GUIDELINES FOR SENIORS AND AMBASSADORS

GIRL SCOUTS OF SUFFOLK COUNTY
The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest and most prestigious award that a Senior and Ambassador can earn and is designed to be completed by an individual girl. **The prerequisites for the Gold Award consist of completing two Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador journeys or having earned the Silver Award and completing one Senior or Ambassador journey.** Each journey you complete gives you the skills necessary to plan and implement your Take Action project. After the prerequisites are complete, **80 hours** is the minimum amount of project time required. Note: Girl Scouts of Suffolk County strongly recommends that you take the Go for Gold training. Training information can be found on our website at [www.gssc.us](http://www.gssc.us).

**STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

When you decide to “go for Gold”, you are on your honor to uphold the Standards of Excellence. These standards invite you to think deeply, develop yourself as a leader, achieve the Leadership Outcomes and make a mark on your community that will create a lasting impact.

**GOLD AWARD TOOL KIT**

Keep track of your ideas, contacts, appointments and plans with the Gold Award Toolkit. The toolkit includes a Standards of Excellence tracking sheet, tips and planning guides to help with each step of your project. Don’t forget that your journeys include tools and ideas, too!

1. **Choose an issue:** Choose a community issue that you care about. Check out Decision-Making Tips. Are you passionate about more than one issue? Talk to others to help you decide! Practice your pitch and see how it feels. You can make a video, write a slogan or find another way to sum up why this issue is important to you.

   **Tools to use:** Decision-Making Tips, Interview Tips, Making-Your-Pitch Tips

2. **Investigate:** Explore everything you can about your issue. Pinpoint a specific aspect of the issue that you want to address. A focused effort has more impact than a big idea that’s scattered!

   - **Log on:** Check news sites and sites of organizations related to your issue. Explore how the media in other countries cover your issue. Before doing online research, take the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge at [www.girlscouts.org/internet_safety_pledge.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/internet_safety_pledge.asp).
   - **Go to the library:** Find books, local newspapers and magazine articles that offer in-depth analysis about your chosen topic and different perspectives on your issue.
   - **Interview people:** Talk to friends, neighbors, teachers, business owners, and others who can offer information or insights about the issue you’ve chosen.
   - Knowing the various causes of a problem enables you to figure out unique ways to solve it. Use the Mind-Mapping Tool to create a diagram to track a problem and possible causes.

   **Tool to use:** Mind-Mapping Tool

3. **Get help:** Invite others to join your team to help you take action. Consider teachers, friends, and experts from organizations. Choose a project advisor, someone with expertise in your topic. An advisor can help identify resources, provide insight, solve problems and provide information on your issue. **Note:** It is **not** recommended that the parent of the girl be the project advisor.

   **Tools to use:** Teaming Tips, Project Advisor Tips

4. **Create a plan:** You are required to address the root cause of an issue and make a lasting impact. Check out the Sustainability Tips for ideas. Create a plan that provides the best use of your time, talent and resources, making the most with what you have!

   **Tools to use:** Project Planner, Planning and Budgeting Tips, Sustainability Tips

5. **Present your plan and get feedback:** Use the Project Planning Checklist before you submit your Project Proposal Form to Council for approval. Include what you’ve learned, team members and your plan for making the project sustainable. **Note:** Hours put into the project before approval
do not count toward project hours. Council approval is **required** before you can continue. Once your project is approved, look at the Project Planner from step 4. Do you have everything you need?

**Tools to use:** *Project Planning Checklist, Project Proposal Form*

6. **Take action:** Lead your team, carry out your plan. Use the tools you have developed and check your journeys for tips. If you hit a speed bump along the way, learn from it and adjust your plan.

7. **Educate and inspire:** Tell your story and share your results to inspire others! Use the Reflection Tool to identify how this experience has affected you and how your views may have changed. Finally, complete your Final Report, a comprehensive account of your project.

