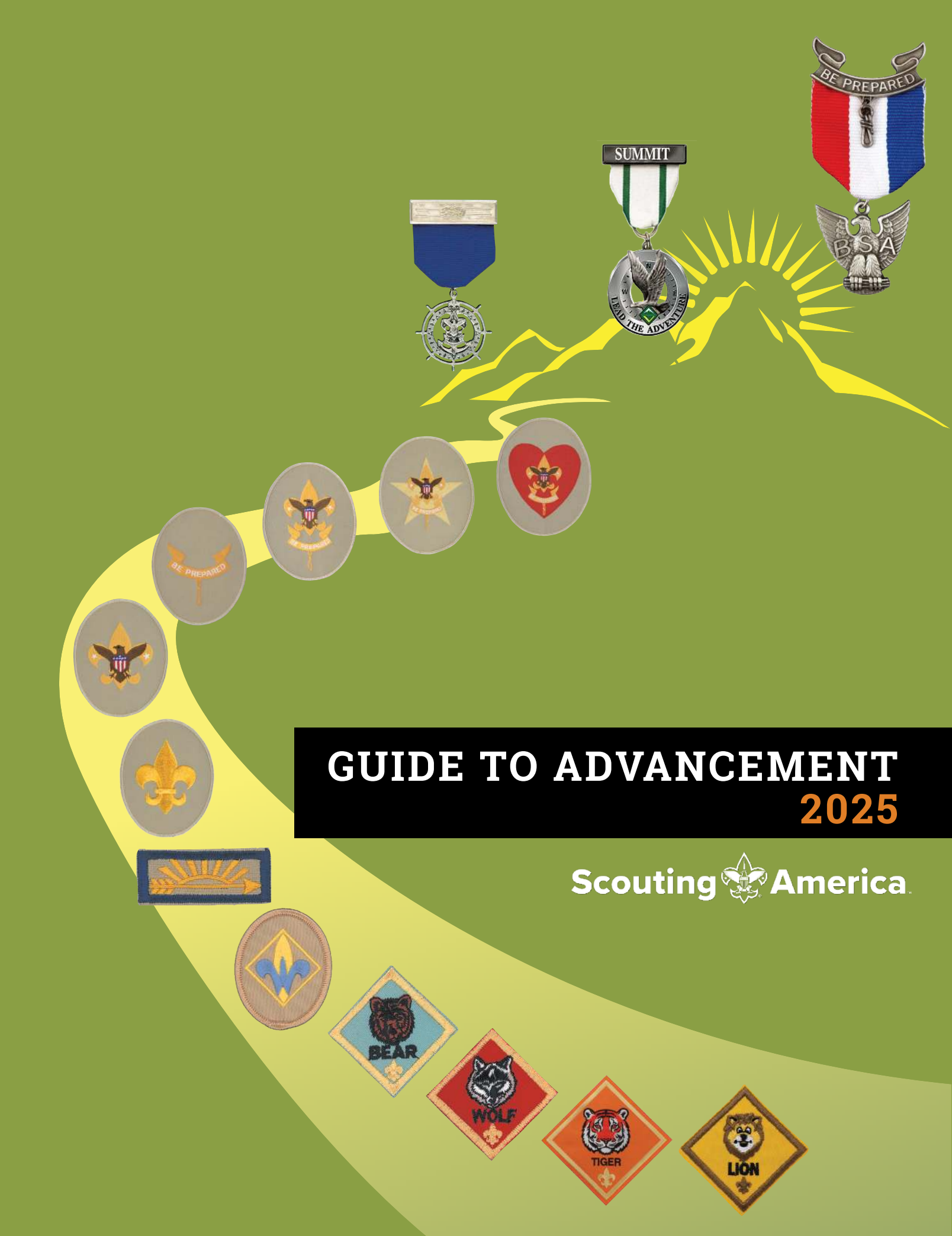


GUIDE TO ADVANCEMENT
2025

Scouting America

Scouting America Mission Statement

The mission of Scouting America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

The Aims of Scouting

Every Scouting activity moves young people toward the basic aims of: character development, citizenship training, leadership, and mental and physical fitness.

Advancement is one of the eight methods used by Scout leaders to help youth fulfill the aims of Scouting America.

Publication numbers listed herein were current at press time but are subject to change.
Note that the publications may be ordered through www.scoutshop.org using either a number or a publication title.

GUIDE TO ADVANCEMENT
2025

Scouting America

The current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* replaces any previous editions and is the official Scouting America source on advancement procedures. The most current and official version of the *Guide to Advancement* can be accessed from www.scouting.org/advancement.

Policy on Unauthorized Changes to Advancement Program

No council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to, or subtract from, advancement requirements, or deviate from policies in this publication. There are limited exceptions relating only to members with special needs. For details see Section 10, "Advancement for Members With Special Needs."

Mandated Procedures and Recommended Practices

This publication clearly identifies mandated procedures with the word "must." Where such language is used, no council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to deviate from the procedures covered without the written permission of the National Program Committee or their designee. Highly recommended best practices are offered using words like "should," while other options and guidelines are indicated with terms such as "may" or "can." Refer questions on these to your local district or council advancement chairs or staff advisors. They, in turn, may request interpretations and assistance from the National Program Committee or their designee.

The Guide to Safe Scouting *Applies*

Policies and procedures outlined in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* apply to all Scouting America activities, including those related to advancement and Eagle Scout, Summit, and Quartermaster service projects.

What Does "Unit Leader" Mean?

Throughout this publication the term "unit leader" refers only to a Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Venturing Advisor, Sea Scout Skipper, or Lone Scout friend and counselor. "Unit leadership" and "leader" are used as generic references to any registered adult leader in a unit and as such would include the unit leader.

What Does "Scouts BSA Handbook" *Mean?*

Throughout this publication, the term *Scouts BSA Handbook* refers to both the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys* and the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls.*

How Is a "Month" Defined?

A month is a month regardless how many days it has. It is not defined as 30 days or four weeks. February 2 up to and including August 1, or August 31 up to and including February 28 (or 29th if leap year) are examples of six-month periods. Six months does not mean 180 days.

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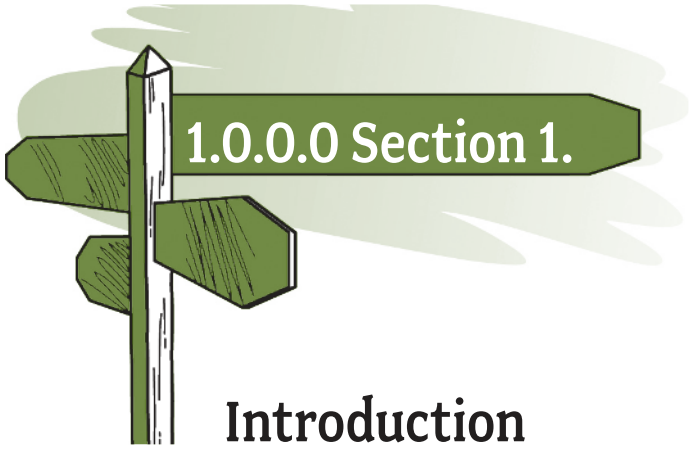
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Introduction

The current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* is the official source for administering advancement in all Scouting America programs: Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts. It replaces any previous Scouting America advancement manuals and previous editions of the *Guide to Advancement*.

