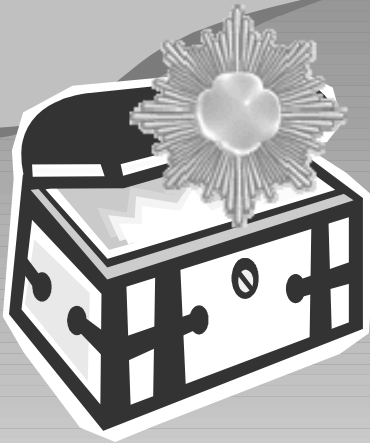


Go for the Girl Scout Gold Award



FIND IT INSIDE:

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BECOME

BELONG

BELIEVE

BUILD

BEFORE YOU START:

- ⇒ **First, stop & think.** Why do you want to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award? If the first couple answers that came to mind were something along the lines of:
"My troop leader says I should", "My friends are doing it", "It will look good on my college application", "My mom earned it and says I should too" or "It's what real Girl Scouts are supposed to do"....think again! Maybe you're not applying for the right reasons.
- The Girl Scout Gold Award is first and foremost about making your community a better place. You need to have a desire to do right in the world and reach out beyond your comfort zone. You should never feel pressured by other people to earn the Gold Award, unless it's something you want to accomplish and you need a little push now and then. *And, that doesn't mean that you shouldn't consider good advice from your leader or parents!* It's best to talk to adults or friends you trust who can help you make a decision. There is a lot you will learn about yourself during the Gold Award process. It's perfectly fine to do some steps and ultimately choose not to the Gold Award Action Project. Just be sure you're making the right decision for you. **At the very least, read this booklet and share it with the other people who will help you in your journey.** It provides a lot of basic information.
- ⇒ Be sure you are registered as a Girl Scout/STUDIO 2B member in our council.
- ⇒ Get the "STUDIO 2B Girl Scout Gold Award *Go For It!*" insert and the other materials from the Girl Scout Store. (The full resource list is on page 11.)

GOLD AWARD BASICS:

Know It: The Girl Scout Gold Award is a COMMUNITY SERVICE based achievement. It is nationally recognized as the highest award a Girl Scout 14-17 can earn. The Gold Award is designed to help a girl set and reach goals and practice leadership skills while making lasting, positive changes in her community. *Don't worry if you're not "good" at school or make the best grades. Earning the Gold Award is an entirely different way to find your strengths (and stuff you need to work on), accomplish goals, help others and feel proud of your work.*

Time It: From start to finish, it can easily take 2 - 3 years to complete the Gold Award process. Time management and organizational skills are very important. If you are dedicated, you can learn these skills through the Gold Award process. *You should not rush through the Gold Award process just to get the award. If you do, you will not truly invest in your work or in your community. The process of earning the Gold and what you learn about yourself while doing it is as important as receiving the Award itself.*

Do It: The 7 Steps in earning the Gold Award. Details on the following pages.



GSCWM and Gold Award Guidelines:

