

## **GOLD AWARD FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

We welcome inquiry about the Gold Award from girls, troop leaders, parents and community partners. **However, we strongly encourage and expect that girls contact us directly about their specific Gold Award Project**, rather than rely on Project Advisors, troop leaders or parents communicating on a girl's behalf. A big part of your Gold Award leadership experience is about developing your leadership skills and communicating, negotiating and advocating for you.

### **1. GENERAL QUESTIONS**

#### ***Who should I contact for any question about the Gold Award at Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri?***

All questions about Girl Scout Gold Award need to be directed to the Gold Award Staff Advisor, 314.592.2360 or [BSGawards@girlscoutsem.org](mailto:BSGawards@girlscoutsem.org)

#### ***Who can earn the Girl Scout Gold Award?***

Registered Girl Scout Seniors or Girl Scout Ambassadors are eligible. You must be registered when you submit your project proposal and final report. A girl has until she turns 18 or until the end of the Girl Scout membership year (September 30<sup>th</sup>) following her graduation from high school.

#### ***Can a girl begin work on the Gold Award the summer after bridging from one Girl Scout level to the next?***

She can begin to work on the prerequisites to earning the Gold Award (i.e. completing a Senior or Ambassador Journey) Completing the prerequisites and attending a GSEM Gold Award workshop are required by GSEM **before** she can begin to work on a Gold Award Project Proposal.

#### ***What if a girl's project is not completed by the council ceremony time?***

Final Reports are due by March 1<sup>st</sup> to be able to be recognized at the June Reflections Ceremony. If a girl's project is not yet complete and she has not received her Final Report Approval, she will be invited to the next year's ceremony.

#### ***If a girl starts working on her Take Action project and moves; can she still earn her award?***

Councils and Overseas Committees are encouraged to be flexible to work and serve the girls' best interests. If a girl moves, she should work with her council and/or Overseas Committee to complete the project, or depending on her project, she may be able to complete her project with Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri.

### **2. PROPOSAL- PREREQUISITES**

#### ***Which form will you accept when I submit my Gold Award proposal?***

All paperwork submitted after September 30, 2010 should be submitted using the GSEM Proposal form available on our website [www.girlscoutsem.org/content/226/gs-gold-award.aspx](http://www.girlscoutsem.org/content/226/gs-gold-award.aspx)

#### ***May I submit my proposal without finishing my prerequisites?***

No. completing Gold Award prerequisites and then attending a GSEM Gold Award Workshop is required. You need to finish all your prerequisites before sending in your

proposal. The purpose of the prerequisites is to better prepare you for the rigorous challenge of the Gold Award by building your skill sets.

***Do we need a different set of requirements for girls with disabilities to earn the Gold Award?***

No. The Girl Scout Awards are done to the best of a girl's ability. There is no need to have special requirements for girls with disabilities- encourage flexibility and the recruitment of Advisors that can work with the girl individually.

***How do girls know when a journey is "completed"?***

A journey is completed when a girl has earned the journey awards, which include creating and carrying out a Take Action project related to the journey theme.

***Could I do my Gold Award project with my Girl Scout friends?***

The Gold Award is an individual girl earned award that reaches outside the Girl Scout community. However, you can recruit your Girl Scout friends to be a part of your project team. Your Gold Award project should be designed; project managed and is accountable to one individual girl. Linking your Gold Award project with another girl and her Gold Award project is not encouraged.

However, if a project is large and can support two girls, than each girl **must provide a project plan and time log that will show separate responsibilities on a project** that will support each girl completing a minimum of 80 hours. (Planning and implementation)

Each girl must record the leadership hours for one girl only- meaning you cannot report the same hours or same activities in more than one proposal. You may share the same Project Advisor, if necessary.

Each girl would need to submit her project proposal and meet with the committee as an individual.

***How should I present my project?***

On time- **project proposals are due the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month, September thru June.** Your proposal should represent thoughtful research and planning on your part. It should provide the reviewer a very clear idea and the intent of your project. Remember, you are presenting your project to individual reviewers that don't know anything about you, your community, the issue you are addressing, or your project. Write and present your proposal in a professional way, communicating fully your vision for the entire Gold Award project,

We start to evaluate as soon as we see the paper, therefore avoid liquid corrector, food stains, wrinkles, etc. **Your project must be completely typed.** Please do not submit hand written proposals. Remember, you are presenting yourself in a more formal way, and your proposal should reflect excellence. Place your name at the top of each page.

