

# Gold Award Guidelines: Your guide on the path to Gold!



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## 10 Steps to Gold

- STEP 1:** Before you do anything else—complete your Silver Award and one Senior/Ambassador Journey **OR** two Senior/Ambassador Journeys, including the Take Action Project.
- STEP 2:** Complete the online or in-person training no more than six months before submitting your project proposal—this way, all the information is fresh!
- STEP 3:** Read Girl Scouts River Valleys’ Gold Award Guidelines.
- STEP 4:** Brainstorm project ideas.
- STEP 5:** Find a project adviser—choose someone who’s an expert on your issue.
- STEP 6:** Complete your Project Proposal and submit to Girl Scouts River Valleys. A Highest Awards Committee member will review your proposal and help you through any changes or additions needed to get your project in tip-top gold shape.
- STEP 7:** Get any revisions done ASAP and return to your council contact.
- STEP 8:** Once you’re approved, get started on your project!
- STEP 9:** When your project work is complete, reflect on your hard work and turn in your Final Report—you might be asked to make a few edits before your Gold Award is approved.
- STEP 10:** Celebrate your achievement with your family and friends!

### IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

**May 1:** Deadline to submit proposal paperwork for girls who are **currently in 12th grade**.

**March 1:** Deadline for your final report if you’d like to participate in the following spring’s Highest Award Ceremony.

**September 30:** Deadline for final reports from girls who graduated high school in spring of that year.

## Parent/Guardian Guide: What's your role?

An important girl in your life is taking on a big challenge—the Girl Scout Gold Award. The Gold Award is the highest award a girl can earn in Girl Scouts, and comes with a lot of history and integrity. Pursuing this award shows a girl's commitment to herself and her community as she makes a plan, talks to others, engages her community, and leads a team toward a common goal to fix a problem that's important to her.

As her parent or guardian, you'll play an important role in supporting her. However, deciding to tackle this challenge should be her decision, and the project will be her own. Here are some ways you can support your girl's Gold Award journey, and help out with bumps along the way.

- Read through the Gold Award Guidelines and project proposal materials so you're familiar if she has questions. You're also welcome to go through the online Gold Award training either with your girl or on your own.
- Be there to brainstorm project ideas and talk through tough concepts like root cause, community impact, and sustainability.
- Let her find her own path and lead the way! Be there when she needs you, but also stand back and let her find her own leadership and project management styles.
- Help her develop a network of adults in the community who can lend insight, provide contacts, and be resources for her along the way.
- Let her be the communicator—she'll need to be in touch with her council contact, her Highest Awards Committee member, her project advisor, and her team.
- Her Highest Awards Committee member will ask a lot of questions, you can help her get ready! Let her practice explaining her proposal and give her feedback before she submits.
- Encourage her to keep trying new things! Help her understand there may be changes to plans along the way, and that's ok.
- Be her cheerleader! Celebrate her accomplishments and help her through rough spots, but stay on the sidelines.

## Troop Leader Guide: What's your role?

Similar to a parent or guardian's role, you'll be an important source of support and guidance for girls in your troop pursuing their Gold Award. You can be there for her in all the ways listed above!

You may have been through the Bronze or Silver Award process with your troop in the past, but this will be a bit different. Where you may have played a very active role while girls worked toward these awards, pursuing the Gold Award needs to be a girl's own leadership experience. The biggest differences are that girls pursue the Gold Award individually rather than in a group, and that the girl will be expected to lead the way—including all communication with council and Highest Awards Committee contacts about her proposal, project, and final report.

# Gold Award Standards of Excellence

The Gold Award Standards of Excellence are set by Girl Scouts of the USA as universal standards for all girls across the country working toward the Gold Award. These standards invite you to think deeply, explore opportunities, and challenge yourself. Refer to these as you develop your proposal and move through the stages of your project.