Producing the *Guide to Advancement* involves many members of Scouting America's national staff, many volunteer advancement administrators, and subject matter experts from across the country. The result is a resource intended to efficiently meet the needs of those who would most often consult it. The policies and procedures specified in this document must be implemented by all units, districts and councils. Therefore, they must work for all units, districts and councils, no matter how large, small, geographically dense, economically diverse, etc. For this reason, policies have been designed to be firm enough to maintain the integrity of the Scouting program, while broad enough to allow councils and districts to match to their circumstances while retaining the intent.

Additional information and best practices, as well as the most current version of the *Guide to Advancement*, appear on the Advancement Resources web page, www.scouting.org/advancement.

1.0.1.0 How to Approach Issues Not Covered in the *Guide to Advancement*

Be aware that statements or interpretations offered from unofficial websites and other such sources may be out of date or incorrect. They will not be considered in resolving advancement questions and issues. In situations not specifically covered in this guide, advancement chairs, coordinators, or other administrators should consult with each other, study all related *Guide to Advancement* sections and topics, and make decisions based on the aims and mission of Scouting America, the Scout Oath and Scout Law, other applicable current and official Scouting America resources—and common sense.



Regardless of the program—Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, or Sea Scouts—where advancement takes place, it is nothing more and nothing less than one of several *methods*. It is a means of accomplishing the Scouting America mission, not an end in itself. When as advancement administrators—both volunteer and professional—we recognize this, we can expect success. To see it otherwise is to indicate we have forgotten our purpose.

1.0.2.0 Questions and Suggestions

Every effort has been made to provide clear procedures and guidelines for a mission-oriented delivery of advancement. Its administration, however, largely takes place locally. Therefore, volunteer advancement administrators should always consult first with the district and council—the district advancement chair, district executive, council advancement chair, or the council's professional staff advisor for advancement. These officials can provide many answers and a certain level of interpretation.

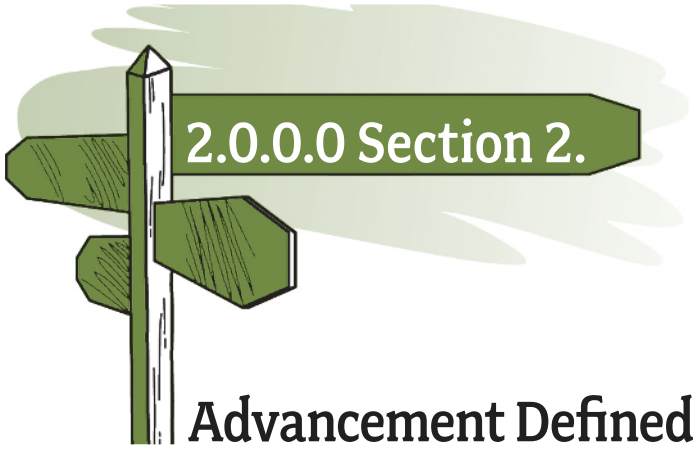
For recommendations or suggested corrections to this publication, or for questions that cannot be handled locally, contact advancement.team@scouting.org.

Direct suggestions for new merit badges, or updates to existing ones, to merit.badge@scouting.org.

1.0.3.0 Significant Changes

Almost every section of this guide has received some minor or major revisions since the last edition. Readers are encouraged to carefully review the entire guide, especially those topics frequently referenced. In particular, the following sections merit close review:

4.2.1.2	"Once a Scout has been tested and signed off by someone approved to do so, the requirement has been met." Added "and cannot be rescinded."
5.0.8.0	Added policy dealing with group/online instruction, and use of artificial intelligence
7.0.4.12	Online Merit Badge Classes
8.0.4.1	Added two-week time limit for council to document denial of advancement to the rank of Eagle Scout, and two months for Scout or parents to file appeal.
9.0.1.7	Changed way Eagle Scout references are handled
9.0.1.8	Added two-week time limit for council to document denial of advancement to the rank of Eagle Scout, and two months for Scout or parents to file appeal.
Section 10	Advancement for Members with Special Needs (completely reorganized and rewritten)
Removed all	References to Advancement News, and National Advancement Program Team
Changed all	"Scoutbook" to "Scoutbook Plus", not "Scoutbook Plus Internet Advancement"



2.0.0.0 Section 2.

Advancement Defined

Advancement is the process by which youth members of Scouting America progress from rank to rank.

2.0.0.1 It Is a Method—Not an End in Itself

Advancement is simply a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is one of several methods designed to help unit leadership carry out the aims and mission of Scouting America. See the inside front cover for text of the aims and mission.

2.0.0.2 Advancement Is Based on Experiential Learning

Everything done to advance—to earn ranks and other awards and recognition—is designed to educate or to otherwise expand Scouts' horizons. Members learn and develop according to a standard. This is the case from the time a member joins, and then moves through, the programs of Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, and Venturing or Sea Scouts.

Experiential learning is the key: Exciting and meaningful activities are offered, and education *happens*. Learning comes from doing. For example, youth may read about first aid, hear it discussed, and watch others administer it, but they will not learn it until they practice it. Rushing a Scout through requirements to obtain a badge is not the goal. Advancement should be a natural outcome of a well-rounded unit program, rich in opportunities to work toward the ranks.

It is important to note, as with any educational opportunity, a rank or award is not the end of the learning process. In Scouting, after a requirement has been passed, the Scout is placed in practical situations that build retention through repeated use of skills. For example, the youth plays games that feature the skills, teaches other Scouts, and perhaps practices the skills in "real-life" outdoor experiences. A well-rounded and strong unit program takes advantage of these kinds of opportunities, using them to improve retention through practical application.



2.0.0.3 Personal Growth Is the Primary Goal

Scouting skills—what a young person learns to do—are important, but not as important as the primary goal of *personal growth* achieved through participating in a unit program. The concern is for total, well-rounded development. Age-appropriate, surmountable hurdles are placed before members, and as they face these challenges they learn about themselves and gain confidence.

Learning Scout skills and concepts through active participation is a vehicle for personal growth, but it is not the primary goal. For example, learning how to tie a knot, plan a menu, swim, or administer first aid may turn out to be critical in one's life, but they are secondary to the goal of personal growth that comes with learning. As Scouts learn skills and are tested on them, and then reviewed and recognized, they develop confidence. They come to realize they can learn and do other similar things. The retention of Scouting skills and knowledge is important, of course; but for retention to take place, it will be because Scouting skills and knowledge are used in our programs.

Success is achieved when we fulfill the Scouting America Mission Statement and when we accomplish the aims of Scouting: character development, citizenship training, leadership, and mental and physical fitness. We know we are on the right track when we see youth accepting responsibility, demonstrating self-reliance, and caring for themselves and others; when they learn to weave Scouting ideals into their lives; and when we can see they will be positive contributors to our American society.

