

M*O*N*E*Y and Your Leadership Project

(adapted from “Go for It” STUDIO 2B Girl Scout Gold Award insert)

One of the challenges facing every girl “going for the Gold” is financial. Often, when the planning gets serious, adjustments have to be made in the doing. On the one hand you are asked to meet a need in your community; on the other hand, you have some major constraints outlined in *Safety-Wise* and by your council. So what’s a girl to do?

OK. The reality first. Then some possible ways to approach it. Think of those who have gone before you. They figured it out, and so can you! Then clear the adjustments you have made in your plan with your Girl Scout council.

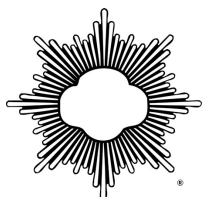
- 1. You can’t ask for money as a girl member of Girl Scouts.** You can’t ask for materials or services (technically called gifts-in-kind) either. This asking is considered fundraising by the IRS and Girl Scout policies — and for a lot of reasons (legal and otherwise), adults are the only people who can raise money for Girl Scouting.

What you can do: Since adults can solicit money, work with an adult partner if you really need to get a donation of materials or need some funds. You **can** describe your project to others, write a letter, create a PowerPoint presentation or write the grant, but an adult has to do the actual ask and sign on the dotted line. And don’t forget to clear the solicitation with your council. No way around it.

- 2. You can’t raise money for another organization as a Girl Scout.** That means you can’t have a bake sale and tell people that you are giving the proceeds to a homeless shelter for meals, you can’t ask for pledges for a walk-a-thon to benefit breast cancer research, and you can’t hold a benefit dance to raise money for Sally’s kidney operation.

What you can do: This is where it gets a bit tricky. Your troop/group **can** hold a bake sale or birdhouse sale and can charge a fee to an approved event that you put on to earn money **for your troop/group’s activities**. However, **your troop/group must have council permission for any money-earning activity. Your troop/group may then decide to use that money toward** the completion of a Girl Scout Gold Award Project, such as the purchase of materials. It must be a troop/group decision on how to allocate the funds, which can be used for group or individual projects.

If you are an individually registered member, things are slightly different. You cannot earn money as an individual Girl Scout for yourself. The money you earn must go to an account held by a group (troop/group, service unit, or your council). Next, you must present your need for funds to that group. There is no guarantee that you will get back the amount of money you earned for the group, as the dispersal of funds will be a group decision. We suggest you first check with your council about the options open. There may be a grant process in place for funds earned by individual girls on product sales, or you might be put into a Girl Scout Gold Award interest group or group of “Juliettes” where, working with other girls and an adult advisor, you can develop a funding base for activities.



Hot Group Money-Earning Ideas

Reminder: All Girl Scout activities should meet **Safety-Wise** and council guidelines — and be approved by your council.

1. Sell Girl Scout cookies. (Think big — arrange for booths at sports events or college dorms or sell cases of cookies to businesses for special treats for their staff. You end up helping your council as well as your group.)
2. Provide childcare at special events during the holiday season or community events. (Be sure to have an adult trained in first aid present.)
3. Recycle aluminum cans. (How about a community can-a-thon? Involve small businesses as well as families.)
4. Put on a gigantic garage sale. Don't forget to make refreshments to sell!
5. Offer clown activities and face painting at family events or malls.
6. Wrap gift packages at holiday fairs.
7. Apply for a community improvement grant. (Check with the mayor's or governor's office and your council. Arrange for an adult to be the signer. The money may need to go through your council or service unit, as well.)
8. Hold a penny drive. Appeal to friends and family members to save loose change for you. (Donations of coins can accumulate really fast, and can present you with the nice problem of hauling a heavy load to the bank.)
9. Recruit "shareholders" for your group's budget. Figure out the total budget and prepare an "ask" for sponsors who support your year's activities. (As shareholders, they deserve an annual report.)
10. Provide classroom or home birthday parties on order (cupcakes and games for the busy mom).

Do *Not* Engage In The Following Kinds Of Activities:

1. **Money-earning projects where you are performing an activity that someone normally gets paid to do** — in other words, taking jobs away from people, such as store workers, maintenance staff, or service providers. (**However**, if certain activities — for example, cleaning a stadium after a game or gift wrapping at a store — have previously been defined clearly as opportunities for nonprofits to earn money, you can undertake these activities **with council approval**.)

- 2. “Cheap labor” projects disguised as money-earning projects.** At first it may sound like a great idea, but you are actually being taken advantage of and taking away the job of someone who should be paid more money than you are being offered. That’s why there are child labor and minimum wage laws!
- 3. Money earning projects where Girl Scouts of the USA might be perceived as endorsing a product or political viewpoint or cause.** This includes getting paid to pass out flyers for political candidates or freebees at a business opening. When in doubt, check with your council.
- 4. Money earning projects where the money goes to individuals rather than to your group as a group donation.** You cannot be employed *as a Girl Scout* to earn money.
- 5. Selling anything on the Internet as a Girl Scout.** Safety and council boundaries are of primary concern here.

Some Frequently Asked Questions on Money

Q: Can I use my own money on the Girl Scout Gold Award Project?

A: Yes. If you want to use your own money, you can. You may receive help from your family, too. However, we encourage you to work with others to earn the money. That’s part of the process. “Going for the Gold” is not meant to be a hardship on a family or individual.