Girl Scout Gold Award Steps	Standards of Excellence
<p><b>1. Choose an issue.</b> Use your values and skills to identify a community issue you care about.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live the Girl Scout Promise and Law.</li> <li>• Demonstrate civic responsibility.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Investigate.</b> Research everything you can about the issue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a variety of sources: interview people, read books and articles, find professional organizations online. Remember to evaluate each source's reliability and accuracy.</li> <li>• Demonstrate courage as you investigate your issue, knowing that what you learn may challenge your own and others' beliefs.</li> <li>• Identify national and/or global links to your community issue.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Get help.</b> Invite others to support and take action with you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek out and recognize skills and strengths in others.</li> <li>• Respect different points of view and ways of working.</li> <li>• Build a team and recruit a project advisor who will bring special skills to your Gold Award project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Create a plan.</b> Create a project plan that achieves sustainable and measurable impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the planning of your Gold Award project.</li> <li>• Work collaboratively to develop a plan that creates lasting change.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Be open to review of your plan and get feedback.</b> Sum up your project plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit a project proposal that is concise, comprehensive, detailed and clear.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Articulate your issue clearly and explain why it matters to you.</li> <li>• Accept constructive suggestions that will help refine and enhance your project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Take action.</b> Take the lead to carry out your plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take action to address the root cause of an issue, so that your solution has measurable and sustainable impact.</li> <li>• Actively seek partnerships to achieve greater community participation and impact for your Gold Award project.</li> <li>• Challenge yourself to try different ways to solve problems.</li> <li>• Use resources wisely.</li> <li>• Speak out and act on behalf of yourself and others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Educate and inspire.</b> Share what you have experienced with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on what you have learned when you submit your Girl Scout Gold Award final report.</li> <li>• Summarize the effectiveness of your project and the impact it has had on you and your community.</li> <li>• Share the project beyond your local community and inspire others to take action in their own communities.</li> </ul>

# Gold Award Requirements

- 1. PREREQUISITES:** Complete two Senior or Ambassador Leadership Journeys **OR** complete one Senior or Ambassador Leadership Journey and earn the Girl Scout Silver Award prior to beginning your Gold Award project. Your Girl Scout Silver Award can be earned through River Valleys or another council. Completion of each Leadership Journey needs to include a Take Action project.
- 2. PREPARATION:** After you've completed your Senior or Ambassador Leadership Journey(s), view the Girl Scouts River Valleys "Going for the Gold" training video online or attend an in-person program. You'll want to complete this training no more than six months prior to submitting your project proposal.
- 3. COMMUNITY ISSUE:** Projects for the Gold Award should address a community need in a community that you are a part of, outside of Girl Scouts. You define the type of community you wish to reach—your school district, religious community, neighborhood, community park, etc.—and whether your project will be done on a local, national or global scale. Think about possible national and/or global links to your community issue and project. Think about doing research and interviewing people in your community to see what issues and needs are present, then choose one that you are passionate about!

## Decision-Making Tips:

You are about to make a big decision that will have a significant impact on your life and may even change it forever. Take some time to reflect and get inspired. Start with yourself.

- What inspires you? Is it something in your school, community, country, or the world?
- What motivates you into action? Is it people, events, activities, places?
- What skills, talents, and strengths do you have to offer?
- How do you want to make a difference? As an advocate for justice? A promoter of environmental awareness? As a trainer, mentor, or coach? As an artist, actor, or musician?
- As an organizer of petitions or campaigns? As an entrepreneur? Can you think of another role?
- What motivates, inspires, and interests others? Can you build a team to support your idea?
- What would benefit the community both immediately and long-term?
- Check back through your Girl Scout Leadership Journey(s). What interested you that you might be able to translate into an award project?

## Interview Tips:

Find out what you need to prepare and conduct an interview.

- 1. Making arrangements:** Deciding who you would like to interview, contacting the person, and setting up a date and time.
- 2. Preparation:** Gathering research and background information to help you formulate questions to ask the interview subject(s). Use these sample interview questions to get you started, and then add some of your own. If you need help choosing an issue, you'll want to ask the following types of questions:
  - What are the biggest challenges/problems that you have faced or are facing?
  - What do you think is the root cause of these issues?
  - What will it take to address these issues?
  - Are there any resources available to do that?
  - What do you consider to be the strengths of the community?
  - If, on the other hand, you've already chosen an issue, move ahead to the interview.