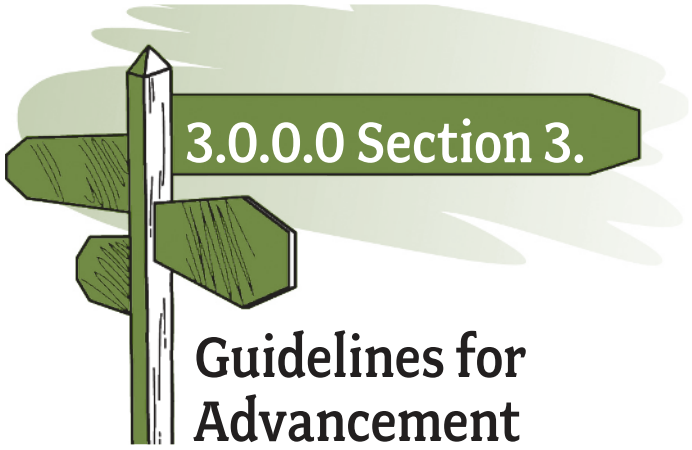
Though certainly goal-oriented, advancement is not a competition. Rather, it is a joint effort involving the leaders, the members, other volunteers such as merit badge counselors or Venturing consultants, and the family. Though much is done individually at their own pace, youth often work together in groups to focus on advancement at Cub Scout den meetings, for example, or participate in a Scouts BSA campout or Sea Scout cruise. As they do this, we must recognize each young person's unique combination of strengths and weaknesses. As watchful leaders, either adult or youth, we lend assistance as called for and encourage members to help each other according to their abilities.

2.0.0.4 The Methods of Scouting

From Cub Scouting through Venturing and Sea Scouts, we put the methods to work. Together they lead to mission fulfillment. For example, the methods of the Scouts BSA program are Scouting ideals, the patrol method, advancement, adult association, outdoor program, the uniform, personal growth, and leadership development. Scouting ideals, put forth in the timeless instruments of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, represent the most basic method. Moving on, we know young people want to belong to groups. Throughout the Scouting program, we provide a place where the sense of belonging—as in a den or patrol—is an outcome of practicing skills, exploring interests, learning values, forming friendships, and enjoying adventure. Associations within families and with a variety of adults are critical too, especially in terms of providing support and recognition and in developing mutual respect.

Advancement is the method by which we promote and encourage the ongoing involvement and commitment that keeps members coming back for more. It works best when it is built into a unit's program so that simply participating leads to meaningful achievement and recognition—and to a continually improving readiness for more complex experiences.

For more about these and the other methods of Scouting, see the leader manuals specific to each program.



Guidelines for Advancement Committees

Council and district advancement committees, which are sometimes jointly advancement and recognition committees, are responsible for implementing and facilitating advancement and processing most special awards and recognitions, respectively. This is done according to national procedures and local practices under the direction of the council executive board. Advancement committees operate under the Scouting America program function. They should cooperate with the other program function elements—outdoor programs, activities and civic service, and training—and also with the membership, finance, and unit-service functions. Accepting the responsibilities outlined in the following pages will help to accomplish this.

3.0.0.1 Council Advancement Committee Responsibilities

The council advancement committee often falls under a vice president for program. The committee's members should represent a breadth of experience in all Scouting programs. Normally, district advancement chairs are included. The council professional staff advisor for advancement provides coaching and guidance—especially as it relates to national policies and procedures. The advancement chair and the staff advisor work together closely, and in harmony with the other efforts and functions involved in delivering and supporting the Scouting program.

A full, functioning council advancement committee should be organized to accomplish the following, while always implementing and enforcing the policies in this *Guide to Advancement*.

1. Recruit enough committee members to fulfill the responsibilities described below and achieve council advancement objectives.
2. Ensure all advancement administrators in the council receive periodic, ongoing training to maintain awareness of updated procedures, best practices, and details related to all programs of Scouting America—Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts. See "Building an Advancement Committee," 3.0.0.5.
3. Establish objectives and action plans that stimulate advancement and lead to maximum success.
4. Inspire a positive working relationship with district advancement committees, providing clear guidance and direction on their responsibilities and objectives.
5. Plan, present, and submit for the council calendar those advancement conferences and training experiences that will strengthen the performance of district and unit advancement volunteers.
6. As appropriate, support advancement elements involved in training, and in events and activities presented by other council committees.
7. Support outdoor programs where advancement may take place, such as day camps, resident camp, long-term camping experiences, and specialized activities featuring advancement. See "Advancement in Camp Settings," 5.0.1.0.
8. Establish local practices for adhering to National Council advancement procedures at outdoor programs, summer camp, and events such as merit badge fairs or midways. See especially "Group Instruction," 7.0.3.2.
9. Support and promote Scoutbook Plus and other official internet portals for advancement reporting. See "Importance and Benefits of Electronic Advancement Reporting," 6.0.0.1. Accurate advancement records and backups are critical to program planning and analysis. Councils should work toward 100 percent electronic data entry.
10. Share advancement statistics for use in council fundraising materials and for supporting recruitment and retention efforts and commissioner service.
11. See to an effective merit badge program administered at the council or district level that functions according to national procedures and recruits, approves, trains, and makes known sufficient counselors to meet the needs of the council.
12. Determine, according to national procedures, consistent and appropriate methods for approving Eagle Scout, Summit, and Quartermaster service project proposals project fundraising applications, providing Eagle Scout service project coaches, and conducting Eagle, Summit, and Quartermaster boards of review.
13. Determine methods of collecting Eagle Scout or Quartermaster references.

14. Know and precisely follow official procedures for appeals and time-extension requests.
15. Establish procedures for the use of technology-based tools like Scoutbook Plus according to "Using Technology-Based Tools in Advancement," 5.0.8.0.
16. Know and follow proper procedures for considering special needs cases involving alternative requirements and merit badges, and registration beyond the normal age of eligibility (RBAE).
17. If awards committee, participate in considering and presenting special awards and recognitions according to established council procedures. This responsibility may or may not include the Silver Beaver Award.
18. If awards committee, support and promote awards such as the religious emblems and the STEM Nova awards, as well as those approved by the local council executive board.
19. If awards committee, process lifesaving and meritorious action awards according to council practices and national procedures.
20. Notify the media to recognize significant youth achievements, such as Eagle Scout, Summit, or Quartermaster ranks; lifesaving and meritorious action awards; and other noteworthy accomplishments.
21. Support protection of youth and Scouting America's trademark by assisting the council in establishing written agreements, as described in 7.0.4.9, with non-Scouting organizations that conduct merit badge and other Scouting classes.

3.0.0.2 District Advancement Committee Responsibilities

Although the council advancement committee or executive board determines specific responsibilities for district advancement committees, district advancement chairs report to their respective district chairs. The following is a guide to the responsibilities that might be delegated.