It is **required**, that after submitting your proposal, you schedule a time on the Proposal Review Date **to present your proposal in person or by teleconference** to the Girl Scout Gold Award Advisory Committee. This person to person presentation saves time and facilitates communication.

### ***Where do I send my Gold Award Proposal?***

If you have your proposal scanned (with signatures in it) please send it to [BSGawards@girlscoutsem.org](mailto:BSGawards@girlscoutsem.org). You may fax it to 314.890.0645 or snail-mail to: Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri, Gold Award, 3200 Ball Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146.

### ***What are the suggested hours for earning the Girl Scout Gold Award?***

Not all projects will require the same length of time to complete. From planning and implementing to troubleshooting and celebration, each project plan will be different. The time it takes to earn the award will depend on the nature of the project, and the support of the community. Quality projects should be emphasized over quantity of hours. The suggested number of hours for a quality Gold Award Project is a **minimum of 80 hours**.

### **3. TAKE ACTION PROJECT**

#### ***What's the difference between a community service project and a Take Action Project?***

A ***Community Service Project*** gives temporary solution to the immediate need of the community (food or clothing drive, planting a garden, writing a manual, designing a website, etc). While these projects address a need in the community, they do so for only a short period of time, and can be considered short-term projects.

A ***Take Action Project*** targets the cause of the situation. Girls take time to identify and understand the root cause of the issue they are addressing. Girls also must make sure that each project is sustainable and that the impact is measurable. ***Your Gold Award should be a Take Action Project!***

- **Sustainable:** Girls must make arrangements (such as collaborating with community leaders and/or organizations; building alliances with mentors) to ensure that the project creates lasting change and is not a one-time event
- **Measurable:** The success of the project can be determined based on the number of people the project helped, the number of people who were involved, any reduction in the community's need, and other concrete numbers.

### **4. SUSTAINABLE – MEASURABLE**

#### ***What does it mean to have a sustainable project?***

A sustainable project is one that lasts after the girl's involvement ends. Including a focus on education and raising awareness is one way to make sure a project is carried on. Workshops and hands-on learning sessions can inspire others to keep the project going. Another way to create a sustainable project is by collaborating with community groups, civic associations, non-profit agencies, local government, and/or religious organizations to ensure the project lasts beyond the girl's involvement. Depending on the project, and the collaborating agencies, it may be necessary to expressly state how and who will sustain the project.

#### ***How does a girl measure project impact?***

Girls identify their project goals for their community, target audience and themselves by developing success indicators. Projects often focus on the number of people that benefit from the project, number of people that participate in the project, survey data, before and after project data, specific behaviors that changed, attitudes affected and/or skills gained. You will need to collect, manage, analyze, and report data findings in order to measure your project impact.

## **5. REVIEW PROCESS**

### ***How much time does it take to review my Girl Scout Gold Award Proposal?***

It may take 5-6 weeks from the date of submission. Project Proposals are due the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month September – June. The Gold Award Advisory Committee does not meet in July or August.

Proposals are posted on the Girl Scout Gold Award Advisory Committee secure web page for their preview. **Project Proposal Reviews** are scheduled for the third week of the month. See current issue of Girl Scout Gold Award Newsletter for dates.

### ***How will I receive feedback about my proposal submission?***

The committee will send you a letter documenting their decision.

**DO NOT begin your project before you receive approval from the committee.**

Meeting in person or via teleconference with the Girl Scout Gold Award Advisory Committee will give you an opportunity to get and give answers about your project that might otherwise get muddled in an e-mail or lost in phone tag.

If you cannot meet with the committee, they will still review your proposal and follow up with a letter informing you of their decision.

Feedback may include some or all of the following:

Detailed questions about your project, budget and project plan; clarifying questions seeking more specificity or greater vision, plan for sustainability, recommended modifications, required modifications and suggestions for strengthening your proposal, or challenging yourself to develop new skills some modifications may be required. Depending, you may need to submit an addendum to your proposal, or resubmit a modified proposal. It is prudent to plan time for some modifications.

