



## Girl Scout Gold Award® FAQs:

(Some FAQs adapted from “Girls Want to Know” section in “Go for It” STUDIO 2B Girl Scout Gold Award insert, as well as lessons learned)

Q: Who can earn the Girl Scout Gold Award?

A: Girls must be a registered Girl Scout and be 14–18 (grades 9–12) to work on STEPS 1-3 leading up to the Girl Scout Gold Award Project. Girls must be 15–18, or grades 10–12, when they work on STEPS 4-7 related to the Girl Scout Gold Award Project. Remember, as always, the project must be completed by September 30 following a girl’s senior year in high school. If she graduates early, she has until she is 18 to complete the project.

Q: Can a girl who is home-schooled or who has skipped grades start her work on the Gold Award prior to age 14 if she is in an advanced grade? Can she start her project prior to age 15?

A: No. The Girl Scout Gold Award is meant to be earned between those ages.

Q: Can a girl work on the prerequisites for her Girl Scout Award Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards the summer after she has bridged, rather than wait until the new membership year begins October 1.

A: YES! We want girls to be excited about these awards and to use the time they have, rather than trying to cram it all into the school year or lose the momentum and interest over the summer. However, a girl must be 14 to start work on the award; and 15 to start on the project.

Q: When the Focus books were first introduced, we were told that the charms were the equivalent of an Interest Project patch and could substitute in the pre-requisites for the Silver or Gold. Is this still the case with the new guidelines?

A: No, the feedback from council staff and volunteers was that substituting IP’s and Focus Books was unacceptable. Based on this feedback we’ve integrated both IP’s and Focus Books into different steps in the Girl Scout Silver and Girl Scout Gold Award process.

Q: Can girls earn the Girl Scout Gold Award if they are in a STUDIO 2B group? If they are a Juliette or individual member?

A: Girls who participate in a STUDIO 2B group and girls who are Juliettes are Girl Scouts. As always, if a girl meets the age and membership requirements, she can work towards her Girl Scout Gold Award.

Q: Is the Girl Scout Gold Award Project an individual project, or can it be worked on by a team of girls?

A: Girls may work with other girls, but they must keep track of their specific work and hours. Working on a project team is a life-skill and there are many different ways of assuming leadership. (See next question.)

Q: How could this project be expanded into a group project?  
Example: An art therapy project for nursing home residents.

**A:** For more than one girl to earn her Girl Scout Gold Award doing a similar project, the girls might:

- Meet with and form collaborations with other community organizations that focus on serving the elderly.
- Expand the number of nursing homes served.
- Secure a larger grant for the project.
- Design a way for the activities to continue even after the girls have earned their awards: for example, working with the local colleges and the nursing homes to set up internships for college credit for students who participate in the project.
- Offer a greater menu of art therapy activities.
- Train a wider pool of volunteers.
- Create a tool kit or packet for nursing homes and residents that defines the project, lists available activities, and provides community contacts.

Q: Can a girl earn the Girl Scout Gold Award even if she hasn't been in Girl Scouts very long?

**A:** Yes! She just needs to be a registered Girl Scout and be willing to complete the hours necessary to earn this award.

Q: Does a girl have to have earned the Girl Scout Silver Award in order to do the Girl Scout Gold Award?

**A:** No. Not at all. However, it's a great foundation for the process.

Q: Does a girl need to do the steps in any particular order?

**A:** She can do the Girl Scout Gold Leadership Award and the Girl Scout Gold Career Award in any order, even work on them simultaneously, but she should do STEP 4, the Girl Scout Gold 4 B's Challenge prior to working on the Girl Scout Gold Award project, STEP 5. STEPS 1-4 must be completed and the girl must be 15 or in 10<sup>th</sup> grade to begin STEP 5. A girl MUST receive council's approval before starting the Girl Scout Gold Award project (STEP 5).

Q: What is the difference between a troop/group advisor and a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor in the Girl Scout Gold Award process? Do girls need both?

