour requirement, the "finish line" of the Gold Award is the actual completion of the project. If girls hit the 80-hour mark but are not done, they must keep going!

When are Girl Scouts eligible to begin working toward their Gold Award?

Girl Scouts should be a registered Senior or Ambassador in grades 9–12. In order to be eligible, girls must have completed either:

- **Two Senior or Ambassador Journeys** (plus the Take Action projects at the end) *or*
- The **Silver Award** (as a Cadette) and **one Senior or Ambassador Journey** (plus the Take Action project at the end)

Girl Scouts must submit their complete Gold Award proposals for review through GoGold Online and gain approval to start work before beginning their projects. The one exception to this is that up to 8 hours of **research** should be conducted before submitting a proposal and gaining approval to start.

How can leaders support girls as they become Gold Award Girl Scouts?

- **Help girls understand the value of going Gold.** It's the chance to build resume-worthy leadership skills while making a lasting impact in their communities! The Gold Award can help girls strengthen college and job applications and give them access to scholarship opportunities. And for girls who plan to enlist in the armed forces, it may mean pay increase.

Pro-tip: The Bronze and Silver Awards are not prerequisites for the Gold; however, the skills girls develop in earning these awards will help prepare them to become Gold Award Girl Scouts. The Bronze and Silver help girls discover how to plan and lead projects, connect with their communities, and drive intentional change.

- **Provide encouragement, but not pressure.** The Gold Award is a major time commitment. It's not for everyone, and that's OK! A girl's decision to become a Gold Award Girl Scout should be entirely her own.
- **Help girls understand the prerequisites** as early as possible. You might help them identify Leadership Journeys that align with their interests, or complete a Journey as a troop.
- **Get to know the safety and fundraising guidelines.** Review the Volunteer Essentials and Gold Award specific materials on GSNorCal.org, and reach out to Gold Award staff as needed.
- **Offer the opportunity to attend a Gold Award training as a troop.** Make it as easy as possible for your girls to *opt in!*
- **Help girls make community connections.** Girls will seek experts to speak with about their chosen issues. Are there any other volunteers or caregivers who can help or introduce a girl to a potential community partner?
- **Brainstorm ways your troop members can support one another.** Girls might join forces to fundraise for their projects. They might volunteer on one another's projects—or help recruit volunteers from their networks. Assisting with another Girl Scout's project may help fulfill community service requirements for school or religious organizations.

- **Dedicate a few minutes of meeting time to updates on girls' Gold Award projects.** This gives Girl Scouts the opportunity to talk through challenges, celebrate successes, and find support in brainstorming. And keep in mind though that any decisions about a girl's project should ultimately be her own.

Troop profile: If and how you dedicate meeting time to the Gold Award is up to you.

Troop leader Melanie from Girl Scouts of the Commonwealth of Virginia surveyed her troop and found that all nine members planned to become Gold Award Gold Scouts—so she dedicated two meetings per semester to the Gold Award, in addition to short check-ins during regular meetings.

“In our dedicated Gold Award meetings, we [talked] about issues in our area that our girls could address, mapped the steps for requesting permission to do the projects (if needed), and [brainstormed] general tips for moving forward, troubleshoot obstacles, etc.” The approach helped Melanie support her girls to the finish line. To date, seven have become Gold Award Girl Scouts and the other two are wrapping up!”

What else should leaders know or keep in mind as girls look to earn their Gold Awards?

- Gold Award proposals are reviewed and approved by the Gold Award Committee, which is made up of volunteers.
- There are four regional Gold Award Committees for GSNorCal that review proposals from the areas in which they are based.
- The Gold Award Committees typically meet once per month. Proposals are not reviewed as soon as they are received—they will be reviewed at the next possible meeting!
- If girls do not take the required training, fill out all supplemental forms, and submit complete proposals, it will delay when they are reviewed.
- Most girls receive follow-up questions or feedback from the Committee to make sure that their ideas will meet requirements.
- Always allow girls to take the lead. Allow them to reach out to ask questions and seek support unless there is a specific reason they are not able to do so.
- The best way to get in touch with the awards team is by emailing awards@gsnorcal.org.