- ◆ **Any girl who starts working on the Gold Award process after January, 2005 MUST use the 2004+ guidelines.** Girls who started working on the Gold Award before January, 2005 may continue to follow previous guidelines. Or, they can choose to "mix & match" old requirements and new ones. However, during Steps 6 and 7 all girls will need to use the new GSUSA guidelines.
- ◆ Girls do not have to have received the Bronze or Silver Award to work on or earn the Gold Award!
- ◆ Girls, are strongly encouraged to attend a Gold Award Orientation in 8th, 9th or 10th grade. Learning the about the Gold Award process earlier, rather than later will help you immensely along your journey. About 90% of our previous Gold Award recipients tell us that the one thing they'd do differently is "start sooner"! Orientation is not required, but girls who attend have much higher success rates and have more fun on their Gold Award journey. Parents & leaders are welcomed! Girls in higher grades are welcome as well.
- ◆ **Girls must work individually during Steps 4-7.** However, girls can work with others while completing Steps 1-3. Even if girls choose to work in a group, **each individual girl must complete her own work and individually meet the goals of the requirement.**
- ◆ **The 2004+ Gold Award Process includes 7 steps / requirements.** The steps are broken down for you later in this booklet. **Keep this booklet for future reference.**
 - ✎ **Girls must be 14 or going into 9th grade to begin work on Steps 1 - 4.**
 - ✎ **Girls must be 15 or going into 10th grade to begin work on Steps 5-7 (the Gold Award Project & Reflection).**
 - ✎ **Girls must finish Step 7 by the age of 18 or by 9/30 of her graduation year.**
 - ✎ **Accomplishments prior to the appropriate ages (or before work is started on the Gold Award,) CANNOT be counted. Of course, no 'double-dipping' is allowed.**
- ◆ **Step 6 mini-explanation (the Gold Award Action Project)**
 - ✎ Council-approval is required before any work is started. Work started before approval will not count. Proposal information and details on page 7.
 - ✎ Once approved, girls will be assigned a trained GSCWM Gold Award Mentor.
 - ✎ **Projects must reflect a need in the community that is original and not currently being addressed. A Gold project is much more than a Service Project.**
 - ✎ Completed Gold Award projects must involve a minimum of 65 hours.
- ◆ All work accomplished while earning the Girl Scout Gold Award must comply with *Safety-Wise*, GSCWM, and GSUSA standards and regulations.

Earning the Gold Award Step-by-Step:

(Adapted from 'Gold Go for It' STUDIO 2B binder insert)



Be sure to read the Guidelines before starting on the Gold Award Process!

STEP 1: Build a Framework!

These are "prep steps" and will help you successfully complete Steps 2 - 7

- ◆ Get familiar with this booklet and the "*Go for It Girl Scout Gold Award Insert*".
- ◆ Attend our Council's Gold Award Orientation.
- ◆ Meet with your Gold Award Advisor. (This is not your GSCWM Gold Award Mentor, who will be assigned to you during Step 6.) This advisor can be your troop leader, Service Unit Cadette/Senior/STUDIO 2B consultant, etc. Ask your Advisor to read this booklet and have them help you create a timeline for Steps 2 through 5. See the *Go for It* Insert for details.
- ◆ Make an agreement with your adult advisor. You, as the girl need to take the lead in the Gold Award process. However, your advisor will help you set challenging, yet realistic goals and provide support. For an example of the agreement, look on page 9 of the *Go for It insert*.
- ◆ You may choose to do Step 3 (Gold Career Award) before Step 2 (Gold Leadership Award) if you wish. However, both Steps 2 and 3 must be completed before Step 4 (Gold 4B's Challenge).
- ◆ Steps 4-7 (Gold 4B's Challenge, Gold Project, Take Action, Reflection) need to be completed in sequential order.

STEP 2: The Girl Scout Gold Leadership Award / Charm

The Leadership Award focuses on learning to live specific aspects of the Girl Scout Promise and Law through earning Interest Projects and Focus Books of your choice, and then putting leadership into action. **There are four steps to earning the Gold Leadership Award:**

1. **Set the Spark:** Earn 3 IP's found in *Interest Projects for Girl Scouts 11-17* related to specific parts of the Girl Scout Law. See the *Go For It!* insert for details and how to record your progress.
2. **Do It Yourself:** Choose a Focus Book and, with your advisor, set and achieve your goals. Choose a Focus Book which you have not completed in the past. Or set new, more challenging goals for a Focus Book you have worked on before. See the *Go For It!* insert for details and how to record your progress.
3. **Put Leadership Into Action:** Spend 30 hours in one or more leadership roles. See the *Go For It!* insert for details, *Fast Track* option, and how to record your progress.
4. **Put it Together:** Use writing to capture and consider what you have learned in earning the Gold Leadership Award. See the *Go For It!* insert for details and how to record your progress.

STEP 3: The Girl Scout Gold Career Award / Charm

Life is approaching fast and soon you'll be in the working world or going off to college and deciding on your future. Earning the Gold Career Award will help you make plans for life after high school. There are at least 2 steps to earning the Gold Career Award. See the *Go For It!* insert for details and how to record your progress.