**A:** A troop/group advisor is the adult who is working with an ongoing troop or group. She can work with girls in the first three steps of their Girl Scout Gold Award — helping them get initial information, working on the Girl Scout Gold Leadership Award, and the Girl Scout Gold Career Award. Some resource consultants may be brought in while girls are working on specific Interest Project Awards, but the advisor will help girls keep on track and lay out their overall timeline. The troop/group advisor may help girls with the initial activities in working on the 4B's. Once a girl (or girls) develops her vision statement, the advisor might help her identify a person in the community who might be a great project advisor. Girls are encouraged to go beyond the group when seeking specific knowledge for a project. However, the troop/group advisor may act as the project advisor if she can fulfill that role and it is a decision arrived at by the girl and herself. It is highly recommended that leaders/advisors who are parents of the girl NOT act as a girl's Gold Award Advisor. The whole idea is to connect with the community when doing one's Girl Scout Gold Award. That means working beyond the family and the troop/group and the council.

The Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor is an adult who has received training or will receive training on how to work with girls on the Girl Scout Gold Award project. She will have specific experience related to the project. For example, if a girl is doing a project to address a concern about AIDS in her community, the advisor might be someone from a non-profit that works with teens and health issues or an AIDS educator; or if girls are doing a literacy project for children of migrant workers, the project advisor might be an “English as a second language” teacher or a social worker giving assistance to the migrant camp. It is also possible that the troop/group advisor can work in partnership with the project advisor.

Q: At what point should a Girl Scout Gold Award project advisor be identified?

A: Ask the council about any plans in place for recruiting project advisors. It’s great to have a project advisor to expand the network of adults and provide expertise for a girl’s project. If a girl has an idea before she starts any work on her Girl Scout Gold Award, she might want to identify her project advisor from the very beginning. A girl’s group advisor can act as the project advisor on the Girl Scout Gold Award through step 4, but GSUSA highly recommends that a project advisor be available when the project starts to come into focus during STEP 4, the Girl Scout Gold 4 B’s Challenge phase. The project advisor should be identified in the planning phase before the Girl Scout Gold Award application is turned into the council. If a girl is having difficulties identifying an advisor for the project, she or her troop/group advisor should feel free to contact the council for assistance **before** the project application is submitted. A troop/group advisor may assume the role of project advisor if necessary or if she is truly qualified to oversee the topic area chosen.

Q: What if a girl has already done some similar activities while doing other Girl Scout awards? Can these activities count toward her Girl Scout Gold Award?

A: Activities done prior to working on the Girl Scout Gold Award may not count toward the number of hours for this award. However, if a girl has earned the charm for a STUDIO 2B Focus book that is one of the requirements for one of the awards, she will need to set new goals for herself in that Focus book.

Q: What is the role of the council’s Girl Scout Gold Award committee?

A: This is usually a group of adult volunteers, including past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award, dedicated to helping a girl succeed. They will review the size, scope, and cost of a project and make recommendations to ensure that it is in fact an appropriate project to earn a Girl Scout Gold Award. They might also be aware of community issues and dynamics that impact the project and may be able to introduce a girl to other adults who can assist her in her project.

Q: What is the Girl Scout Gold 4 B’s Challenge?

A: The 4 B Challenge will help girls be better prepared and informed before choosing a project to spend many hours on. It was initiated to end the frustration girls expressed about the difficulty of coming up with ideas for projects.

Q: Do the hours put into planning and researching for the 4 B’s Challenge count towards the hours needed for the Girl Scout Gold Award project?

A: Yes. Even if a girl decides not to do the project she comes up with in the “4B’s visioning process” when she gets down to planning with her advisor, she has not wasted the time in learning the process required to focus on a vision. A girl shouldn’t be focusing on a project that she really doesn’t want to be doing, or isn’t able to do because of something she’s discovered in her research or community networking. A girl might even discover a project advisor in the community networking process who sparks a different twist on her vision. The more that is found

out about something, the more possibilities there are — the trick is to end up with a project that meets needs of the community and that allows a girl to be effective and passionate in what she is doing. For example, a girl may find that a safety program is not what is needed to prevent accidents in her community — what's needed is a stop light at a dangerous intersection. That will require focusing on a different network as she works with the community to make that kind of a change and her project advisor may need to be someone from the city council instead of a safety educator.

