

Building a Gold Award Proposal

5 Important Overall Steps

1. **Brainstorm issues.** Think about what YOU are passionate about. Use GSUSA's [GoGold](#) to assist you.
2. **Investigate your issue!** Find the root cause, the effects, the perspectives of your community of choice and how it is currently be addressed and supported
3. **Talk to community members.** Verify the community need and begin to seek out tentative permissions from those you'd like to work with
4. **Begin working on your Project Proposal.** Using GoGold, work through Steps 1-4. Make sure you answer each question thoroughly!
5. **Share your plan** with those you will be working with, get feedback, and collect digital verification from your Troop Leader and Project Advisor.

Investigate the issue

Research everything you can about the issue. Use multiple sources, talk with the community, and find out what others have done to address the issue.

Why research?:

- ✓ Prepares you to speak confidently to peers and community members
- ✓ Helps to identify the root cause
- ✓ Helps validate the need
- ✓ Highlight examples of how others are addressing the issue

Research the issue by finding the answers to these questions:

- What is the history of the issue?
- What causes it?
- Why does it matter?
- How does it impact communities?
- Is your community already addressing it? How so? If it's already being addressed, is there a need for you to do it too?
- How have others outside the community tackled this issue? Why have those solutions worked? What challenges did they face?
- Do community members agree on the importance or cause of this issue?

Keep in mind that a Gold Award Project is not just:

X a collection or donation project. Collecting food for an animal shelter, for example, doesn't meet the standards of a Gold Award. Collecting or making things to donate can be helpful in the short term, but it doesn't address a root cause and isn't sustainable

X a fundraiser. As a Girl Scout, you cannot raise money for another organization. Also, money alone doesn't usually address the root cause of an issue. Just like with a collection drive, the resources will run out.

X a tool. Physical structures, trails, website, and videos are all important tools that can assist you in educating your community on issues, but alone, these tools do not create measurable or sustainable change.

X a "canned" or pre-established program. Highest Award projects should be your own ideas, not implementing someone else's.

Your Gold Award can include these types of activities, but it cannot be the only component of your project.

Gold Award Projects use these 3 Take Action solutions

- ✓ **Work directly on the problem and with the community you have identified.** A Gold Award project cannot be earned without multiple face to face interactions.
- ✓ **Educate.** Past Gold Award Projects have educating on the issue, taught life skills that connect to their issue, educating influence-makers in their community and more.
- ✓ **Advocate for a change by influencing appropriate decision-makers to address the problem.**

Then as you write your proposal, keep the following in mind!

- **You take the lead.** This is your project. You'll need to create a team to support you but remember the Gold Award is an individual recognition.
- **Include facts and data that support your project's need and the proposed solutions.** Try to go beyond just personal observations. GSAK recommends identifying 3 quick facts that you support your project need.
- **Share details!** In order to understand your project plan, the Gold Award Committee need details.

- **Explain the outline of your plan.**
 - What is the impact you want to see (aka your overall project goals)?
 - Who do you wish to work with?
 - What take action solutions are you offering to address the root cause?
 - Who will you include in your team? Challenge: look for experts to support you as well as peers outside of Girl Scouts.
 - How will you spend the recommended 80 hours asked for the Gold Award project?
 - What are the major steps you'll need to take to implement your plans?
 - What budget is necessary to support your project? How will you earn the money necessary?
 - How will you measure success? What tools and methods will you use?
 - How will your project be sustained? Who will manage the project in the future?