1. You choose one or more of these options:

- ◆ Career shadowing
- ◆ Internship or Apprenticeship
- ◆ College or trade school visits
- ◆ Organize a career fair
- ◆ Newsletter or web page for your school
- ◆ Work with a GSMC Council staff person
- ◆ Work at least 40 hours in a paying job (beyond babysitting) or in a business you started.

2. Reflect on your Dream Job:

- ◆ Write your ideal job description and critically think about the details of that job.

STEP 4: The Gold Award 4B's Challenge / Charm

This Challenge focuses on the 4B's: "Become, Belong, Believe and Build" (the Girl Scout Program Goals for Girls 11-17) and how activities relate to these concepts and the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The Challenge will help you explore your community, identify needs and create a relevant 65 hour Girl Scout Gold Award Project (Steps 5-7). **There are four steps to earning the Gold 4Bs Challenge.** See the *Go For It!* insert for details and how to record your progress.

- 1. Become:** Set goals for personal growth based on 2 skills you want to improve on.
- 2. Belong:** Explore your community and its members. Explore project ideas.
- 3. Believe:** Develop a plan and vision statement based on your research in 'Belong'.
- 4. Build:** Find people in your community who also care about your issue.
This is the time you might find a consultant/advisor who can help you prepare to apply for your Project Proposal during Step 5.
(Your assigned Gold Award Mentor from Council will come later.)

Note: Planning time for the 4B's Challenge may be applied to the Gold Award project hours.

**Now you've finished all your preparation work for your Gold Project.
Be sure you have the most recent Gold Award Action Project Proposal
(application) as move on to Step 5.**

Step 5: Plan Your Girl Scout Gold Award Action Project.

Now you're ready to think about your action project idea! Everything you have done in steps 1 - 4 has led you to this step. Work with your troop/group advisor (or the Gold Award Project Consultant whom you recruited to help you with the project because of her/his expertise). Planning and implementing your Gold Award project should take a *minimum* of 65 hours.

- ◆ All work on Steps 1-4 must be completed and approved by the adult who helped you during those steps. (Usually, it's a troop leader or town consultant.)
- ◆ You must be at least 15 years old or in 10th grade to start work on Step 5.
- ◆ You may create your own worksheet, as long as it includes all the info from the *2B insert*

There are 5 steps involved in planning your Gold Award Action Project:

1. Plan It

Figure out what the community problem is and what you want to do about it. Look back at what you did for the Gold 4Bs Challenge. Is this the issue you want to work on for your Gold Award Action project? Do you have any new or different ideas? Now is the time to commit to a community issue, problem or challenge as the focus of your Gold Award Project. See the *Go For It!* insert for details and how to record your progress.

2. Know More About It

Research information about your issue and project idea. Collect as much information on your issue or topic as you can. You can use the same steps as you did in the "Believe" section of the Gold 4B's Challenge to conduct your research. See the *Go For It!* insert for details and how to record your progress.

3. Choose It

Brainstorm ways you think you can solve this issue. Use the same process that you did in the "Build" section of the 'Gold 4Bs Challenge' to help you choose specifically what you want to do about your issue. Be creative and original. If your project is approved by Council, you will get help from your assigned Gold Award Mentor who will help see you through! See the *Go For It!* insert for details/questions and how to record your progress.

4. Budget It

Make a list of materials and resources you think you will need to carry out your project. Then, create a draft budget. Again, if your project is approved by Council, your Gold Award Mentor will help you develop a final budget and donation requests. Don't forget that people can be helpful resources too! See the *Go For It!* insert for details and how to record your progress.

5. Map It

Create a timeline of project steps and list of resources needed. Organize the people and other resources you will need to carry out your plan. See the *Go For It!* insert for details and how to record your progress.

STEP 6: Apply and Take Action

This is the time when you'll implement your idea and start to make a lasting improvement in your community. You must have approval by the Girl Scouts of Central & Western Massachusetts Council before starting any portion of your proposed project.