### ***How will I know if I need to make modifications to my proposal?***

A letter will be sent after your Project Proposal Review documenting the committee's decision. If you took good notes during the review, you should have a pretty good idea of what needs to be done.

### ***How much time do I have to turn in the changes to the council?***

It depends on you, your personal timeline and goals. –is it a simple addition or total revision; do you need to discuss changes with your Project Advisor or benefiting agencies? A short turn around time is highly recommended.

### ***Could I start my Gold Award project even when I haven't received approval?***

No. You need to secure **approval** from the Girl Scout Gold Award Advisory Committee **before** starting your Gold Award project. Plan a starting date in your timeline that allows for possible modifications before receiving council approval. Should your starting timeline prove too soon, you may risk over promising to your community partners.

### ***Can I expedite my proposal and final report review?***

Sorry. We receive a high volume of submissions for girls pursuing their Gold Award. As such, we review submissions according to the date of receipt. The committee is not able to accommodate last minute or expedited requests for reviews. Plan ahead.

***Can I submit my proposal for approval, do my project and submit my final report the summer following my high school graduation, and earn my Gold Award by September 30?***

The last possible date to submit a Gold Award Project proposal for this scenario would be May 1<sup>st</sup>. The committee does not meet in July or August and if you wait till June 1<sup>st</sup> to submit your proposal and you need to revise or resubmit, you will run out of time.

While some girls may succeed in earning the Gold Award on such a timeline, this is not recommended. Remember you are the project manager and will be communicating and working with several people, and maybe several community partners. Coordination takes time, and the summer presents the increased likelihood that your project team may have prior summer commitments that do not fit with your compressed project plan.

***How can we make sure that the Gold Award represents quality projects?***

The best way to make sure that a girl will develop a quality project is to ensure that both she and her Project Advisor understand what the Girl Scout Gold Award entails, and specifically the difference between a onetime community service opportunity or event and a Gold Award Take Action Project.

Girls and their adult advocates (Project Advisor, Troop leaders, and parents) should review the GSUSA Girl and Adult Volunteer Guidelines and the GSEM Guidelines, Policies and Procedures.

Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri use the GSUSA national benchmark, the Standards of Excellence, as a guide in reviewing proposals and final reports. These standards will be applied to each Girl Scout seeking to earn her Girl Scout Gold Award. Remember, the perceived quality of your project begins with your proposal review; presenting your proposal as a professional document is essential to demonstrating your excellence from the very beginning, and is an expectation easily met with time and attention to detail.

## **6. ADULT SUPPORT – PROJECT ADVISORS**

***Who are the adult guides for- council staff, parents, or volunteers?***

Any adult is welcome to use the adult guides. The guides were designed for volunteers working directly with girls on achieving their Gold Award.

***What is the difference between a troop/group volunteer and a Girl Scout Gold Award Project Advisor in the Girl Scout Gold Award process? Do girls need both?***

- A **Troop/Group Volunteer** is the adult who works with an ongoing troop or group. This adult works with girls to complete the pre-requisites. Once a girl identifies her issue, the troop/group volunteer might help her identify a person in the community who could be a great Project Advisor.
- A **Girl Scout Gold Award Project Advisor** is typically an adult identified and approached by the girl, who volunteers to guide and support a girl as she takes her project from the planning stage to implementation thru to completion. The Project Advisor is not a girl's parent or the girls Troop/Group volunteer. The Project Advisor is typically someone from the community who is knowledgeable about the issue and who can provide guidance, experience, expertise and connections to resources along the way.

***At what point should a Girl Scout Gold Award Project Advisor be identified?***

The Project Advisor should be identified in the planning phase before the Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal is submitted to the council. The Project Advisor expands the network of adults and provides expertise for a girl's project. If a girl has an idea before she starts any work on her Girl Scout Gold Award, she might want to identify her Project Advisor from the very beginning.

Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri require a Gold Award Project Advisor to **submit a background check, after the project is approved**, as a part of the Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal process.

***Why can't a parent be a Girl Scout Gold Award Project Advisor?***

Girls are encouraged to connect with their community and expand their network when earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. That means working with a Project Advisor who is not her parent.

**DO YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?** Please contact  
[BSGawards@girlscoutsem.org](mailto:BSGawards@girlscoutsem.org)