1. Recruit enough members to fulfill the responsibilities and accomplish any objectives established by the council advancement committee or executive board.
2. Provide members with ongoing training to maintain awareness of updated procedures, best practices, and details related to Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts. See "Building an Advancement Committee," 3.0.0.5.
3. Establish objectives and implement action plans that stimulate advancement and lead to maximum success.
4. Maintain advancement records and share them with commissioners, trainers, and other district volunteers who serve units, while respecting the privacy of Scouts. Identify and work with units that are experiencing little or no advancement.
5. Plan, present, and submit for the district and council calendars those advancement conferences and training experiences that will improve the results of unit advancement volunteers.
6. As appropriate, support advancement elements involved in training, and in events and activities presented by other committees of the district.
7. Support outdoor programs where advancement may take place, such as district day camps, camporees, etc.
8. Support and promote Scoutbook Plus and Scouting America's other internet portals for advancement reporting. See "Importance and Benefits of Electronic Advancement Reporting," 6.0.0.1. Accurate advancement records are critical to program planning and analysis. Districts should work toward 100 percent electronic data entry.
9. Follow national and local council procedures in administering the merit badge program and in recruiting, approving, and training a sufficient number of merit badge counselors. Provide units, especially those that do not yet use Scoutbook Plus, with access to a current listing of council-approved merit badge counselors.
10. Follow national and local council procedures as prescribed regarding appeals; references; project proposal approvals; board of review chair selection; boards of review support; and time extensions.
11. Support and promote awards such as the religious emblems and the STEM Nova awards (if your council supports these awards), as well as those approved by the local council executive board.
12. Recommend, according to council and district practices, recipients for the Award of Merit and other recognitions, if a joint recognition committee.
13. Notify the media to recognize significant achievements such as Eagle Scout, Summit, or Quartermaster ranks; lifesaving and meritorious action awards; and other noteworthy accomplishments.

14. To strengthen units through strong advancement programs, consider adding:
    a. Assist unit commissioners and others who serve units.
    b. Serve as a resource for roundtables.
    c. Develop relationships with unit advancement volunteers.
    d. Provide units with advancement reports, summarizing and explaining what they mean.
    e. Assist unit leadership with advancement planning and promotion.
    f. Visit pack, troop, crew, and ship committee meetings, as warranted.
    g. Visit boards of review, as warranted.
    h. Help troops, crews, and ships avoid pitfalls as qualified youth strive for the Eagle Scout, Summit, and Quartermaster ranks.
    i. Encourage prompt and proper recognition, ceremonies, and courts of honor.
    j. Recognize units excelling in advancement.

3.0.0.3 Unit Advancement Responsibilities

Unit advancement coordinators and those who assist them have the basic responsibility to support the youth's advancement to maximize achievement, and otherwise facilitate a smooth implementation of the process. Specific responsibilities are outlined in the leader literature for each program. The following responsibilities are not all-inclusive, but typical.

1. Support and facilitate the unit leader's vision for rank advancement, providing consultation on the policies and procedures put forth in the *Guide to Advancement*.
2. Educate parents, guardians, unit leadership, and committee members on appropriate methods to stimulate and encourage advancement. For example, help build unit programming rich in advancement opportunities, recognize successes, encourage members who are advancing slowly, and post advancement charts.
3. Help plan, facilitate, or conduct advancement ceremonies. In troops and crews, schedule and support regular courts of honor—every three to four months is generally sufficient. Ships will want regular bridges of honor, and packs should make recognition a key part of every pack meeting.
4. Obtain necessary badges and certificates, etc., and arrange for timely presentation of ranks, Adventure belt loops and pins, merit badges, awards, and other recognitions. It is best to obtain and present these as soon as possible after they are earned. They can then be re-presented in more formal settings.
5. Ensure Cub Scouts advance in rank annually by school year's end and are recognized in a meaningful ceremony.
6. Know and understand the advancement procedures for the program served, especially those applicable to Eagle Scout, Summit, and Quartermaster candidates.
7. Assist the unit leader in establishing practices that will provide opportunities for each new Scout to achieve First Class rank within 12 to 18 months of joining, and Star rank soon thereafter.
8. Arrange for timely boards of review, and see that youth who are ready are invited. It is important that youth are allowed to progress when they are ready, and no youth is barred from achieving later ranks due to delays in holding boards of review.
9. Maintain advancement records and backups and submit reports to the unit committee. It is appropriate in Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts to involve youth leaders in this process.
10. Use Scoutbook Plus to report advancement.
11. Keep a current and accessible copy of the district or council merit badge counselor list. All merit badge counselors must be registered as such annually, and also be approved through the council advancement committee.
12. In troops, crews, and ships, work with the unit's youth leadership to maintain a listing of advancement publications and web pages.
13. Learn about other Scouting America awards and recognition opportunities that may be helpful in delivering a well-rounded unit program. A good resource for this is the *Guide to Awards and Insignia*.

3.0.0.4 Awards and Recognitions

Awards and recognitions by definition are not part of the advancement plan. They supplement it in many ways, however, and often lead to increased retention. Some awards and recognitions are for youth members, some for adults, and some for both. Some are earned, while others are presented in honor of service rendered. Awards and recognitions can be administered by a council advancement committee or by a separate committee or task force as determined by the council executive board.

For more information about awards, visit Awards Central at www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central. Application and nomination forms are available at www.scouting.org/forms. In most cases, the forms provide details on where to send the paperwork and also list any additional information that might be required. Questions about awards and recognitions should be directed to the National Program Committee or their designee.

3.0.0.5 Building an Advancement Committee

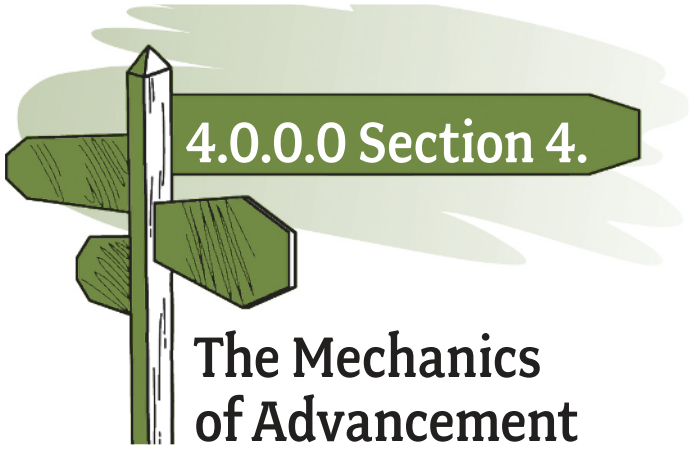
To accomplish the suggested responsibilities outlined in 3.0.0.1 and 3.0.0.2 above, council and district advancement committees need to be well-staffed and organized. The following positions, in addition to the council advancement chair and any vice chairs, are suggested for a council advancement committee:

1. District/unit advancement chairs support
2. Volunteer recruitment
3. Advancement promotions
4. Advancement training and events
5. Camping committee and outdoors program liaison
6. Advancement records and reporting
7. Scoutbook Plus and other technology for advancement recording and reporting support
8. Merit badge counselor, Nova counselor, and Supernova mentor coordination
9. Eagle, Summit, and Quartermaster issues
10. Special needs Scouting
11. Awards and recognition
12. Religious emblems

For thoughts on what each position might entail, see the information sheet "Building Effective Advancement Committees" that is posted on the Advancement Resources webpage at www.scouting.org/advancement. A list of positions for a district advancement committee could be very similar. The organization of advancement committees is a local council decision. The above is offered only as a guide in establishing a committee that could fulfill its various traditional responsibilities and also positively influence the rate of advancement.

Thoughts on finding and recruiting advancement committee members are also covered in "Building Effective Advancement Committees."

