



Building a Gold Award Project Proposal

5 Important Overall Steps

1. Brainstorm issue and project possibilities. Use [GSUSA's GoGold](#) to assist you.
2. Investigate your issue! Find the root cause, the effects, the perspectives of the issue and how it is currently being supported in your community of choice.
3. Talk to community members. Verify the community need and begin to seek out tentative permissions from those that you'd like to work with. This is the perfect time to interview and ask experts to become your [Project Advisor](#).
4. Begin your first draft of the Project Proposal. Start early and well in advance of any GSEMA Gold Award Deadlines! See Gold Award Deadlines on our [GSEMA Gold Award page](#).
5. Share the plan. Share the plan with those that you will be working with, get feedback and collect signatures. You will need the verification of your Troop Leader and your Project Advisor before you can submit to GSEMA.

Investigate the Issue

Research everything you can about the issue.

Benefits:

- ✓ Prepares you to speak confidently to peers and community members
- ✓ Helps to identify the root cause
- ✓ Helps to 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? Which communities does it impact the most?
- How is your community already addressing it? If your community is addressing it – is there a true need?
- How have others outside your community tackled this issue? Why have those solutions worked?
- Do community members agree on the causes or the importance of the issue?

Tip: Use the Explore the Issue Handout to help you! This handout is found in [GSEMA's Gold Award Orientation Online](#).

Keep in mind that a Gold Award Project is not:

- ✗ A Collection Project. Collecting food for an animal shelter, for example, wouldn't qualify. When you collect donations, you aren't addressing the root cause and aren't addressing the sustainability of the effort as donations must be continuously gathered.
- ✗ A Fundraiser. Planning a 5k or another event to raise funds for a cause wouldn't qualify. As a Girl Scout, you cannot raise money for another organization. And Money alone doesn't usually address the root cause of an issue. Just like collections, resources will run out.



- ✗ A Make or Donate Project. Making blankets, birthday bags and other donations to local organizations and community members also wouldn't qualify. While it is helpful like collections, it doesn't identify and address a root cause and only addresses immediate needs.
- ✗ Just a Tool. Trails, physical structures, websites and videos are all important tools that can assist you in educating your community on issues. But alone these tools would not be a project. Websites and social media platforms are included in the space, while they can be interactive and bring in a community they need a person or a team to run, update, and continue to address the audience.
- ✗ A pre-established program. A Gold Award project should not exist without you, the project lead. Establishing an already created program in your community would not be considered a Gold Award project.

Both the collection and donation projects are examples of community service.

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 direct interactions with your audience. This can be done in-person or virtually, but must include you engaging your target audience with your project.
- ✓ Educate. Past Gold Award Projects have educated on the issue, taught life skills that connect to their issue, educated 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. GSEMA recommends identifying 3 quick facts that support your project need.
- Share details! In order to understand your project plan, we need details to understand your vision.
- 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 minimum 80 hours asked for the Gold Award project? You can count up to twelve of your hours on the research and time you have spent building your project proposal.
 - 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 GSEMA's Program team in understanding what you set out to do. They are learning about this for the first time and what might be obvious to you, as the project expert, will not always be obvious to the reader.
- Provide evidence to confirm the need of your project and your solutions.
- Review your Project Proposal with others to ensure it is clear, your plan is well communicated and if edits are needed. GSEMA 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, if possible, 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 and an 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.
- Set up a meeting with 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 GSEMA?

Project Proposals received by GSEMA are reviewed by members of our GSEMA Program Team and Gold Award Committee. We use the following steps:

- Each proposal is reviewed first to see:
 - Have the prerequisites been met?
 - Has the need of the issue been verified?
 - Does the project proposal utilize take action solutions?
 - Are there any concerns or gaps that may need to be addressed?
 - What is the sustainability plan?
- Reviewed Gold Award Project Proposals are placed into three categories:
 1. Project Proposal Meets Criteria
 2. Project Proposal Needs Improvements
 3. Project Proposal Does Not Meet Criteria
- Email confirmation from GSEMA will be sent directly to the Gold Award candidate. This email helps GSEMA confirm prerequisites and share feedback, questions to expand on, or next steps. An opportunity is always given to candidates to set up calls with GSEMA to review feedback.
 - Project Proposal Meets Criteria: Gold Award candidate moves forward to work with the Gold Award Committee.
 - Project Proposal Needs Improvement: Gold Award candidate receives explanation of why the proposal needs improvements and what those needed improvements are. The



candidate is paired with a Gold Award Advisor who works with them to incorporate those changes into a Project Plan Agreement before the candidate may start implementing their project.

- Project Proposal Does Not Meet Criteria: Gold Award candidate receives explanation of why it does not meet criteria and feedback is sent to the candidate to make improvements. Candidates are provided with a point person on the Gold Award Committee to support their resubmission, and asked to submit for a later Gold Award deadline. Your proposal will be marked as “Needs Improvement” in GoGold which allows you to make edits, confirm with your Troop Leader and Project Advisor and resubmit to GSEMA.

