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## Highest Award Program: Frequently Asked Questions (Updated March 2020)

In these times of uncertainty and change, you can definitely count on Girl Scouts to be there! We are confident in our Girl Scouts' ability to make change, even in times such as these. GSEMA will continue to be available to any Girl Scout or group and the adults that are supporting them along the way. We are here to help you, not to put up barriers.

Please review the most frequently asked questions since COVID-19 guidelines were implemented. You can reach our Director of Leadership and Awards at 617-999-4433 or email [customer care@gsema.org](mailto:customer care@gsema.org) to be connected if you have additional questions or would like help in brainstorming.

### **Can girls continue to take action in their communities?**

Yes! When projects first began we asked groups to have in-person interaction with their communities. Now with COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations, we understand that both girls and adults will need to work together to find creative ways to meet and complete their take-action projects.

The safety and health of our Girl Scouts is our top priority. We urge Girl Scout families to take the time you need to acclimate. Then, when girls are ready, encourage your girls to flex their problem-solving muscles and adjust how they plan and implement their projects. We're confident in your ability to be the change our community needs through this crisis.

### **Will deadlines be extended to assist Girl Scouts in completing their highest award?**

GSUSA recognizes that many schools, youth activities and community gatherings have been suspended, and that we are navigating a period of rapid change. We will be offering a three-month extension from September 30 to December 31, 2020, to provide flexibility for Girl Scout Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors earning Girl Scouts' Highest Awards.

This is particularly relevant for 5th grade Juniors, 8th grade Cadettes, and 12th grade Ambassadors who will bridge to the next program age level officially on September 30, 2020 and typically would be no longer eligible to earn the Bronze, Silver or Gold Award, respectively. To complete their award, Girl Scouts must submit the appropriate Final Report to GSEMA. GSEMA strongly encourages online submission.

### **Can girl scouts take action electronically?**

Yes. We understand that action projects may look slightly different. We encourage you to work with your Girl Scouts and community partners to help them identify what might work best. Each of our highest award projects is unique and ask each group to use their creativity and leadership skills to determine which course of action is best. As you identify digital solutions keep in mind that they must address the root cause of a community issue with sustainable and measurable impact.



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**Encourage your group to think about these questions:**

- Where are they currently in their planning?
- How can they still achieve their project goals while protecting themselves and their community members? Are there goals that may need to be changed?
- Who can they partner with to assist them in helping to bring awareness to their issue or educate their community?
- Are there community members they might need to partner with to gain access to their audience? For example: guardians or family members.
- What online tools could assist them to educate and bring awareness to their chosen issue? Can you harness digital solutions like Zoom, Google Hangouts, Facebook Live, Skype, phone calls or another format to engage your target audience and facilitate your change?
- What materials or activities may have to be modified to fit your new setting?
- How can they measure success?

Any pre-approved Bronze and Silver Award projects will be honored when Final Reports are submitted. If you have not yet shared your plans with GSEMA, please do so [online](#).

**I am working on my approved Gold Award project. What does the Gold Award Committee recommend I work on?**

We strongly encourage you to reach out to your GSEMA Gold Award Advisor as well as any of your community partners. Use the above questions in FAQ3 to help guide you in brainstorming. For Gold Award, we would also ask you to outline a plan on how you will release, publish and share out any digital solutions.

If you just started:

- Recruit and train team members
- Contact and interview experts to learn more about your issue
- Continue to build your materials and share out with experts for review
- Use your project plan to delegate out tasks and support your team
- Find other ways to connect with your project's audience

If you had begun to host events:

- Debrief with team—discuss what worked, what didn't
- Collect feedback from participants
- Use feedback to edit and adjust your materials with your team
- Work with your community partners, advisors and team to identify digital solutions

If you are close to completion:

- Contact your Gold Award Advisor
- Review your project plan with them and what few steps you have remaining
- GSEMA and your Gold Award Advisor will review on a case by case to determine if it make sense for you to move forward to your sustainability plans and begin your Final Report



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**Our Girl Scouts made great progress already and have implemented the majority of their plans.**

**What do you recommend?**

GSEMA is working with groups to review their project goals and progress. Then on a case by case basis, we will work with Girl Scouts to determine if they are ready to debrief, plan for sustainability and submit their Final Report. Please contact the Director of Girl Leadership and Awards at 617-999-4433 or by emailing [customercare@gsema.org](mailto:customercare@gsema.org) to share your progress with GSEMA.

**Our group has identified new take action solutions for our pre-approved plans. Do we need to share with GSEMA?**

We strongly encourage you share your plans so that we can update any pre-approved plans on the troop or Girl Scout's record. You can email [customercare@gsema.org](mailto:customercare@gsema.org) to share. This is also a perfect opportunity to ask any specific questions you may have.

**How can we help our Girl Scouts and community members be safe in our online spaces?**

The safety of our Girl Scouts is always a top priority whether we are in-person or online. Please:

- Review the GSUSA Safety Activity Guideline's [Computer and Internet Use](#).
- Protect private information—encourage participants and girls to share only their first name.
- Consider closed meeting spaces online where you control who can view and enter live interactions.
- Maintain the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for all meetings whether in-person or virtual. There should always be two unrelated, background check adult members meeting with Girl Scouts. To make this more comfortable for girls, you may opt for small group meetings.

**We didn't start our highest award project. Is it too late?**

Absolutely not! The first step is to complete the Journey prerequisite(s). Your Journey must match the level you are with the exception of high school students who can choose Senior or Ambassador Journeys. Visit [GSEMA's Girl Scouts at Home](#) to access a self-directed journey experience for [Think Like a Programmer Journey](#). Next, view the appropriate highest award training online. [Bronze and Silver Award Orientation](#) can be viewed with a volunteer account while [individual girl accounts can be created](#) to complete the Gold Award Orientation (required for Gold). After Orientation, find an issue you care about and begin to build out your plans. Next, share your plans with GSEMA. For Bronze and Silver, use our [pre-approval form](#). For Gold Award, please use [GoGold](#).