Unit advancement coordinators are good prospects for district advancement committees. They become well-versed in best practices, policies, procedures, and responsibilities, and may be able to provide vital information on the needs of the units. They also know what it takes to increase the rate of advancement. Note that membership on any advancement committee should reflect and support the variety of programs offered in the council or district.



4.0.0.0 Section 4.

The Mechanics of Advancement

Advancement in each Scouting program is designed to be age-appropriate for the youth eligible to participate in it. Ranks form the foundation for the experiences; they are established and authorized by the National Executive Board of Scouting America and described in the various member handbooks. The advancement program is administered by a combination of adult and youth leaders, with young people taking more responsibility as the members progress. The role of parents also differs with member age and ability, but parents are encouraged to be engaged at all levels.

4.0.0.1 Changes to Requirements

Advancement requirements change from time to time. For each program's requirements, consult the following web pages, which are expected to be updated annually:

Cub Scouting: www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/what-cub-scouts-earn/the-advancement-trail

Scouts BSA: www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards

Venturing: www.scouting.org/programs/venturing/venturing-awards-and-advancement/rank-advancement

Sea Scouts: www.seascout.org/advancement-central

Please note that web addresses appearing in the *Guide to Advancement* are confirmed prior to publication, but they are subject to change.

Once a new or revised requirement appears on one of those web pages, any Scouts BSA member, Venturer, or Sea Scout beginning work on the next rank (or Eagle Palm) must use the new or revised requirement as stated there. In Cub Scouting, Cub Scouts work on the badge of rank and associated Adventures that are specific to their grade. Changes in Cub Scout badges of rank or Adventure requirements take effect at the start of the next program year unless otherwise stated.

Changes may also be introduced in youth handbooks or various official Scouting America publications or releases before appearing on one of the above web pages. In this case, unless official communications set forth a different procedure or establish a date by when use of the old requirements must cease, youth members have through December 31 of that year to decide what to do. They may continue—or begin work—using the old requirements, or may switch to—or begin work—using the new requirements. Scouts who choose to use the old requirements may continue using them until the rank has been completed. Those who have not begun work on a rank by December 31 of the year a change in its requirements is announced must use the new requirements.

For handling changes to merit badge requirements, see "What to Do When Requirements Change," 7.0.4.3.

Former members who rejoin a Scouting America program, still as youth members, may carry on in the advancement program and pick up where they left off, but they will not receive credit for activities while not registered. If the member rejoining is a Cub Scout, they may continue on their rank only if rejoining while in the same grade, otherwise they must work on the rank appropriate for their current grade. A former member who is no longer eligible to participate in a program as a youth member due to age, for example, can neither receive credit for completing advancement requirements nor be awarded any advancement-oriented recognition such as ranks or merit badges, etc., that the individual was ineligible to earn as a youth member under the rules in effect at that time.

4.0.0.2 Reporting Advancement

All Cub Scout, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts ranks must be reported to local councils. The best and most accurate method is through Scoutbook Plus (see "Electronic Advancement Reporting," 6.0.0.0, for more detail on reporting). At the council's discretion, the paper form, Advancement Report, may also be submitted.

All badges of rank, merit badges, and Eagle Palms are restricted items. Unit leadership may not purchase these insignia for presentation without having filed a report of the youth's advancement. An advancement report is not



required to purchase Adventure loops or pins. However, to ensure that each Cub Scout's record is complete and accurate, all Adventures—required and elective—should be posted in Scoutbook Plus in a timely manner.

Council advancement committees may elect to accept a completed Eagle Scout, Summit, or Quartermaster rank application that is signed by the board of review chair and the Scout executive, in lieu of an advancement report form.

Units should report advancement at least monthly. This assures member records are complete. Missing reports are a serious issue, for example, accurate documentation is critical for rank advancement, membership transfers, or membership reinstatements.

4.0.0.3 Age Exception for Youth With Special Needs

Youth members with severe and permanent mental or physical disabilities may work toward ranks or Eagle Palms even after they have passed the chronological age of eligibility for a program. For details, see, "Registering Qualified Members Beyond Age of Eligibility," 10.1.0.0.

4.1.0.0 Mechanics of Advancement in Cub Scouting

4.1.0.1 Delivering the Cub Scout Program

Den leaders, Cubmasters, and their assistants conduct meetings implementing the three steps in Cub Scout advancement: preparation, qualification, and recognition. Den meetings follow the local traditional school year and are designed to result in advancement for all youth by the end of the school year. The Cub Scout program year officially begins and ends June 1 to coincide with the automatic grade rollover that happens in membership records when Scouts are advanced one grade level. For areas where school does not end by June 1, Cub Scouts may still work on advancement needed for their badge of rank until their school year ends. The frequency and length of den meetings, however, is determined by the den to best meet the needs of its members. Advancement activities are called Adventures. They are most often completed during den activities, though some may be completed in a home or family setting. Elective Adventures provide flexibility for differing interests or school schedules and can facilitate summertime programming.

Den leader resources are at www.scouting.org. The requirements for all the required and elective Cub Scout Adventures also are available. Each Cub Scout Adventure has a list of requirements along with suggested activities that can be conducted to complete the requirement.

Scoutbook Plus is the official record of the den and pack. A den leader may schedule out the program year, share the information with the families in the den and set a path to completing advancement within a set time frame.

4.1.0.2 The Role of the Pack Committee

Den leaders, Cubmasters, and their assistants stimulate interest in advancement and deliver the program. The responsibility for Cub Scout advancement *administration*, however, belongs to a pack committee ("Unit Advancement Responsibilities," 3.0.0.3).

The pack committee records advancement using Scoutbook Plus or may do so manually by collecting den advancement reports, maintaining them in pack records, and submitting them to the council (see "Electronic Advancement Reporting," 6.0.0.0). The committee also purchases Cub Scout Adventure loops and pins and badges of rank and helps plan and facilitate various ceremonies. The committee may also recommend special pack activities that assist Cub Scouts in earning Adventures.

4.1.0.3 Who Approves Cub Scout Advancement?

A key responsibility for den leaders is to guide each Cub Scout toward completing their badge of rank by organizing meetings, activities, and working with the family of the Cub Scout to complete the requirements for the six required Adventures and at least two elective Adventures each year. For Lion through Webelos ranks, if activities take place outside the den meeting, a parent, guardian, or another trusted adult may verify that Cub Scouts have done their best to meet the requirements completed at the activity. The den leader then records the requirements.

If the requirement is completed in a den meeting, Scoutbook Plus can be used to automatically record the advancement to the Cub Scout's official record. If not using digital assets, the den leader signs the handbook and records the requirement. Den leaders may delegate an assistant or parent who helps at meetings to assist with the approvals. For Arrow of Light Adventures and rank, the den leader signs for approval of all requirements, unless they delegate this responsibility.

4.1.0.4 "Do Your Best"

Cub Scouts—even those of the same age, grade, and gender—may have very different developmental timetables. For this reason, advancement performance in Cub Scouting is centered on its motto: "Do Your Best." When Cub Scouts have done this—their best effort possible—then regardless of the requirements for any rank or award, it is enough; accomplishment is noted. This is why den leaders, assistants, and parents or guardians are involved in approvals. Generally they know if the effort put forth is really the Cub Scout's best.