- ⇒ It is common and expected that you will spend *at least* 4-8 months implementing your Gold Award Action project. Don't be too intimidated; You will have lots of people to help you succeed and be there when things get difficult. But, plan ahead & give yourself plenty of time.
- ⇒ Anticipate your proposed project start date *6-8 weeks after* you mail in your application. Think about your time frame carefully.
- ⇒ There is no application deadline. However, the annual council-sponsored Gold Award Ceremony is traditionally held in April or May. If you want to participate in the ceremony the same year you complete the Gold Award, you must have the *entire* Gold Award Process completed by mid-February. Girls who complete the requirements after that date will be invited to the next year's ceremony. The ceremony is very important to some girls, and not so important to others. There's no "right" or "wrong" decision.
- ⇒ The entire Gold Award process must be completed by September 30th of your high school graduation year, so take that into consideration when making plans. (Basically, keep in mind that you have the summer after you graduate high school to finish.)

There are 4 Steps during this phase.

1. Apply for It: Get the latest version of the Gold Award Project Proposal Application.

- ◆ Thoughtfully and neatly complete the application and get all signatures necessary. Be sure to keep in mind that Gold Award projects are not just big service projects. So think "outside the box". If your idea is approved, your mentor will help you break down the work into manageable pieces. You can always reduce your goals later if needed.
- ◆ Make a copy of your application and keep it. Mail the original to the address on the back of this booklet.

2. Interview: You will meet with the Gold Award Mentors to discuss your project idea.

- ◆ When your application is received it will be reviewed. You will then be contacted by Teen Services to either schedule an interview or to discuss any problems or issues.
- ◆ Please do not ask for an interview date before your application has been received.
- ◆ During the interview, we will ask you about your ideas and we'll provide some feedback. After the interview you will know if your project idea has been approved or not. If it is not approved, you will be provided with tools to help you think of a Gold Award caliber project. If you are approved, you will be assigned a council volunteer Gold Award Mentor who will help you through the rest of the Gold Award process!
- ◆ Interviews are offered once a month. *Depending on the number of applications received, you may have to wait a month or two to be scheduled.* Keep this in mind when creating your timeline.

3. Meet & Greet: Meet with your assigned Gold Award Mentor

- ◆ Here's your chance for 1:1 time with your Mentor. S/he will provide you with guidelines for the next steps, as well as help you develop a timeframe for your Gold Award Action Project.
- ◆ You must meet with your Gold Award Mentor and complete the 'Project Agreement' before starting any work on your Gold Award. You will learn more about this in the Gold interview.



4. Do It: Implement your Gold Award Action Project!

- ◆ After your 'Project Agreement' is signed by both you and your Gold Award Mentor, you can start putting your ideas into action!
- ◆ Be sure to keep in touch with your Gold Mentor *at least* once a month. If you have any new ideas or need to make changes, contact your Mentor first.
- ◆ Keep a log of all of your hours. Any time spent on your project counts!

STEP 7: Reflect and Evaluate

Now you get to reflect and think about all of your hard work! You'll meet with your Gold Award Mentor and discuss your accomplishments and constructively critique your project. **There are 3 steps to Step 7.**

1. Mentor Meeting:

Meet with your Gold Award Mentor and complete the Gold Award Final Report. The form will be provided to you by your Gold Award Mentor once you have finished Step 6.

2. Final presentation:

Schedule a final presentation with all of the Gold Award Mentors. This is your chance to show us what you did, how you overcame stumbling blocks and how your community will continue to improve in the future. At the end of the evening, you will find out if you have earned the Gold Award! As long as you have followed the process of the Gold Award, worked closely with your Gold Award Mentor and completed all of the requirements then Step 7 will be smooth sailing. If the Gold Award Mentors have any concerns, they will be addressed at that time.

3. Receive Award:

You will be provided with details about the Gold Award Ceremony, should you want to participate. Otherwise, arrangements will be made to receive your Gold Award pin.