Q: The focus books seem to be so easy compared to Interest Project Awards.

A: The STUDIO 2B Focus books look deceptively simple (it must be all the pictures); however, the most important component of each booklet is the goal setting. Yes, it is possible to breeze through one, but if a girl is really true to the concept, and working “on her honor” she will set goals that involve stretching and learning — allowing for a thorough exploration of the topic in order to meet her goals. The role of the advisor is key to the goal setting process.

Q: How can we assure that Girl Scout Awards represent quality projects? In the past we have had some projects that resemble service projects signed off by advisors.

A: The best way to assure that a girl is doing the best of her ability is to ensure that both she and her advisor receive orientation about the award and about the difference between a service project and a Girl Scout Gold Award project — whether it is through training, Web site information, or a marketing piece. The last thing a Girl Scout Gold Award Mentor Committee or council wants to do is to be put in the position of telling a girl her project isn't a Girl Scout Gold Award when the final report comes in. The project at that point reflects on the adults who are advising her and it would be unacceptable to refuse her the award if she had put in the hours and gone through with the process.

Q: Do the changes in 2004 make the awards harder or easier to earn?

A: Some of the steps leading up to the award project have been streamlined so that each step is a progression toward the most important part of the award — the action project. The project has a greater number of hours to complete, but the hours in the Girl Scout Gold 4 B's Challenge can be counted toward the project planning.

Q: Is it recommended that a girl's parent be her advisor for the Girl Scout Gold Award?

A: GSUSA strongly recommend against it, even if a girl's parent is her leader/advisor. Ideally, she should have an advisor that has experience in the area of her project. Avoid situations where parents do a girl's work, even when it comes to calling and asking questions. If money earning is involved, the girl and her advisor can act as a team, with the girl doing the planning and the adult doing the “ask.”

Q: What if a girl is 16 and graduating? **Can she complete her project when she is in college?**

A: Yes. A girl has until she turns 18 or until the end of the Girl Scout membership year when she is a senior in high school.

Q: What if a girl graduates and is 18 and doesn't have her project completed?

A: In this case the girl would have until September 30 of the year she graduates.

Q: What if a girl's project is not completed by the council ceremony time?

A: This is up to the girl. She might be recognized for her work in progress at the Girl Scout Gold Award Ceremony for her peers, or she girl can be honored in a separate ceremony or come back for the council-wide ceremony the next year. If the council has a set time for honoring Girl Scout Gold Awardees, this should be part of the orientation to girls planning their Girl Scout Gold Award. Girls and their advisors should be encouraged to work within the council timeline; however, the ceremony time should not dictate whether a girl is able to earn her Girl Scout Gold Award or not. **A council or Girl Scout Gold Award Mentor Committee can not insist that a Girl Scout Gold Award project be completed by a certain time other than within the national guidelines** — by the end of the Girl Scout membership year when a girl graduates or when she turns 18 years old.

Q: Can a girl who is developmentally disabled/delayed earn the Girl Scout Gold Award? Don't we need a different set of requirements?

A: The Girl Scout Gold Award is something done to the best of a girl's ability. It is totally possible to work with someone who needs to adapt the program with the existing requirements. For example, a young woman who will never hold a job because of the severity of her disabilities was able to adapt the career component, turning it around so that she learned how to select her personal caretaker, how to evaluate her caretaker, and how to let her go. Her project focused on a community awareness program involving the group home that she lived in and was overseen by her caretaker. Her troop/group helped do the "legwork" and she provided the vision. There is not a need to have special requirements for girls who are handicapped or mentally challenged — encourage flexibility and the recruitment of advisors that can work with the girl individually. Specific questions on adaptations can be directed to the Gold Award Consultant or Disabilities Consultant in the Mission to Market Group at GSUSA.

Q: How do we get letters of congratulations?

A: The council must put a system in place for requesting letters of congratulations and certificates from Girls Scouts of the USA. This can be delegated to the Girl Scout Gold Award Mentor Committee, however, procedures as outlined in this document and the Council Online Network must be followed. **Advisors and service units can not make such requests.** Please, no personal invitations to GSUSA's CEO and National President to respond to from troops/groups or individuals.