A Cub Scout who has completed advancement should be congratulated immediately and publicly. And though badges of rank should be reserved for the next pack meeting, it is best to present items such as Adventure loops and pins soon after they have been earned. If it is possible for the pack to report and purchase these awards quickly, they could be presented at the next den meeting, rather than waiting for a pack meeting. If presented at den meetings, the accompanying pocket certificates can be used in a ceremony at a subsequent pack meeting—or vice versa with the pocket certificates at a den meeting. However this is done, it is important to note that advancement is an individual process, not dependent on the work or progress of others. Awards should never be withheld for group recognition. Likewise, a youth should not be presented with recognition that was not earned simply to avoid anyone "feeling left out."

In the same spirit as "Do Your Best," if a Cub Scout is close to earning a badge of rank when it is time to transition to a new den, the pack committee, in consultation with the den leader and the Cub Scout's parent or guardian, may allow a few weeks to complete the badge before going on to the next rank. Earning it will give the youth added incentive to continue in Scouting and carry on and tackle the next rank.

What about a youth who must repeat a grade in school? Generally, repeating a grade does not mean being kept back in Cub Scouting, but it depends on the circumstances and what is best for the youth. The decision is up to the parent or guardian.

4.1.1.0 Cub Scout Ranks

The Cub Scout program is centered primarily in the den, the home, and the neighborhood. It leads to advancement through six ranks, which are grade-based. Cub Scout dens are named for the rank that their members are working to achieve. Cub Scouts are eligible to earn ranks as follows:

Lion. For youth who are kindergarten age.

Tiger. For youth who have completed kindergarten or are 6 years old.

Wolf. For youth who have completed first grade or are 7 years old.

Bear. For youth who have completed second grade or are 8 years old.

Webelos. For youth who have completed third grade or are 9 years old.

Arrow of Light. For youth who have completed fourth grade or are 10 years old.

In situations like those found in home-schooling or non-traditional education, where youth are working at grade levels that may not correspond to their ages, Cub Scouts must work on the rank that relates to their age, rather than their grade. When doing so, take the joining requirements for Scouts BSA into consideration to avoid completing the Arrow of Light before meeting the minimum age requirement for Scouts BSA.

Cub Scouts do not "go back" and work on ranks designed for earlier grade levels, even if missed due to their time of joining. Likewise, Cub Scouts do not "move ahead" to work on the next rank until the completion of the current school year (or until their next birthday if they are transitioning by age).

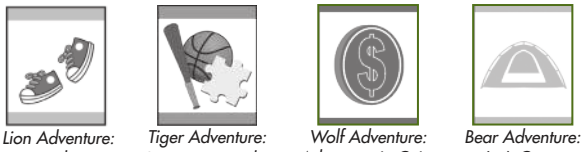
4.1.1.1 Lion, Tiger, Wolf, and Bear



For Lion, Tiger, Wolf, and Bear ranks Cub Scouts complete six required Adventures and two elective Adventures. Cub Scout Adventures are collections of themed, multidisciplinary activities of engaging content. Required and elective Adventures may be earned in any order, with the exception that the Bobcat Adventure is designed to be earned as the first required adventure. As youth finish an Adventure, they are awarded a belt loop that is worn on the official Cub Scout belt. Belt loops should be presented as soon as possible. When the requirements for each rank are fulfilled, the rank badge is presented at the next pack meeting.

Note that although participation with a parent or other caring adult is required for all Lion and Tiger Adventures, recognition items are for the Cub Scouts only.

Lion, Tiger, Wolf, and Bear Adventure Belt Loops



Lion Adventure: Fun on the Run | *Tiger Adventure: Games Tigers Play* | *Wolf Adventure: Adventure in Coins* | *Bear Adventure: Let's Camp*

4.1.1.2 Webelos and Arrow of Light



Just as with the previous ranks, Cub Scouts complete required and elective Adventures for each rank in any order, with the exception that the Bobcat Adventure is designed to be the first required Adventure earned.

An Adventure pin is awarded for each completed Adventure. The pins may be worn on the Adventures colors or on the front of the Webelos cap. Arrow of Light Scouts may wear their Adventure pins on a Scout hat of their choosing. Cub Scouts may work on required and elective Adventure pins at the same time. Adventure pins should be presented as soon as possible. When the requirements for the Webelos or Arrow of Light ranks are fulfilled, the rank badge is presented at the next pack meeting.

Arrow of Light is Cub Scouting's final rank before joining Scouts BSA. Much of the experience gives a youth the chance to practice skills in preparation for becoming a Scout in Scouts BSA. Once completed, the rank should be presented during an impressive ceremony involving Scouts from a local Scout troop. Their involvement may encourage the eventual crossing over of recipients into the troop.

Webelos, an acronym for "WE'll BE LOyal Scouts," is the rank for youth who have completed third grade or are 9 years old.

The minimum age for a Cub Scout who has earned the Arrow of Light Award to join Scouts BSA is 10 years old. The requirements for joining Scouts BSA, as stated in the *Scouts BSA Handbook,* include the following: Be at least 10 years old, currently in the fifth grade, and register on or after March 1 OR at least 10 years old and have earned the Arrow of Light rank OR at least 11 years old (but not yet 18).

The Arrow of Light rank is the only Cub Scout badge authorized to be worn on the Scouts BSA uniform once a youth transitions into a troop; it is worn below the left pocket. On an adult uniform, the Arrow of Light rank is recognized with a red and green square knot worn above the left pocket.

Webelos and Arrow of Light Adventure Pins



Webelos Adventure: Cast Iron Chef (Required)



Arrow of Light Adventure: Building a Better World (Required)

4.2.0.0 Mechanics of Advancement in Scouts BSA

Both adult leaders and youth leaders approve advancement in Scouts BSA. This permits greater emphasis on standards and more consistency in measurement, but it also places another level of importance on teaching and testing. As Scouts work with one another, learning takes place on both sides of the equation as they play teacher and student in turn. Parents or guardians are involved at home encouraging, mentoring, and supporting, but do not sign for rank advancement requirements unless they are registered leaders and have been authorized by the unit leader to approve advancement or are Lone Scout friends and counselors (see "Lone Scouting," 5.0.3.0). Even then, it is preferable for an authorized person other than the Scout's own parent to certify their accomplishments.

Advancement at this level presents a Scout with a series of challenges in a fun and educational manner. As the youth completes the requirements, the aims of Scouting are being achieved: to develop character, to train in the

All the requirements for all the required and elective Cub Scout Adventures are shown in the respective handbooks.



responsibilities of participating citizenship, to develop leadership skills, and to develop physical and mental fitness. It is important to remember that in the end, badges recognize that Scouts have gone through experiences of learning things they did not previously know. Through increased confidence, Scouts discover or realize they are able to learn a variety of skills and disciplines. Advancement is thus about what Scouts are now able to learn and to do, and how they have grown. Retention of skills and knowledge is then developed later by using what has been learned through the natural course of unit programming; for example, instructing others and using skills in games and on outings.

Throughout this publication the term "Scout" generically refers to any youth member of a troop or a Lone Scout, regardless of rank. The phrase "Scout rank" refers to the first rank every Scout earns.