**Tools to use:** *Sharing Tips, Reflection Tool, Girl Scout Gold Award Final Report*

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### GOLD AWARD STEPS AND STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE TRACKING SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girl Scout Gold Award Steps</th>
<th>Notes Regarding Your Progress and Significant Dates</th>
<th>Standards of Excellence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Choose an issue:</strong> Use your values &amp; skills to identify a community issue you care about.</td>
<td>Live the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Demonstrate civic responsibility.</td>
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<td><strong>2. Investigate:</strong> Research everything you can about the issue.</td>
<td>Use a variety of sources: interview people, read books or articles, find organizations online. Evaluate sources for reliability and accuracy. Be aware as you investigate, know that what you learn may challenge your beliefs. Identify national and/or global links to your community issue.</td>
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<td><strong>3. Get help:</strong> Invite others to support and take action with you.</td>
<td>Seek out and recognize the value of the skills and strengths of others. Respect different points of view and ways of working. Build a team and recruit a project advisor who will bring special skills to your project.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Create a plan:</strong> Create a project plan that achieves sustainable and measurable impact.</td>
<td>Lead the planning of your Take Action project. Work collaboratively to develop a plan for your project that creates lasting change.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. Present your plan and get feedback:</strong> Sum up your project plan for Council.</td>
<td>Submit a Project Proposal to Council that is concise, comprehensive, and clear. Describe your plan. Include the Leadership Outcomes you want to achieve and the impact you plan to make on yourself and the community. Articulate your issue clearly and explain why it matters to you. Accept constructive suggestions that will help refine your project.</td>
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</table>
6. Take action: Take the lead to carry out your plan.

- Focus on the root cause of the issue to ensure that your solution has measurable and sustainable impact.
- Seek partnerships to achieve greater community participation and project impact.
- Strive to solve problems creatively.
- Use resources wisely.
- Speak out/act on behalf of yourself and others.

7. Educate and inspire: Share what you have experienced with others.

- Reflect on what you have learned when you present your Final Report to Council.
- Summarize the impact your project has had on you and your community.
- Share the project beyond your local community; inspire others to take action in their communities.

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**Making Your Decision**

You are about to make a big decision that will have a significant impact on your life and may even change it forever. Take some time to reflect and get inspired!

- What inspires you? Is it something in your school, community, country or the world?
- What motivates you into action? Is it people, events, activities, places?
- What skills, talents, and strengths do you have to offer?
- How do you want to make a difference? Perhaps as:
  - An advocate for justice?
  - A promoter of environmental awareness?
  - A trainer, mentor, or coach?
  - An artist, actor, or musician?
  - An organizer of petitions or campaigns?
  - An entrepreneur?

- What motivates, inspires, and interests others? Can you build a team to support your idea?
- What would benefit the community both immediately and long-term?
- Look back at your Girl Scout journeys. What interested you that could be translated into a project?

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**Need more inspiration?**

Search through these sites to see what others are doing to address issues in their community.

- Global Citizens Corps: [www.globalcitizencorps.org](http://www.globalcitizencorps.org)
- Taking IT Global: [www.tigweb.org](http://www.tigweb.org)
- Global Youth Action Network: [www.youthlink.org](http://www.youthlink.org)
- Prudential: [www.spirit.prudential.com](http://www.spirit.prudential.com)
- Global Youth Service Day: [http://gysd.org/share](http://gysd.org/share)
- United We Serve: [www.serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov)
- Learn and Serve America: [www.learnandserve.gov](http://www.learnandserve.gov)
- Youth Venture: [www.genv.net](http://www.genv.net)
- World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts: [www.waggs.org](http://www.waggs.org)
**Interview Tips**

Find out what you need to prepare and conduct an interview.

1. **Make arrangements:** Decide who you would like to interview and contact him or her to set up a date and time.

2. **Prepare:** Gather research and background information to help you formulate questions to ask your interview subjects. Use these sample questions to get started, and then add some of your own. *Please note: If you’ve already chosen an issue, move ahead to the interview.*
   - What are the biggest challenges/problems that you have faced or are facing?
   - What do you think is the root cause of these issues?
   - What will it take to address these issues?
   - Are there any resources available to do that?
   - What do you consider to be the strengths of the community?