**Congratulations.
You've made it happen!**



TIPS & TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Creating a Great Gold Award Action Project

- ✎ Attend a Council-sponsored Gold Award Orientation or rent the Gold Orientation Check Out Kit. This is not required, but *highly* recommended. Girls who participate in either orientation format are much more likely to be able to complete and enjoy the process.
- ✎ Keep in mind that earning the Gold Award is a "community improvement" based process. It is important that you choose and implement an *original* project to address a concern in your community that is not already being taken care of in another way.
- ✎ We want to make sure all who earn the Girl Scout Gold Award in our council have completed projects of high caliber. Remember this is *your* project. Your leaders/advisors can't do it for you, nor can your family. Certainly, under your direction they can help you with aspects of implementation. However, you must be the person who takes the lead earning the Gold Award.
- ✎ An important aspect of the Gold Award is the Action Project. It is important to differentiate between a community service project and a Girl Scout Gold Award Action Project. The latter should involve lots of research, planning and individual opportunities for leadership and decision-making.
- ✎ It's best to come up with your own ideas, based on your passions. You'll be more successful, and you'll have more fun!

Need help? These community issues might help you think of a Gold Award Action Project:

- ⇒ Domestic or street violence (verbal or physical)
 - ⇒ Hunger / malnutrition
- ⇒ Illegal drug use / youth smoking or drinking
- ⇒ Infrastructure repair or improvement (streets, playgrounds, bike trails, gardens, etc)
 - ⇒ Lonely, disadvantaged, or home-bound people
 - ⇒ Abandoned animals / pet training
 - ⇒ Recreation opportunities for youth
- ⇒ Government & Civic involvement (School or community rule that needs to be changed)
 - ⇒ Pollution / environmental decline
 - ⇒ Peer education / Life skills
 - ⇒ Diversity & equality
 - ⇒ Arts education
 - ⇒ Math & science opportunities for girls
 - ⇒ Cliques / teasing, bullying / self-esteem
- ⇒ Preserving & promoting town or women's or minority history
 - ⇒ Your own observations!

Gold Award Action Projects are ongoing solutions, not just service projects. Find a way to make a short-term fix into a long-term improvement!

M*O*N*E*Y AND THE GOLD AWARD PROJECT

(Adapted from "Go for It" STUDIO 2B Girl Scout Silver and Gold Award inserts)

One of the challenges you may face during your Gold Award process is funding your project. Girl Scout of the USA and the GS of Central & Western MA Council have very strict rules which **must** be followed during the Gold Award process. Here are the rules, and ways to approach a solution.

1. What you **CAN'T** do:

You, as a legal minor **CANNOT** ask for money as a girl member of Girl Scouts. You also can't ask for materials or services (technically called "gifts-in-kind") either. For a lot of reasons, legal and otherwise, this kind of asking is considered *fundraising* by the IRS and Girl Scout policies. Adults are the only people who can raise money or ask for goods for Girl Scout purposes.

What you **CAN** do:

Work with your Gold Award Mentor to create a business letter describing your project, its purpose and the materials you need to complete your project. Then, you will be given a council-provided cover letter. Your assigned Gold Award Mentor will provide further instruction. If you happen to need donated materials during Steps 1-5, please contact the Teen Program Specialist.

2. What you **CAN'T** do:

As a Girl Scout, you can't raise money for another organization. For example, you can't have a bake sale and tell people that you are giving the proceeds to a homeless shelter for meals. Nor can you ask for pledges for a walk-a-thon to benefit breast cancer research, or hold a benefit dance to raise money for friend's kidney operation.

What you **CAN** do:

If you are working on a Gold Award Project as a group/troop, your group may apply with the council for a "money-earning activity". You must follow the same procedures and rules as you would for any other reason your group would raise money (to go on a trip, etc.). You must involve every girl who is working with you on your Gold Award project. All decisions on how to allocate the funds, must be made as a group. Money earned as a troop, can be used for individual projects, however all members of your troop decide on how funds are allocated.

If you are an *individually registered member*, things are slightly different. An Individual Girl Scout (even if you are registered in a group), cannot earn money for herself. However, you can work with a group/troop in your area by presenting your need for funds, and assisting in the money earning process. There is no guarantee that you will get the amount of money you need from the group, as the dispersal of funds will be a group decision.

These are the basic explanations for the 2 major rules. Work with your advisor and Gold Award Mentor to become familiar with all of the GSUSA and GSCWM rules and regulations regarding money-earning programs, blackout dates, and prohibited activities. You are responsible for this information during the course of the Gold Award process. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Teen Program Specialist.