Advancement, thus, is not so much a reward for what has been done. It is, instead, more about the journey: As a Scout advances, the Scout is measured, grows in confidence and self-reliance, and builds upon skills and abilities learned.

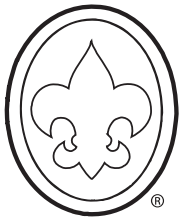
The badge signifies that a young person—through participation in a series of educational activities—has provided service to others, practiced personal responsibility, and set the examples critical to the development of leadership; all the while working to live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

The badge signifies a young person has provided service to others, practiced personal responsibility, and set the examples critical to the development of leadership.

4.2.0.1 Scouting Ranks and Advancement Age Requirements

All Scouts BSA awards, merit badges, badges of rank, and Eagle Palms are only for registered Scouts, including Lone Scouts, and also for qualified Venturers or Sea Scouts who are not yet 18 years old. Venturers and Sea Scouts qualify by achieving First Class rank in a Scouts BSA troop or as a Lone Scout. The only exceptions for those older than age 18 are related to Scouts registered beyond the age of eligibility ("Registering Qualified Members Beyond Age of Eligibility," 10.1.0.0) and those who have been granted time extensions to complete the Eagle Scout rank ("Time Extensions," 9.0.4.0).

There are seven ranks in Scouts BSA that are to be earned sequentially no matter what age a youth joins the program.



Scout

The Scout rank is oriented toward learning the basic information every youth needs to know to be a good Scout. It starts with demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan and then introduces the Scout to basic troop operations and safety concerns.



Tenderfoot



Second Class



First Class

Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks are oriented toward learning and practicing skills that will help Scouts develop confidence and fitness, challenge their thought processes, introduce them to their responsibilities as citizens, and prepare them for exciting and successful Scouting experiences. Requirements for the Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks may be worked on simultaneously; however, these ranks must be earned in sequence. For information on boards of review for these ranks, see "Particulars for Tenderfoot Through Life Ranks" 8.0.2.0, especially point No. 7.



Star



Life



Eagle

All requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle, except for those related to merit badges, must be fulfilled after the successful completion of a board of review for the previous rank.

In Scouts BSA, advancement requirements must be passed as written. If, for example, a requirement uses words like "show," "demonstrate," or "discuss," then that is what Scouts must do. Filling out a worksheet, for example, would not suffice.

4.2.1.0 Four Steps in Advancement

A Scout advances from the Scout rank to Eagle by doing things with a patrol and troop, with adult and youth leaders, and independently. A well-rounded and active unit program that generates advancement as a natural outcome should enable Scouts to achieve First Class in their first 12 to 18 months of membership. Advancement is a straightforward matter when the four steps or stages outlined below are observed and integrated into troop programming. The same steps apply to members who are qualified to continue with Scouts BSA advancement in Venturing or Sea Scouts. In these cases, references to troops and various troop leaders would point to crews and ships, and their respective leaders.

4.2.1.1 The Scout Learns

With learning, a Scout grows in the ability to contribute to the patrol and troop. As Scouts develop knowledge and skills, they are asked to teach others and, in this way, they learn and develop leadership.

4.2.1.2 The Scout Is Tested

The Scout's unit leader authorizes those who may test and pass the Scout on rank requirements (primary unit leader if the Scout is registered in multiple units). They might include the patrol leader, the senior patrol leader, the unit leader, an assistant unit leader, or another Scout. Other non-direct-contact Leaders, such as committee members, committee chairs, unit scouter reserves, and college scouter reserves, may not test or pass Scouts on rank requirements. Merit badge counselors guide Scouts and verify requirements for merit badges. Authorized testers must verify that requirements have actually and personally completed by the Scout, exactly as written.

Once a Scout has been tested and signed off by someone approved to do so, the requirement has been met and cannot be rescinded. The unit leader is accountable for ensuring proper advancement procedures are followed. This includes the careful selection and training of those who approve advancement. If a unit leader believes a Scout has not learned the subject matter for a requirement that has been signed off, the unit leader should have the Scout practice or teach the requirement. Thus Scouts may complete their learning and further develop the related skills without being retested.

4.2.1.3 The Scout Is Reviewed

After completing all the requirements for a rank, except Scout rank, a Scout meets with a board of review. It should happen promptly and not be delayed for reasons unrelated to rank requirements. For Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, and Life ranks, members of the unit committee conduct it. See "Particulars for Tenderfoot Through Life Ranks," 8.0.2.0. The Eagle Scout board of review is held in accordance with National Council and local council procedures.

4.2.1.4 The Scout Is Recognized

When a Scout has earned the Scout rank or when a board of review has approved advancement, the Scout deserves recognition as soon as possible. This should be done at a ceremony at the next unit meeting. The achievement may be recognized again later, such as during a formal court of honor.

4.2.1.5 After the Scout Is Tested and Recognized

After the Scout is tested and recognized, a well-organized unit program will help the Scout practice newly learned skills in different settings and methods: at unit meetings, through various activities and outings, by teaching other Scouts, while enjoying games and leading projects, and so forth. These activities reinforce the learning, show how Scout skills and knowledge are applied, and build confidence. Repetition is the key; this is how retention is achieved. The Scout fulfills a requirement and then is placed in a situation to put the skills to work. Scouts who have forgotten any skills or information might seek out a friend, leader, or other resource to help refresh their memory. In so doing, these Scouts will continue to grow.

4.2.3.0 Rank Requirements Overview

When people are asked what they did in Scouting, or what it is they think Scouts do or learn, they most often mention the outdoor activities, such as camping and hiking. A First Class Scout would surely add first aid or fire building or swimming or cooking or knot tying. And those who made at least Star or Life would doubtless talk about the merit badges they earned to achieve those ranks—especially those required for Eagle. But these hands-on experiences, as memorable as they are, make up only a portion of what must be done to advance. And the remaining requirements—those beyond the merit badges and skills activities—are generally the most difficult to administer and judge. This section concentrates on those. Consult Volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* for guidance on implementing the others.

The concepts of "reasonable" and "within reason" will help unit leadership and boards of review gauge the fairness of expectations for considering whether a Scout is "active" or has fulfilled positions of responsibility. A unit is allowed, of course, to establish expectations acceptable to its chartered organization and unit committee. But for advancement purposes, Scouts must not be held to those which are so demanding as to be impractical for today's youth (and families) to achieve.

Ultimately, a board of review must decide what is reasonable and what is not. In doing so, the board members must use common sense and must take into account that youth should be allowed to balance their lives with positive activities outside of Scouting.

Since we are preparing young people to make a positive difference in our American society, we determine a member is "active" when the member's level of activity in Scouting, whether high or minimal, has had a sufficiently positive influence toward this end.

4.2.3.1 Active Participation

The purpose of Star, Life, and Eagle Scout requirements calling for Scouts to be active for a period of months involves *impact*. Since we are preparing young people to make a positive difference in our American society, we determine a member is "active" when the member's level of activity in Scouting, whether high or minimal, has had a sufficiently positive influence toward this end.