3. **Conduct the interview:** Bring a notebook to take notes. Here are some tips:
   - Find a quiet place where you’ll have each others’ full attention.
   - Begin by thanking him/her for their time and then briefly describe your project.
   - Keep questions simple and related to the issue. Do your research and be prepared!
   - Ask the interviewee if she/he would like to receive project updates.
   - Send a thank-you note to everyone you interview within a week of the interview. Mention the possibility of a follow-up interview if necessary.

4. **Review information and set up a follow-up interview if necessary:** After the interview, sift through the data to see what is relevant to your project. If there are gaps that need filling, contact your interview subjects to get more information. Check and recheck your facts!

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**Making Your Pitch**

What makes a memorable advertisement or slogan? Maybe it’s clever, catchy or funny. Now that you’ve chosen your issue, think of an unforgettable way to tell others about it! You should be able to describe the issue in about 15 seconds. Below are tips to help!

**Make it memorable:** Develop a slogan. What makes you remember a slogan from a commercial on TV? How can you incorporate that into your pitch?

**Target your audience:** Who are you trying to reach? If your focus is kids, think of a rhyme or story that kids would relate to. Tailor your pitch so that it connects with your audience!

**How you will help:** You’ve gotten their attention with your story. Now tell them what your project will do to make their lives better.

**Personalize it:** Why this project? Why this target audience? How will doing this make you a better person?

**Do it:** Put it all together. Explain your idea in a concise, motivating way. Remember, 15 seconds. Go!

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**Mind-Mapping Tool**

Create a mind-mapping diagram like the one below, using an issue facing your community. This activity will help brainstorm different ways to approach and address a problem.

- Write the community issue in the middle circle.
- Think about what some causes of your issue could be. Below, a main cause of car accidents is bad weather. Notice how many causes connect from bad weather.
- Now, try connecting the different causes you come up with to each other and to the main issue. How do the causes connect to each other? Do you see a pattern?
Teaming Tips

Think about people who can help put your project into action. Choose people who are consistent and reliable. Working in a group will help you make a bigger impact and cover more ground! Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you build your team:

- Promote a sense of trust and belonging
- Share ownership
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Communicate regularly and openly
- Respect diversity
- Have fun and be creative
- Be open to new ideas and different ways of working
- Keep learning and growing

Project Advisor Tips

Below are tips for selecting and working with your project advisor.

• **Reach out:** You’ve figured out the issue you’re going to address with your project. Now you need an expert to help give advice and suggestions. Select people who are related to your issue area with whom you’d like to work.

• **Safety first:** Before you meet with new people, review safety tips and dos and don’ts. Make sure your family knows who you’re talking to and meeting with.

• **Ask:** Approach the people you selected one at a time. Introduce yourself by sending a brief letter or e-mail, give some background on your project and the advice you would like. Ask about time commitments and the best way to communicate.

• **Say thanks:** When an individual accepts, send a thank-you note, along with a description of your project and areas where you think you’ll need the most help.

• **Think ahead when asking for help:** Before e-mailing or calling your project advisor, think about how to simplify the problem you’re having so that she/he can offer quick suggestions.

• **Share your progress:** Keep your project advisor updated on your progress and how her/his help is making your project better, easier, etc.

• **Celebrate together:** After your project is complete, invite her/him to your Gold Award ceremony. Don’t forget to send a thank-you!

Project Planner

A Take Action project addresses the core of an issue, produces a measurable and sustainable impact and is a local project that links to a national and/or global issue. Here are tips to help lay out your project plan:

• **Set project goals:**
  - What is your project?
  - Why does it matter?
  - Who will it help?
  - How will it make a difference in the world?

• **List Steps to meet your goals:**
  - What steps will it take to reach your goal? Be specific so that you can put together a timeline and draw on your team for help to reach your goals.

• **Develop a timeline:** Timelines help determine how to schedule each part of your project.

• **Think about money-earning:** Brainstorm ways to finance your project. Check with Council to make sure that your ideas are in line with Girl Scout policies. You can make an impact without spending money by influencing policy, etc.

• **Establish a global link:** Consider how to connect your project to an issue that affects people in other parts of the country or the world.