ROLE OF PARENTS/FAMILIES IN THE GOLD AWARD PROCESS

Earning the Gold Award represents a girl's commitment to herself and to her community. Parents and family members play a significant role in supporting a girl during the process. However, they cannot be the "taskmasters" or even serve as an Advisor. Gold Award Candidates need to reach beyond familiar faces and find resources outside of their comfort zone. However, here are some good ways families can assist a girl:

- Read through the materials provided to girls regarding the Gold Award. Provide transportation if needed.
- Encourage and support her, but do not pressure her. "Going for the Gold" is something that a girl has to want to do herself. It is not a chance for adults to "live vicariously" through her achievements.
- Support her in following Girl Scout safety or money earning rules. This is important to ensure her safety and the integrity of the Girl Scout program.
- Allow her to stumble and learn the lessons that come with the Girl Scout Gold Award. Let her make decisions and mistakes. Decision-making is a life lesson. Part of the role of the Gold Award Mentor (assigned upon approval of a girl's Action Project Proposal) is to help girls find their way through "red tape" and other obstacles. So, she will be provided with adult support.
- Realize that she is capable, competent and worthy of respect as she assumes more responsibilities within. Provide her with positive and constructive support on this journey.

RESOURCES GIRLS WILL NEED:

Available for purchase at the Girl Scout Store in E. Longmeadow, Leeds and Worcester:

- ◆ STUDIO 2B Basics insert *Go For It! Girl Scout Gold Award* (\$5.25)
You are welcome to adapt the questions and forms to your liking. For example, if the insert is too small for you to write in, just write or type out the questions and answers. Keep a notebook of all your work, hours, and journal entries!
- ◆ STUDIO 2B Focus Books of your choice. See Steps 2-4 for details. (\$5.95 each)
- ◆ *Interest Projects for Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts* or *Interest Projects for Girls 11-17*. (\$9.95)

Available for free:

- ◆ Latest Version Girl Scout Gold Award Project Proposal. Contact either council office or Tammy Breen to get one.
- ◆ A variety of Girl Scout Gold Award worksheets to assist you during Step 6 and Step 7. These will be provided to you by your assigned Gold Award Mentor.
- ◆ "Gold Award FAQ's" (GSUSA publication)
- ◆ "The Girl Scout Gold Award at a Glance" - clarification of Council's role, Advisor Role, and Project Advisor or 'Gold Award Mentor'. (GSUSA publication)
- ◆ "Advisor Tips for the Girl Scout Gold Award" (GSUSA publication)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the Gold Award process? Contact: Tammy Breen

**Teen Program Specialist
Tbreen@gscwm.org or 508-853-1070 x108
Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts
81 Gold Star Blvd
Worcester, MA 01606**

For hints on choosing a project and advice from other girls:

Girl Scouts of the USA website:	www.girlscouts.org
STUDIO 2B website:	www.studio2b.org
Girl Scouts of Central & Western MA website:	www.gscwm.org

SOME LAST WORDS OF ADVICE:

The Girl Scout Law begins with "I will do my best to be honest and fair". Be honest about your activities. Fully complete each requirement, and do your best to challenge yourself. Remember your manners - be polite and humble when speaking with businesses, community members, adults, and peers. Keep in mind other people's workloads and timeframes when you make plans. Importantly, a Gold Award that is based on dishonest reporting, half-finished requirements, or arrogant attitudes may look good on your vest, but it won't wear well in your heart or in other's eyes.

When it comes time to consider and select a project, choose something that will be a "reach" for you - not something you've done before. Make it a project worthy of the recognition.

Be sure to follow the process of the Gold Award. The process is almost as important as the work. It is your responsibility to contact your advisors and Gold Award Mentors on a regular basis. It is also your responsibility to check with Council if you have any questions or concerns during the Gold Award process. Please do not have your parents, troop leaders, or advisors make calls or write emails for you. If at any time you have an issue with your advisor or assigned Gold Award Mentor, you may confidentially contact the Teen Services Manager who will help you.