Please review best practices and frequently asked questions compiled by our Gold Award Girl Scout program. If you need additional help, please reach out to your Gold Award Advisor. In addition, GSEMA strongly asks that you continue to adhere to any Safety Activity Checkpoints especially those in Virtual Troop Meetings.

Virtual Programming: Best Practices

Our Gold Award Committee has recommended that Gold Award candidates use the following tools: PowerPoint, Zoom, and Google Classroom. These are tools we have used frequently at GSEMA, but they are not the only tools that are available to you.

PowerPoint:
- Create a script with talking points rather than placing all text onto your slides
- Avoid transitions between your slides
- Alternate between slides with words and slides that are just pictures
- Be aware of copyright materials and photos you may be using to create your PowerPoint
- If you are including a discussion or activity, 20 slides will fill an hour

Zoom:
- Be sure to have the most recent update. Zoom updates their platform frequently.
- Do not post meeting IDs and passwords publicly. By creating a sign up form (like with Google) you can protect your meeting login information.
- To ensure safety and control of your spaces, turn on: screen-share for host only; password protection; waiting rooms. It may be important to turn off annotations (that let you draw on the screen) and the ability for participants to unmute themselves depending on your needs.
- Don't host an online space alone! Get help by having: someone to monitor the chat, someone to help with allowing participates into your meeting room or removing anyone who has become disruptive, someone to assist with muting and unmuting permissions, and more. This will let you focus solely on interacting and teaching those who came to participate.
- Practice before your live or recorded sessions. Meet online with your team members to ensure all are ready and prepared for their meeting role. We recommend signing in at least 30 minutes before the start of your meeting. This time allows you and your team to ensure: internet connections are stable; microphones and audio works well; practice video angles or any shared content.
- Do a quick tutorial to show participants on how to use the tools you wish them to use.
- Have participants use the hand raise icon before unmuting themselves.
- Encourage participants to use "speaker view" to see the speaker as the largest video. You can also use spotlight.
- When sharing your screen share "with computer audio" so you can play videos and participants can hear. This option is available as a checkbox on the bottom left corner.
- Record: this will be important for your records and to have for safety for you and all participations. Files can be viewed later as a MP4.

To learn more about Zoom visit Video Tutorials.

Google Classroom:

Google Classroom is a great place to combine activities, videos, and additional information: especially if you want to rerun and use again.

- Divide the classroom by topic or session
- Turn off comments – unless you want a discussion space
- Hide notifications

For additional support, visit Google Classroom Help.

Team Support and Meeting Size:

Gold Award projects cannot be completed alone. This is even true in online spaces.

- When hosting live sessions, you are going to need at least 2 helpers with you to monitor the chat, videos, and wait room. You find it helpful for your helpers to also be the individuals you have secured as your Girl Scout volunteers for safety.
- Don't assume your team knows how to use the tool. Help them practice and know how to use the features you are asking them to monitor.
- For every additional 10 people, add one helper for safety ratio as well as help with the chat and activity.
- GSEMA's Gold Award Committee would not recommend groups of larger than 25 if you leading hands-on activities or in-depth conversations and debriefs.
- If hosting panel discussions with little engagement, you may have rooms bigger than 25.

Leading Activities in Online Spaces:

- If materials are needed for the activity send out a material list at least 48 hours in advance.
- Try to give supply options on what could be used.
- Share directions slowly, you may also need to repeat the steps as participants complete the activity.
- Be aware of your camera angle and lighting to ensure all participants can see you.
- Have a finished example of the activity for the participants.
- If using polls, create the polls for Zoom ahead of time to vote or choose.
- Have your directions for the activity ready digitally. Most participants will ask for them if they do not have the supplies ready or unable to finish within the time. Pictures for each step can be very helpful.
- Mute all when giving instructions.
- Give 10 minutes at the end for questions or show and tell.
  - Always compliment and/or give a follow-up question.

Frequently Asked Questions from Gold Award Candidates

How can I advertise my event?
- Reach out to your service unit volunteers for your town to advertise to troops.
- Contact your library to see if they have a children's page or email list that you can reach out through.
- Talk to leaders in the community you were are targeting with your project

How can I edit a video for free?
- Microsoft Video Editor comes with many computers
- iMovie comes free with Apple products
- There are a few web-based solutions

What are things that I should stay away from virtually?
- Giving out any private information (school, phone number, address, email)
- Just resharing resources that already exist online. Existing materials cannot be the sole aspect of your project.

What are the benefits of Zoom?
- It doesn't give out your email address
- There are passwords and security protections
- You are able to record and keep records
- Screen share capabilities
- Chat safety: the ability to limit chat so participants can't talk to each other or can only chat to the host

What are the limits of Zoom?
- 40-minute caps for unpaid accounts
- You may need help managing chat or waiting room.