**3. Conducting the interview:** Bring a notebook to take notes. Here are some tips:

- Find a quiet place where you'll have each other's full attention, and turn off your cell phones.
- Start by thanking the interviewee for her/his time, and then briefly describe your project.
- Keep questions simple and related to the issue at hand. Do your research. Preparation is key!
- Ask the person you interview if she or he would like to hear more about your project as it develops.
- Send a thank-you note to everyone you interview within a week of the interview.
- Mention the possibility of a follow-up interview.

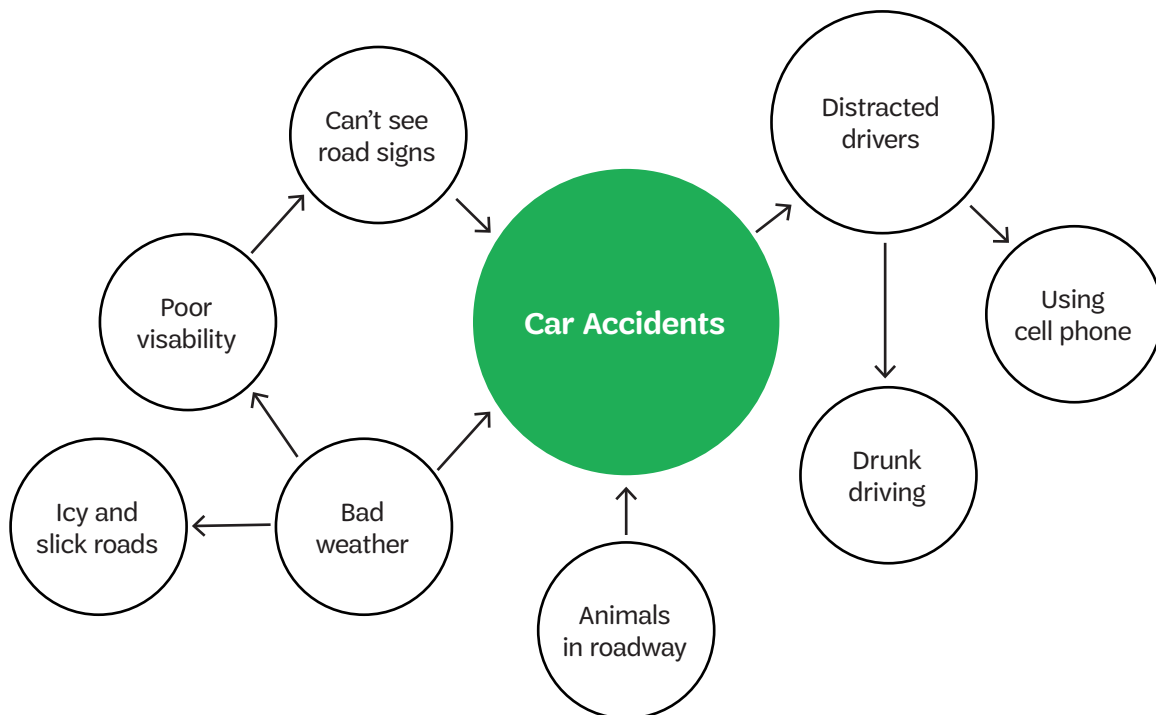
**4. Reviewing information and setting up a possible follow up interview:** Your interview is over. Now what? You have to sift through to find the information that's relevant to what you are working on. If there are some gaps that you need to fill, contact your interview subject(s) to get more information and to find out whether or not you have your facts correct.

**Mind-Mapping Tool:**

Create your own mind-mapping diagram like the one shown here, using one of the issues facing your community. Follow these instructions.

- Write the community issue in the middle of the paper or anywhere that works for you.
- Think about what some of the causes of this issue could be. In this example, one of the main causes of car accidents is bad weather. Notice how many different causes connect from bad weather.
- Now, try connecting the different causes you come up with to each other and to the main issue. How do the causes connect to each other?
- Do you see a pattern?

This activity will help you come up with different ways to approach a problem, as well as different ways you might go about addressing it.



**4. ROOT CAUSE:** It's important that your Gold Award project addresses your community issue's **root cause**, or underlying issue. This is the "why" of the issue and how it became a problem in your community. Finding the root cause of your issue takes thought, research, and talking to others. The same issue might exist in many communities, but the root cause may be different. You'll need to dig down find yours!