Gold Award Rubric Requirements and Standards

Defined Requirement	Does Not Meet Standard	Needs Improvement	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
Step 1: Choose an Issue				
<i>Related questions in proposal: My Gold Award aims to address this issue: The root cause of my issue is</i>				
Project identifies root cause and a valid community need	Issue is based on girl interests only and not on valid community need.	Issue has potential but lacks identification of root cause	Issue addresses topic of need and root cause is identified	Issue addresses 2 or more topics of need and root causes OR addresses a need and root cause that is important, but rarely addressed
<i>Related question in proposal: The target audience(s) for my Gold Award project is/are</i>				
Target Audience is clearly identified	Audience is only immediate network (family, Girl Scout troop)	Audience is only immediate community (family, friends, Girl Scouts, athletic team, youth group, etc.)	Reaches beyond current network (all teams at school, church community, town)	Beyond current network and reaching national or global communities
Step 2: Investigate				
<i>Related question in proposal: The reasons I selected my issue are</i>				
Research sources are cited and thoroughly investigated	No validation or research conducted	Little or no research is provided	Some research has been conducted and 1-2 sources are referenced	Thorough research has been conducted and 3+ sources cited
<i>Related question in proposal: My Gold Award's national and/or global link is</i>				
Project plans for national or global connection to issue	No mention of national or global connection	Includes research and evidence at the local level	Includes research and evidence at the local and national level	Includes research and evidence at the local, national, and global level and plan for project to take off in new locations/groups
Step 3: Get Help				
<i>Related question in proposal: List the names of individuals and organizations you plan to work with on your Gold Award project</i>				
Project team members are identified	Self and family only	Self, family, and Girl Scouts only OR 2 or less team members	3-5 team members with majority from local network beyond self, family, and Girl Scouts	5+ team members from larger network beyond self, family, and Girl Scouts and including previously unknown connections with strategic thought of leveraging skill/expertise
<i>Related question in proposal: Girl Scout Gold Award Project Advisor information</i>				
Project Advisor is identified and appropriate for the issue	None selected	Advisor is family member or troop leader/volunteer OR does not have knowledge of selected issue	Advisor has knowledge of the issue selected	Advisor is an expert on the issue selected and additional expert advisors are listed in team.
Step 4: Create a Plan				
<i>Related question in proposal: I will address the root cause by</i>				
Clear project description	Project is not defined, refers back to issue OR Project is Service Project	Project is vaguely described, it's unclear what will be done	Project is clearly described, reviewer can understand exactly what will be done	Project is clearly described, reviewer can understand exactly what will be done
<i>Related questions in proposal: The skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes my target audience will gain are; I will know that my audience has gained the desired skills/knowledge because; Measurement of my project's success chart</i>				
Project has a measurable impact	Impact does not relate to issue OR no impact defined	Impact is a vague impression OR not realistically measurable (more smiles, happier, etc.)	Impact is defined by a range, 1 measurement tool identified	Impact goals are high and 2+ measurement tools are identified

Defined Requirement	Does Not Meet Standard	Needs Improvement	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
<i>Related question in proposal: My Gold Award project goals are</i>				
Project goals are clearly defined and realistic	No goals	Goals stated in the form of feelings	1 overall goal clearly defined	2+ goals clearly defined OR 1 ambitious goal defined with more attainable sub-goals included
<i>Related question in proposal: My Gold Award will be sustained by:</i>				
Project ensures sustainability	No sustainability	Implied or little attempt to be sustainable OR other Girl Scouts will continue	Partner/group/individual will continue using/promoting project	Partner/group/individual agrees to continue implementing project AND new groups contribute to sustainability
<i>Related question in proposal: I will put my plan in to action by:</i>				
Timeline is realistic and appropriate for project	No timeline	2-3 milestones defined or milestones not relevant to project	4-5 milestones clearly defined	6+ milestones clearly defined
Project will allow candidate to demonstrate active leadership role	Teammates not used in timeline, project primarily solitary	Teammates only have minor roles OR only 1-2 people are led in execution of project	Teammates have active role in project AND a team of 3+ is led in execution of project	Large team led in execution and plan for leadership skills to be transferred to the team and target audience
<i>Related question in proposal: Estimate your project expenses and how you plan to meet those costs</i>				
Budget is realistic	No thought about potential expenses	Budget only has total expenses OR supplies listed are inappropriate for the scope of the project	2-3 overall expenses defined with known approximate income amount listed OR no budget required	4+ detailed expenses defined with known approximate income amount listed
Income and money earning activities are explained	No explanation OR disregards money earning policy	Yes, but unclear if following policy	Yes, follows all money earning policies OR no money earning required	Yes, and provides highly creative plan for funding
<i>Related question in proposal: I will let others know about my Gold Award by promoting via; I will put my plan in action by</i>				
Plan to actively share project	No plan	Passive sharing only (social media, brochure, etc.) OR only sharing with target audience	Plan for a mix of passive and active sharing beyond target audience	Plan for sustained sharing beyond Gold Award
While All Elements are required for a Gold Award Project - some elements carry more weight than others - the lower weighted elements are more easily adjusted during the project process, while the higher weighted elements need to be in good order prior to initiating the project.				
Highest Weight	Any item in the Does Not Meet Standard Category would need additional consideration prior to Project Proposal Approval			
Highest Weight	Any item in the Needs Improvement Category would require a conversation with the Gold Award Committee to make adjustment prior to Project Proposal Approval			
Medium Weight	Any item in the Does Not Meet Standard or Needs Improvement Categories would require a conversation with the Gold Award Committee to make adjustments during the finalizing of the path forward.			
Lower Weight	Any item in the Does Not Meet Standard or Needs Improvement Categories would require a conversation with the Gold Award Committee to make adjustments during the finalizing of the path forward.			