Answer the following questions to determine your project needs.

What is the goal of your project?
How do you plan to achieve this project goal?
What are the foreseeable obstacles?
Aside from your team, troop/group volunteer, and project advisor, do you need any one else to help with your project?
What supplies will you need?
If necessary, how will you earn money or fundraise?
How will you measure your success as you go?
How will your project create lasting change?
Planning and Budgeting Tips

It’s budget time! Think what you need and where you can get it for little or no cost. If that isn’t possible, determine how much your project is going to cost and how you can cover those expenses. Brainstorm ways you can make a difference that might not include earning money.

Sound doable? If not, take a step back, refocus and to find a different angle to pursue. Work with your project advisor and team to find solutions to obstacles that come up along the way.

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<th>List the Steps to Achieve Your Goal</th>
<th>What Materials and Resources Will You Need?</th>
<th>Where Can You Get the Materials and Resources?</th>
<th>How Much Will They Cost?</th>
<th>How Do You Plan to Cover These Costs?</th>
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Sustainability Tips

Gold Award projects create lasting change. Ensure a lasting project by setting clear timelines, collaborating and building alliances with others and keeping good records. Sustainability often involves influencing others to pitch in. Below is an example of a sustainable project.

Example #1

**Community issue:** Food waste from school lunches poses a danger to the environment.

**Root cause:** No community composting or recycling program.

**Take action:** Create a food-waste composting program for the school.

**Make the solution sustainable:**
- Work with school officials to find biodegradable plates and cups to use in the cafeteria.
- Work with town/state food waste officials to ensure the system is in place.
- Implement a plan in your school to separate cafeteria waste into composting, recycling and trash bins. (Farmers can use the compost to fertilize crops, improve soil quality, decrease soil runoff, etc.)
- Get a commitment from school administrators to continue your project.

**Make the project bigger (national and/or global link):** Recruit local students or contact local/state officials about adopting the program.

**Global link:** Find out how other parts of the world deal with food waste in schools. What kind of programs do they have in place? How can you learn from this?
Reflection Tool

Reflection is about thinking critically, solving problems, interpreting and analyzing the results of your experiences. After you complete your project, take some time to assess yourself.

1. Which values from the Girl Scout Promise and Law did you employ?
2. Which new leadership skills have you developed?
3. How are you better able to advocate for yourself and others?
4. How has your access to community resources and relationships with adults changed as a result of this experience?
5. How important has cooperation and team building been in developing your leadership skills?
6. What changes would you make if you were to do this project again?
7. How has this helped you get an idea of what your future career might be?
8. Now that you have planned, developed, and taken action on your project, how are you better equipped to pursue future/life goals?

One last thing...

Don’t forget to celebrate and take pride in your achievement!
Your hard work and dedication has made a difference in your life and the lives of others. On Congratulations!

Sharing Tips

What have you learned? What is the impact you hope your project will have? Share your story to spur others into action! Here are suggestions on how you can display your project’s success:

- Create a Web site or blog to post updates about your project and its impact on the national and/or global community.
- Log on to some Web sites where you can share your story:
  - Taking IT Global: [www.tigweb.org](http://www.tigweb.org)
  - Global Youth Service Day: [www.globalyouthserviceday.org](http://www.globalyouthserviceday.org)
- Create a campaign! Make buttons, posters and flyers to inform others about your project.
- Present what you have learned and your project’s community benefits at a workshop for community members.
- Make a video about the effects of your project and post it online. Invite friends, community leaders and others who are tackling similar issues to look at it.
- Write an article for your local newspaper or create a newsletter.

Project Planning Checklist

Read the questions below. Once you can answer yes to them all, you’re ready to submit your Project Proposal to Council!

- Will your project demonstrate your leadership skills?
- Have you set your project goal and identified what you would like to learn?
- Have you chosen your Take Action team? Have you discussed the project with them?
- Have you created a budget for the project?
- Have you created a plan to raise funds, if necessary?
- Have you made a timeline for your project?
- Does your project address a need in the local community?
- Have you found national and/or global links?
- Can your project be sustainable?
- Does your project challenge your abilities and your interests?