Check out some examples of root cause below, and use the Impact Planning Sheet on the next page to help you think it through.

Sample Community Issue	Possible Root Causes ("Why" it's an issue)
The parks in your community are often full of litter.	People in the community aren't invested in their community parks. No trash cans are available at the parks, people in the community aren't aware of the negative effects of littering on the environment.
The local food shelf is often low on food	People in the community don't know how to donate food or aren't aware of the need. There is a lack of access to grocery stores. People are lacking the skills or resources to find a job.
Bats are intruding on the neighborhood and homes	New home construction has destroyed area bats' natural habitat. People don't understand the important role of bats in the local ecosystem. There is a lack of knowledge in the community about how to provide or restore bats' homes.



**Impact Planning Sheet:**

Using the impact planning chart below, describe the impact you hope your project will have on your community, your target audience and you.

Impact On...	Goals	Potential Impact
<b>Community</b>	What community issue do you plan to address? What is the root cause of your chosen issue?	What examples of the project impact might you see in the future?
<b>Target Audience</b> (workshop participants, other youth, community members, etc.)	What skills, knowledge or attitudes will your target audience gain?	How will you know that the target audience gained skills or knowledge?

**5. CREATING A UNIQUE PROJECT:** The essence of a Gold Award project is its uniqueness. You've got a chance to truly think outside the box, and show your friends, family, neighbors, and teachers what you can do to improve the world around you. Utilize your skills, talents, and creativity to design a project you're passionate about!

Tackle an issue in your community that hasn't been addressed before. Make sure it's different from issues you addressed with your Journey Take Action Projects or your Silver or Bronze awards, and that you work with different groups or organizations than you did in these projects. Your project should stand alone, not as part of another organization's event.

**6. PROJECT ADVISOR:** Your project advisor will be an important resource—look for an adult with knowledge and expertise in the subject of your project. You'll look to this person for guidance, ideas, and expert advice along the way. Here are some things to remember and rules to follow:

- You'll have to find an advisor who is **not** your troop leader or parent/guardian. Look to your teachers, religious community leaders, or other adults in your broader community who might want to get involved!
- Tell your advisor about your project plans, make sure they're on board!
- You are welcome to have more than one person in this role, but choose one as your primary project advisor. This will be the person who signs the project advisor line in your proposal.

Need a little help recruiting your project advisor? Here are some tips to work through the process.

- **Reach out:** You've figured out the issue you're going to address with your project. Now it's time to find an expert to help along the way and give you advice and suggestions. Ask your troop/group volunteer or your council for suggestions. Then, select a few people who are related to your issue area with whom you'd like to work.
- **Safety first:** Before you meet with new people, talk to your troop/group volunteer for some safety tips and do's and don'ts. Make sure your family knows who you're talking to and meeting with.
- **Ask:** Start with your first choice, and if she or he can't help, go to your next choice. (There may be many others who are willing to help!) Approach the people you selected one at a time. Introduce yourself by sending a brief letter or e-mail, explaining what you're working on and the advice you would like. Give some background. Give an estimate, asking about time commitments and which way would be best to communicate.
- **Say thanks:** When an individual accepts, send her or him a thank-you note, along with a brief description of your project and a list of areas where you think you'll need the most help.
- **Think ahead when asking for help:** Before you compose an e-mail or call your project advisor, think about how you can simplify a problem you're having, so that she or he can offer quick suggestions.
- **Share your progress:** Make sure to tell your project advisor (in a quick e-mail or phone call) about your progress and how her or his help is making your project better, easier, and so on.
- **Celebrate together:** After your project is completed, invite her/him to your Highest Award ceremony/your own celebration. Don't forget to send a thank-you note!

**7. ACTIVE LEADERSHIP:** The most important piece of your Gold Award project is displaying **active leadership**. This is your time to shine! You'll use everything you've learned about being a leader in your years of Girl Scouts to engage your community. You may have worked on your Silver Award in a group of up to four girls, but your Gold Award needs to be your own individual project with you leading the way.

- Your project, along with the narrative, timeline, and photos you submit at the end should show you as the director or coordinator, instead of the person doing all the work by yourself.
- Build a team by enlisting your friends, classmates, fellow Girl Scouts, trusted adults, and others to get through the steps of your project and show that you actively led your community to accomplish your goals.
- Lead, coordinate, educate, and inspire others through your project work!

