

Money and Your Take Action Project

Some things to remember as you budget for your project.

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. Make clear to the donor that their gift is for your particular Gold Award project and is NOT a tax-deductible gift to Girl Scouts of Gateway Council. And don't forget to write a thank you note!

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, etc.

What you can do: This is where it gets a bit tricky. Your troop/group can hold a bake sale or birdhouse sale, etc., 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 an individual's Girl Scout Gold Award Project, such as the purchase of materials. It must be a troop/group decision on how to allocate the funds, such as being used for an individual's project. If you are an individually registered member, things are slightly different. You cannot earn money as an individual Girl Scout for yourself. Think about earning money on your own by doing something non-Girl Scout related (such as babysitting, pet sitting, etc.) to finance your project with your own money. You are also able to have an adult do the "ask" to raise funds or gift-in-kind donations (See #1).

All Girl Scout money earning activities should meet *Safety Activity Checkpoints* and council guidelines.

Money-Earning Ideas

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. 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.)

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 freebies 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 about Money Earning

Q: Can I use my own money on the Girl Scout Gold Award Take Action 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.

Some individual activities with great potential:

1. Pet walking and pet care
2. Babysitting, plant sitting, pet sitting
3. Lawn mowing, leaf raking
4. Recycling
5. Tutoring younger kids
6. Refereeing sports games
7. Party giving (clowning, magic shows, game leading)
8. Making or repairing jewelry
9. Creating hand-made greeting cards

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. Make sure your neighbor knows that their donation is for your particular Gold Award project and is NOT a tax deductible gift to Girl Scouts of Gateway Council.

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 Project 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 Take Action Project.

Q: I know you can't raise money as a Girl Scout for other organizations; 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 supplies, 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. 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, 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. If your actual project is an event for the public, you can charge a fee to cover the cost of materials.