It is suggested that someone be appointed to request other letters on council letterhead to be presented to girls. Requests should be consolidated and plenty of time needs to be allowed for response. (See Appendix: "**Government and Outside Organizations That Recognize Girl Scout Gold Award.**")

Girls should be advised of procedures for inviting attendance at ceremonies. Invitations might be sent to parents/guardians, troop/group advisors, project advisors, troop/group sponsors, key volunteers or someone representing recipients of project, etc.

Q: Who purchases the Girl Scout Gold Award for the girl?

A: This can be determined by Girl Scout council. Some councils are able to provide the award pins as part of the recognition ceremony, while in others, it is the responsibility of the troop/group or service unit. The miniature Girl Scout Gold Award pins are available to girls as a "thank-you" presentation for parents or advisors. Award certificates and folders must be ordered from Girl Scouts of the USA (See "**Submission Guidelines for Girl Scout Gold Award Certificates, Folders and Letters Requests**" in Appendix.)

Q: Where does a girl wear her related Girl Scout Gold Awards?

A: If a girl wears the Girl Scout uniform for girls 14-18, she can choose to wear her earned charms on the STUDIO 2B Bracelet or on the STUDIO 2B Charm Holder pinned to the sash or vest with other earned insignia. She can wear the STUDIO 2B Bracelet and Charm Holder and the Girl Scout Membership Pin and Girl Scout Gold Award with regular clothing as well. See "Girl Scout Central" on [girlscouts.org](http://girlscouts.org) for more information.

If a girl has chosen to accept the "old" Girl Scout Gold Award related pins in place of the charms (the Girl Scout Leadership Pin, the Girl Scout Challenge Pin and the Girl Scout Career Exploration Pin) she should wear them on her uniform as shown in diagrams.

The official Girl Scout Gold Award pin goes to the left of the Girl Scouts of the USA Membership Pin on the girl uniform and can be worn on the right side of the adult Girl Scout uniform in line with membership pins or on regular clothing. The miniature pin can be worn on the lapel of regular clothing.



## Ways Parents/Guardians Can Support Girls Working on the Girl Scout Gold Award®

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award in Girl Scouting that girls 14-18 can earn. It represents a girl's commitment to herself and to her community, as she focuses on leadership, career exploration, personal challenges and completing a lasting project that will benefit her community. It takes many hours of preparation, planning and work to accomplish the goals a girl has set for herself.

Parents/guardians play a significant role in supporting a girl's path to the Girl Scout Gold Award. As a parent you may be called upon to be coach, mentor, cheerleader, sounding board and chauffeur. As a parent, you are not expected to be a taskmaster — this is the girl's project. However, you can assist a girl by:

- Reading through the materials provided to girls regarding the Girl Scout Gold Award so that you feel comfortable offering support.
- Helping her choose a topic that will become the basis for her project if she asks for ideas. Remember, however, that the topic is based on her passion, not yours.
- Encouraging and supporting her, but not pressuring her. "Going for the Gold" is something that a girl has to want to do herself.
- Recognizing that your daughter is capable, competent and worthy of respect as she assumes greater citizenship and responsibility. You can help provide her with positive and constructive support on this journey.
- Aiding her in accessing a network of adults who can lend insight, provide contacts, and point to resources. You may work with someone who has just the skill set your daughter needs in an advisor, or someone who belongs to a service club that your daughter and her advisor can approach for financial assistance.
- Practicing good parenting when it comes to making sure she gets enough rest, eats well and is supported by the whole family in her endeavor.
- Helping and supporting girls in any Girl Scout safety or money earning guidelines during her path to the Girl Scout Gold Award. These are important to assure the safety of your daughter and the integrity of the Girl Scout program.
- Allowing your daughter to stumble and learn the lessons that come with the Girl Scout Gold Award project. She will be working with a Girl Scout Gold Award Project advisor, an adult who has been trained to assist her in partnership who has skills specific to the project, and a council Gold Award Mentor Committee.
- Helping with the project as asked or cheerleading from the sidelines if appropriate.
- Joining in the celebration as she is honored for her accomplishments.