Active Leadership is what sets a Gold Award-worthy project apart from regular service projects. Take a look at the examples below of girls demonstrating active leadership.

Tasks that do not demonstrate active leadership	Tasks that demonstrate active leadership
Making posters or fliers yourself to display around town	Organizing and leading volunteers to make posters and fliers and websites
Writing a blog listing environmental activities for middle school students	Creating a team to organize and lead environmental activities with middle school students
Asking your family to make a bench	Making and directing a video with volunteers that gives step-by-step instructions on how to make a bench along with a how to flier on how to make one

**Service vs. Take Action Projects:**

Serving the community has always been an important part of Girl Scouts. Being of service means being helpful—like volunteering for a local shelter, putting together a clothing drive, doing yard work in a community space for Earth Day, or helping out at an animal shelter. These projects are very important, but are short-term.

Taking action means teaming up and mobilizing others to solve a problem—understanding the problem’s root cause and addressing it in a way that has long-term effects. The girl who organized the clothing drive could turn her service experience into a Take Action project by creating a clothes closet for the community and educating others about the importance of getting involved. That’s how you move from service to action! See below for examples of service projects vs. Take Action projects:

<b>Example #1 Community Issue: Patients and their families spend a lot of time in the hospital.</b>	
<p><b>Service project:</b> Make blankets; collect games, toys and books; and create care packages to donate to the hospital.</p>	<p><b>Take Action projects:</b> Organize meal delivery or a household chores service to support families; plan an annual health fair to encourage people to stay healthy and promote regular check-ups and screenings; organize and lead informational talks or support groups for those struggling with a particular illness.</p>

<b>Example #2 Community Issue: PA family’s home is destroyed by a fire.</b>	
<p><b>Service project:</b> Collect clothes, household goods, and food for the family.</p>	<p><b>Take Action projects:</b> Create a public service announcement to raise fire safety awareness; hold workshops in the community about the importance of renter’s insurance in case of fire; develop a fun, educational fire safety day for kids in the community.</p>

### Teaming Tips:

Think about the people who might be able to help you put your project into action. Choose people who will stick it out until the project is complete. You shouldn't limit your team to people your age or just Girl Scouts. Working in a group will help you make a bigger impact and cover more ground than you would on your own. It might be challenging at times, but remember to always be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, and responsible for what you say and do. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you build your team:

- Promote a sense of trust and belonging
- Share ownership
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Communicate regularly and openly
- Respect diversity
- Have fun and be creative
- Be open to new ideas and different ways of working
- Keep learning and growing

### Making Your Pitch:

You've seen the advertisements and most times you even remember the slogans. What makes them memorable? It could be because they're clever or catchy or funny. Now that you've chosen your issue, think of a way that you can let people know about it. You should be able to describe the issue you've chosen in about 15 seconds. Here are some tips to help you do that.

- **Make it memorable:** Develop a slogan. What makes you remember the slogan in those commercials on TV? How can you incorporate that into your pitch?
- **Target your audience:** Who are you trying to reach? If you are aiming for kids, think of a story or riddle that would relate this to them. Young kids love to rhyme. If you're reaching out to adults, no cute stories! Think about your audience and try to tailor your pitch so that it connects with them.
- **How you will help:** You've gotten their attention with your story. Now tell them what your project will do to make their lives better.
- **Personalize it:** Why this project? Why this target audience? How will doing this make you a better person?
- **Do it:** Put it all together. Explain your idea in a short and motivating way that clarifies for you, your potential team, target audience, and supporters. Remember, 15 seconds. Go!

**8. SUSTAINABILITY:** Design a project that creates lasting change! Once you've done all the work to find an issue, gotten at the root cause, rallied your friends, family, and community, and solved the problem, you'll need to make sure your efforts are sustainable. This means making sure things don't revert back to the way they were. Find a way to make sure the results of your project continue to live on in the future, and that your work has a lasting impact on your community.