When designing your project, it’s important to think creatively about how you can make a difference with little or no money. Then talk to your council and advisor about ideas for financing the project or arranging for the donation of materials and services.

Some individual activities with great potential:

1. Pet walking and pet care
2. Babysitting
3. Lawn mowing, leaf raking
4. Plant sitting
5. Recycling
6. Tutoring younger kids
7. Providing respite care for family caregivers
8. Refereeing sports games
9. Party giving (clowning, magic shows, game leading)
10. Making or repairing jewelry
11. Creating hand-made greeting cards
12. Providing a calligraphy service for addresses on special invitation

Q: Can I ask friends and neighbors for help?

A: You shouldn't ask for donations of money, but you can ask for donations of time and stuff, such as clothing for a clothing drive or that pile of bricks left over from your neighbor's backyard project. **However, if the neighbor wants to claim the donation as a tax deduction, he or she will need to make the donation to the council for IRS purposes and get a receipt signed by a council staff person.**

Q: What if what I want to do costs too much?

A: It's better to succeed with a smaller project that is within your budget than to be unable to complete a larger project because it exceeds your budget. Be realistic about what you can and can't do. Work with your adult advisor to develop a reasonable budget for your project. If your resources are not sufficient for you to realistically accomplish your goal, then you need to rethink the project. Planning is the key to a good Girl Scout Gold Award Project. You should be prepared with a budget for your project before you meet with your council Girl Scout Gold Award Mentor Committee. Think it through and do your homework! Your council has the right to put a cap on spending, as well as to request that large donations go through the council office. Work with them. See your **"Go for It!" Girl Scout Gold Award** insert for more on creating a realistic budget.

Q: Is it all right to seek help from other organizations when doing my Girl Scout Gold Award?

A: Yes, with some qualifications. Many service organizations have budgets for community projects. You can use their interests (e.g., Lions Club International may focus on vision care, while Soroptimists may have a committee on literacy) as leverage to support your project and get volunteers to help you. Do some research on local service organizations. Even some businesses give workers time for community service hours and projects. However, remember the rule about having the adult doing the "ask" for actual money and gifts-in-kind, and clearing your joint approach with your local council. (Your council may be asking the same group for major donation and you don't want to interfere with the council's "ask.") Don't let the organization's agenda drive your vision for your project.

Q: I know you can't raise money as a Girl Scout for other organizations, but can I do it on my own?

A: As an individual, you can volunteer for other organizations, but you should not identify work that you do to raise funds for another organization as part of your time going toward the Girl Scout Gold Award. Additionally, you may not present yourself as a Girl Scout to the public in this process since you are a volunteer for another organization. For example: If your local Red Cross needs money to purchase training dummies, you may participate under their supervision as an individual volunteer to raise funds, but you cannot count that service as part of your time toward any Girl Scout award or service hours. However, you can plan a Girl Scout Gold Award project using the equipment that was purchased as part of your efforts as a volunteer for that organization.

Q: Can we charge for a Girl Scout event to earn money?

A: If it is a service project, a fee can be collected to cover the cost of materials. The project ceases to be a service project if you are charging a fee for the event above cost,

in which case the hours cannot go toward service hours in any award. If you are doing an event as a Girl Scout (e.g., a Badge Workshop, Bike Rodeo, etc.) and are planning to charge a fee **above** the cost of materials, you **must first** clear this with your Girl Scout council. Provision should be made for scholarships for troop/groups or individual girls who cannot afford fees to your event and you must be clear in your advertisements and materials that this is a money-earning event for your troop/group. If your actual project is an event for the public, you can charge a fee to cover the cost of materials.

Things to Include in Your Donor Request Letter:

- When possible, use the name of the manager, owner, etc. of the business you are making the request of.
- Put your name and town in the body of the letter.
- Introduce Girl Scouts and the Silver Award-don't assume they already know about either. What is the Silver Award and why is it important to you and your community?
- Describe the need in your community you hope to address with your project.
- Explain how you plan to address that need by briefly describing your project. What do you plan to do and why? Who will your project benefit with their help?
- Explain how the business specifically can help you and your project. What donations are you hoping to receive from them?
- Provide your contact information and the best way to reach you.
- Sincerely thank them for their consideration.
- Use a formal business letter style such as:

Date:

Name:

Company:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Dear:

Body of Letter:

Sincerely,

Your Name:

November 10th, 2008

Dear Jane;

Sandy Foster is member of the Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts in Rutland, MA. She is in the process of earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest achievement that Girl Scouts age 15 to 17 may earn. The Gold Award is a great accomplishment which utilizes girl's leadership abilities, organizational skills, and passion for the Girl Scout Movement to benefit their community in a significant way.

To successfully earn the Gold Award, Girl Scouts must complete at least 65 hours of volunteer work relating to their Gold Award Project. Because the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. is a non-profit organization, girls are not provided with a stipend to help offset the cost of their projects. Girls often rely on donated items (relating to her project) from generous companies, like yours.

Please read the enclosed letter from the Gold Award candidate. Completing this community project is an incredible accomplishment. Over the last several months, Sandy has already earned several prerequisite recognitions which have led her toward her Gold Award project idea. Sandy has displayed responsibility and persistence, and she is now ready to serve her community as a dedicated Girl Scout. We hope that you will be able to help this young woman succeed.

Thank you for supporting the Girl Scouts, Where Girls Grow Strong! Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Tammy Breen
Teen Program Specialist

Enc. Donation Request