Important Tips for Gold Award Project Proposals

- **Answer each question with enough detail to create a full picture.** One to two sentence explanations do not help the Gold Award Committee and GSAK's Program team in understanding what you set out to do.
- **Provide evidence to confirm the need of your project and your solutions.**
- **Review your Project Proposal with others to ensure it is clear and well communicated.** GSAK suggests giving the completed project proposal to someone who knows nothing about your plans. Ask them to read it and give feedback. You might ask one person to be your editor-looking at grammar, spelling, and structure-while another reviewer focuses on content, checking if you have complete, robust answers with specifics and clear connections between the answers for related questions. Your reviewers should be from outside your family and troop.
- **Identify a Project Advisor outside of your family and Girl Scouts.** A Project Advisor should be an adult expert on the issue you have chosen. This person is also your primary subject matter expert. Past Project Advisors include social workers, teachers, nurses, directors and staff at local organizations and businesses, coaches and more.
- **Ask your Project Advisor to review the proposal.** Point out what you hope to achieve, how you're communicating that to the Gold Award committee, and ensure you've thought through every aspect of the project. Keeping your Project Advisor informed gives you the opportunity to gather feedback and results in your advisor having confidence in your ability to carry out the project.

What happens after a Project Proposal is submitted to GSAK?

Project Proposals submitted in GoGold will be automatically emailed to the GSAK program team. Proposals reviewed first by members of the GSAK Program Team and then the Gold Award Committee. We use the following steps:

- 1) A member of the GSAK Program team will review the proposal to ensure it's not missing anything
- 2) You'll receive an email with instructions for submitting additional information (if needed) and details about your Gold Award Committee Interview.
- 3) All Gold Award Girl Scouts must complete an interview with the Gold Award Committee. Interviews are held on the 4th Monday of the month, by phone, usually between 6:00 – 7:30 pm. The interview is a chance for you to tell the Committee more about your project and gives the Committee a chance to ask questions and make suggestions.
- 4) Following the interview (usually the next day), you'll receive an email with feedback from the Committee, contact information for your Committee Liaison, as well as the status of your proposal.
 - **Proposal Meets Criteria:** You've met the requirements of the proposal, go ahead and get started!
 - **Proposal Needs Improvement:** You have a good idea, but your proposal needs some edits. You can start your project after you submit the changes requested by the Committee and it's been reviewed.
 - **Proposal Doesn't Meet Criteria:** Your project doesn't meet the standards of a Gold Award. You'll receive an email with an explanation as well as next steps.

Gold Award Project Proposal Rubric

		Does Not Meet Criteria	Needs Improvements	Meets Criteria
Take Action	Project Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project description is confusing Community issue is not clear and too broad Little to no research has been completed beyond personal observations No set target audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project description is mostly understood Community issue is defined but lacks detail Highlights 1-2 research points to support need Target audience is identified but needs more definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project description is easily understood Community issue is clearly defined Highlights 3 research points and community validation of need Target audience is clear and fully described
	Root Cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not identify root cause of issue. Does not list action to address issue. Lacks link to larger context (national/global) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes at least 1 root cause of issue but lacks detail Has at least 1 action to address issue but lacks details Explains a link to larger context (national/global) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes at least 1 root cause of issue Has at least 1 action to address issue Shows project's clear link to larger context (national/global)
	Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No SMART goals No clear project purpose No measurement methods or tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes 1-2 SMART goals SMART goals connected to project purpose Includes methods/tools that might relate to SMART goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes 2-3 SMART goals SMART goals are directly related to project purpose Includes methods/tools that directly related to SMART goals
	Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks idea of who will continue project Only includes website, video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes an idea of who will continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes an idea of how will continue Explains who will continue the project
Leadership	Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not include team members Includes only family members and Girl Scouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes team members but less than 5 Has some diversity of expertise but most are from the same organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes team members from several varying backgrounds with diverse skills (approx. 5 members)
	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has no information about personal strengths Does not highlight HOW they will use the team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes vague strengths Highlights 1-2 ways they will use the team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains information about personal strengths Shares clear strategies for using team
Project Planning	Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 80 hours Doesn't highlight ANY action steps Includes time of other volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somewhat realistic Highlights many major steps Is fairly easy to understand what candidate looks to do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairly realistic with 80+ hours Highlights many major steps clearly Easy to understand what candidate looks to achieve
	Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incomplete information Income and expenses do not balance Very few expenses have been anticipated and uses their own money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income and expenses balance Doesn't raise money for another organization Most expenses have been anticipated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income and expenses balance Doesn't raise money for another organization Nearly all likely expenses have been anticipated

Use this rubric help you know when you are ready to submit your proposal