Here are some ideas of community groups you might pursue a commitment from to continue the accomplishments of your project in the future:

- Community group related to your project
- Younger Girl Scout or Boy Scout troop
- Your church or place of worship
- School administrators
- School club like the National Honor Society, STEM club, or another related to the subject of your project
- Local government

**Sustainability Tips:** Girl Scout Gold Award projects are not "one shot"—they create lasting change. You can ensure a lasting project by setting clear timelines, collaborating with community organizations, building alliances with adults and mentors, and keeping good records. Sustainability often involves influencing others to pitch in. Here are some examples on the next page of sustainable projects.

Community Issue	Root Cause	Take Action	Making It Sustainable
Food waste from school lunches	No community composting or recycling program.	Create a food-waste composting program for the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with school officials to change to biodegradable plates and cups in the cafeteria.</li> <li>• Work with town/state food waste officials to ensure the system is in place.</li> <li>• Get a commitment from school administrators to carry on when your project is complete.</li> </ul>
Teen suicide	Lack of awareness and prevention.	Establish an awareness and prevention program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce a short video that can be used in other communities with an online brochure outlining the steps to an awareness and prevention program.</li> <li>• Share the video and online brochure with schools and community organizations.</li> </ul>

**9. BUDGET:** Your Gold Award project doesn't need to cost anything—in fact, the best projects often cost nothing or very little! If your project will cost money to carry out, make sure you're following all Girl Scout money-earning and donation guidelines. You'll also need to submit a budget—both an estimated budget with your proposal and a final budget with your final report. Make sure you're keeping track!

Here are the ways you may fund your project, some money-earning no-no's, and a budget planning worksheet to help you out.

#### **Donations**

You as a Girl Scout may not directly ask for donations of money, but you may ask for in-kind donations of supplies, services, or volunteer time. You may only ask for these in-kind donations from smaller local businesses, not large corporations or chains such as Target, Lowes, Home Depot, or Michael's. As a minor, you may not ask for donations alone—enlist an adult to ask on your behalf.

#### **Troop Funds or Juliette Program Credits**

You may use money from your troop's account (or Juliette Program Credits for Juliette Girl Scouts), but the decision to use troop funds for a Gold Award project needs to be approved by the whole troop. Juliette Program Credits should be submitted along with receipts with your final report.

#### **Cookie Credits/Fall FUNds**

Cookie Credits or Fall FUNds are a great source of funding for your project! Once your project has been approved and completed, submit any unexpired credits (Remember—your credits cannot expire before submitting your final report, or they will not be redeemed!) and project receipts with your final report.

#### **Personal and Family Contributions**

You're welcome to make personal contributions to carry out your project—this is a great way to invest in your own leadership development! Your family may also make a contribution, but only up to 25% of your total project costs.

### **Money-Earning Projects**

Check the River Valleys website for up-to-date money-earning guidelines. Also, be sure to follow all guidelines in SafetyWise! Any money-earning projects where you'll make more than \$100 need to be approved first by submitting the Money Earning Approval Form to River Valleys. You'll also need to participate in the Cookie Program during the year you'll be completing any money-earning projects.

### **Small Grants**

Any grants you'd like to pursue need to be approved by Girl Scouts River Valleys first before you apply. If you find a small grant under \$500 you'd like to apply for, please email the grant information and a description of what it will be used for to [girlscouts@girlscoutsv.org](mailto:girlscouts@girlscoutsv.org) for approval before beginning an application.

### **Event Fees**

If you're hosting an event for your project, you may choose to charge a small fee to cover costs of supplies, food, or professional services. Remember—Girl Scout Gold Award Projects cannot make money for you or another organization, and any extra project money cannot not be deposited into a troop or Juliette account.

### **Money no-no's**

Raising funds in these ways could jeopardize your project! If you're not sure, reach out to Girl Scouts River Valleys with questions.

- Asking large corporations or chains for any kind of donation
- Asking for donations of money, rather than supplies or volunteer time
- Using a donation or tip jar to collect money
- Creating a campaign on websites like Go Fund Me, Kickstarter, etc. to raise money
- Applying for a large corporate grant, or receiving grant funds without approval
- Gold Award projects cannot make a profit or raise money for other organizations. Your income and expenses should match.

### **Planning Your Budget:**

It's budget time! Start by figuring out what steps you need to complete and what resources or materials you will need. Think about where you can get materials for little or no cost, if possible. If it's not possible, think about how much it is going to cost and how you can cover those expenses. Many projects are possible when you concentrate on the issue at hand. Use your influence and leadership skills to come up with ways that you can make a different way to complete your project that might not include earning money. See the budget planning worksheet on the next page.

## Budget Planning Worksheet

List the steps to achieve your project goal	Date by which to complete	What resources and materials will you need?	Where can you get the resources and materials?	How much will they cost?	How do you plan to cover these costs?

**10. TIMELINE:** You'll include a timeline in your proposal, and another more accurate and detailed timeline in your final report. Your proposal timeline is where you've got a chance to map out your project and show how you'll get it done! Break down larger tasks into smaller detailed ones, with the majority of tasks assigned to your team. This shows active leadership!

Be specific—list the date you think your project will begin, the approximate dates each task will happen, and when you think you'll finish. Your total hours should equal at least 80 hours, with most hours spent in an active leadership role. Remember, money-earning activities and time spent on your proposal and final report do not count toward your total hours. The timeline you complete with your final report should accurately record all tasks and people involved in your project. Make sure you're keeping track along the way!

You can count hours spent by your team members completing tasks. When recording tasks your team completes together, you'll only count the hours once. For example: if three people make posters for two hours, you would count two hours, not six.

Here's an example timeline to get you pointed in the right direction.

Estimated Project Start Date April 27, 2018 Estimated Project End Date October 15, 2018

Date (MM/DD/YY)	Activity/Task	Team Members Involved	Hours
4/27/18	Logistics meeting	Advisor, troop members	3
4/29/18	Meeting w/ organization director	Advisor, Organization Director	2
4/30/18	Research for video presentation	Advisor	5
5/6/18	Creation of video presentation	AV club, troop members	8
5/8/18	Editing of video presentation	AV club	5
6/9/18	Research for curriculum development	Advisor	3
6/10/18	Curriculum development	Advisor, Organization Director	7
6/11/18	Curriculum development	Advisor, Organization Director	7
6/17/18	Volunteer meeting	Organization Director & volunteers	2
6/21/18	Curriculum trial run	Organization volunteers	5
6/21/18	Feedback session	Organization volunteers	3
6/25/18	Curriculum revision	Advisor, Organization Director	4
7/10/18	Volunteer training	Advisor, Organization volunteers	3
7/11/18	Volunteer training	Advisor, Organization volunteers	3
7/12/18	First day of workshop	Organization volunteers	6
7/13/18	Second day of workshop	Organization volunteers	6
7/14/18	Third day of workshop	Organization volunteers	6
7/14/18	Debrief session	Organization volunteers	3
7/17/18	Meeting w/ organization director	Organization Director	3
Estimated Total Hours to Complete Project:			84



**11. THE APPROVAL PROCESS:** When submitting your proposal, keep in mind that project approval takes up to eight weeks or more from the time you submit your proposal to when it's approved by the Highest Award Committee. Leave yourself enough time before your project's planned start date, especially for summer projects! This includes time in between when you'll be contacted to make any updates, so be ready and get any revisions back ASAP.

Here are the steps for project approval:

- Fill out the River Valleys Gold Award proposal form (please type!). Make sure it's the form from the River Valleys website, not from Girl Scouts of the USA or another council! Wrong paperwork can cause a serious slow-down and you'll have to resubmit.
- Think of your proposal as a professional application—fill in all the lines, get all your signatures, answer every question thoroughly!
- Submit the original (make a copy for yourself!) by mail, or email a digital copy to: **[girlscouts@girlscoutsv.org](mailto:girlscouts@girlscoutsv.org)**.
- Your proposal will be reviewed by council staff and the Highest Award committee. See more about the committee later!
- A member of the committee will contact you to talk about your proposal. They'll have questions, and you'll likely be asked to send additional information or make changes to increase the strength of your project. Don't worry, this is normal! Finish your revisions and send them back as soon as you can.
- Once your project is approved, get started! Projects usually take between three months and two years from beginning to end.

#### Highest Awards Committee

The Highest Awards committee is a group of Girl Scout adult volunteers and council staff committed to helping girls achieve great things. They're here to make sure your project is in great shape and meets all Gold Award requirements. They'll ask you to talk through your project and elaborate on things you might not have written about, and might need you to send additional materials. Be ready!

Here's a list of questions your committee contact might ask:

1. Describe your Gold Award project and what prompted you to select it. What community need are you serving? How are you addressing the root cause of your chosen issue?
2. What are the specific steps you need to take in order to complete your project and what is your timeline for completion?
3. What goals do you have for your project and how will you know that you have reached them? What tools will you use to evaluate your project's effectiveness?
4. Describe how you will demonstrate active leadership in this project? What other skills and talents will you put into action to complete your project?
5. How is your project sustainable?
6. How will you promote your Gold Award project within your community?
7. How will you involve others in the completion of your Gold Award project? Are you working with an organization or agency? If so, what relationship(s) have you already developed?
8. How do you plan to meet the costs of your project?
9. What aspects of this project do you anticipate will be challenging for you?

# Project Planning Checklist

Go through this checklist before you submit your project proposal for council approval to help determine if you're ready to go. If you can't check something off, revisit that piece to make sure you've got everything covered.

- My project is unique. It is my own, can stand on its own, and is not dependent on another girl's project or another organization's event.
- I have a project goal, and I know what I want to learn.
- I dug down to the root cause, and my project will address it.
- I feel good about the level of challenge and scale. My project is doable! (If not, you may need to step back and refocus. Talk to your advisor, troop volunteer, or council contact for help.)
- My project plans fit within the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints (found on Girl Scout River Valleys' website).
- My project plan demonstrates active leadership!
- I have recruited my team, and have discussed the project plan with them.
- I created a budget for my project.
- I have a plan for how I'll raise funds (if necessary).
- I have created a timeline for my project that includes a minimum of 80 hours, not including writing my proposal, fundraising, or writing my final report.
- My project addresses a need in my community, and I have found national and/or global links.
- I have a plan for how my project will be sustainable.
- My project challenges my abilities and interests, and will help me grow.
- I have filled out the project proposal packet (completely!), either typed or in black pen, and have obtained all required signatures.
- I saved a copy of my Project Proposal and any other supporting documents for myself.
- I'm ready to get started!

# Carry Out Your Project

Once your project proposal has been approved, lead your team and carry out your plan:

- Make sure you have completed all necessary additional forms (non-member insurance, money earning approval, etc.).
- If you hit a speed bump along the way, learn from it and find ways to adjust your plan.
- Contact the Highest Award Committee and council if there are any major changes to your project after approval, you have any questions, or simply need some advice.
- Take pictures as you carry out your project to send in with your Final Report.
- Record your timeline project hours and dates as you go.
- Keep all receipts and make copies of all documentation for your project.
- Have FUN!

# Final Report

Once you have completed your Gold Award Project, your last step is to complete and submit your Final Report.

If you wish to participate in Girl Scouts River Valleys' Highest Award recognition ceremony, your project must be completed and the **Final Report submitted by March 1**. Final Reports submitted after March 1 will be recognized at the following year's ceremony. Girls that have graduated from high school must submit their Final Report by **September 30** of their graduation year.

Make one copy of the Final Report and all attachments for yourself and one copy for your advisors before submitting to council. The Highest Award Committee will reach out to you once they have received and reviewed your Final Report. Please allow at least four weeks for a response. Final Reports must be typed or completed in black ink.

## Final Report Checklist

Be sure the following is included before sending in your Girl Scouts River Valleys Gold Award Final Report, found on Girl Scouts River Valleys' website. Remember to make a copy of everything you turn in.

- Fully completed Final Report packet, found on Girl Scouts River Valleys' website, including signatures.
- Photographs: 5–10 photographs of your project being implemented, including at least one picture of you doing your project.
- Receipts and Cookie Credits/Fall FUNds/Juliette Program Credits for reimbursement, if applicable.
- Any newspaper articles, website links, fliers, or other resources that would be helpful and relevant to the person reviewing your final report.
- Submit headshot picture of you to our website at [gsrv.gs/submit-gold-award-photo](https://gsrv.gs/submit-gold-award-photo) when you submit your Final Report to Girl Scouts River Valleys.