Scouting is a year-round program administered by the adult leaders. Units should not be taking time off during the summer or at other times of the year. Regardless of a unit's expectations or policy, if a unit takes time off, then that time must count toward the Scout's active participation requirement. The Scout must not be penalized because the unit has chosen not to meet or conduct other activities for a period of time.

The following three tests determine whether the requirement has been met. The first and second are required, along with either the third *or its alternative*.

1. **The Scout is registered.** The youth is registered in the unit for at least the time period indicated in the requirement. It should also be indicated by the youth in some way, through word or action, that the youth considers himself or herself a member. If a youth was supposed to have been registered, but for whatever reason was not, discuss with the local council registrar the possibility of back-registering the youth.
2. **The Scout is in good standing.** Scouts are considered in "good standing" with a unit as long as they have not been dismissed or suspended for disciplinary reasons. Scouts must also be in good standing with the local council and Scouting America. (In the rare case a youth is not in good standing, communications will have been delivered.)
3. **The Scout meets the unit's reasonable expectations; or, if not, a lesser level of activity is explained.** If, for the time period required, a Scout or qualifying Venturer or Sea Scout meets those aspects of the unit's pre-established documented expectations that refer to a level of activity, then he or she is considered active and the requirement is met. Time counted as "active" need not be consecutive. Scouts may piece together any times they *have* been active and still qualify. If a Scout does not meet the unit's reasonable documented expectations, which were communicated in advance, the alternative that follows must be offered.

Units are free to establish additional expectations on uniforming, supplies for outings, payment of dues, parental involvement, etc., but these and any other standards extraneous to the active participation must not be considered in evaluating this requirement.

Alternative to the third test if expectations are not met:

> If a Scout has fallen below the unit's activity-oriented expectations, the reason must be other positive endeavors—in or out of Scouting—or noteworthy circumstances that have prevented a higher level of participation.

Additional Guidelines on the Three Tests. There may be, of course, registered youth who appear to have little or no activity. Maybe they are out of the country on an exchange program, or away at school. Or maybe we just haven't seen them and wonder if they've quit. To pass the first test above, youth must be registered. But they should also have made it clear through participation or by communicating in some way that they still consider themselves to be members, even though—for now—the unit's participation expectations may not have been fulfilled. A conscientious leader might make a call and discover the Scout's intentions.

If, however, a Scout has been asked to leave a unit due to behavioral issues or the like, or if the council or Scouting America has directed—for whatever reason—that the Scout must not participate, then according to the second test the Scout is not considered "active."

In considering the third test, it is appropriate for units to set reasonable expectations for attendance and participation. Then it is simple: Those who meet them are "active." But those who do not must be given the opportunity to qualify under the third-test alternative above. To do so, they must first offer an acceptable explanation. Certainly, there are medical, educational, family, and other issues that for practical purposes prevent higher levels of participation and are outside the control of the Scout.

It is reasonable to accept that competition for a Scout's time will become intense, especially as the Scout grows older and wants to take advantage of positive "outside" opportunities. This can make full-time dedication to the unit difficult to balance. A fair leader, therefore, will seek ways to empower the Scout to plan personal growth opportunities both inside and outside Scouting, and consider them part of the overall positive life experience for which Scouting America is a driving force.

The board can grant the rank regardless of the Scout's current or most recent level of activity in Scouting, as long as they were active for the required length of time (or combination of times) during their tenure at that rank.

4.2.3.2 Demonstrate Scout Spirit

The ideals of Scouting America are spelled out in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. Members incorporating these ideals into their daily lives at home, at school, in religious life, and in their neighborhoods, for example, are said to have *Scout spirit*. In evaluating whether this requirement has been fulfilled, it may be best to begin by asking the Scout to explain what Scout spirit, living the Scout Oath and Scout Law, and duty to God means to them. Young people know when they are being kind or helpful, or a good friend to others. They know when they are cheerful, or trustworthy, or reverent. All of us, young and old, know how we act when no one else is around.

"Scout spirit" refers to ideals and values; it is not the same as "school spirit."

A leader typically asks for examples of how a Scout has lived the Oath and Law. It might also be useful to invite examples of when the Scout did not. This is not something to push, but it can help with the realization that sometimes we fail to live by our ideals, and that we *all* can do better. This also sends a message that a Scout can admit mistakes, yet still advance. Or in a serious situation—such as alcohol or illegal drug use—understand why advancement might not be appropriate just now. This is a sensitive issue and must be treated carefully. Most Scout leaders do their best to live by the Oath and Law, but any one of them may look back on years past and wish that, at times, they had acted differently. We learn from these experiences and improve and grow. We can look for the same in our youth.

Evaluating Scout spirit will always be a judgment call, but through getting to know a Scout and by asking probing questions, we can get a feel for it. We can say, however, that we do not measure Scout spirit by counting meetings and outings attended or by whether they wore a uniform. It is indicated, instead, by the way the Scout lives daily life.

4.2.3.3 Service Projects

Basic to the lessons in Scouting, especially regarding citizenship, service projects are a key element in council, district and unit programs. They should be a regular and critical part of the program in every pack, troop, crew, and ship.

Service projects required for ranks other than Eagle must be approved according to what is written in the requirements and may be conducted individually or through participation in patrol or troop efforts. Service project work for ranks other than Eagle clearly calls for participation only. Planning, development, or leadership must not be required.

Time that Scouts spend assisting on Eagle service projects must be allowed in meeting these requirements. Note that Eagle projects do not have a minimum time requirement, but call for planning and development, and leadership of others, and must be preapproved by the council or district. (See "The Eagle Scout Service Project," 9.0.2.0.)

The National Safe Scouting Support Committee has issued two documents that work together to assist youth and adult leaders in planning and safely conducting service projects: *SAFE Service Project Planning Checklist*, and its companion, *SAFE Project Tool Use*. Unit leadership should be familiar with both documents.

4.2.3.4 Positions of Responsibility

"Serve actively in your unit for a period of … months in one or more … positions of responsibility" is an accomplishment every candidate for Star, Life, or Eagle must achieve. The following will help to determine whether a Scout has fulfilled the requirement.

4.2.3.4.1 Positions Must Be Chosen From Among Those Listed. The position must be listed in the position of responsibility requirement shown on the Advancement and Awards web page found at www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/.

Since more than one member may hold some positions—"instructor," for example—it is expected that even very large units are able to provide sufficient opportunities within the list. The only exception involves Lone Scouts, who may use positions in school, in a religious organization, in a club, or elsewhere in the community. Units do not have authority to require specific positions of responsibility for a rank. For example, they must not require a Scout to be senior patrol leader to obtain the Eagle rank.

Service in positions of responsibility in provisional units, such as a jamboree troop or Philmont trek crew, do not count toward this requirement.

For Star and Life ranks only, a unit leader may assign, as a substitute for the position of responsibility, a leadership project that helps the unit. If this is done, the unit leader should consult the unit committee and unit advancement coordinator to arrive at suitable standards. The experience should provide lessons similar to those of the listed positions, but it must not be confused with, or compared to, the scope of an Eagle Scout service project. It may be productive in many cases for the Scout to propose a leadership project that is discussed with the unit leader and then "assigned."

4.2.3.4.2 Meeting the Time Test May Involve Any Number of Positions. The requirement calls for a period of months. Any number of positions may be held as long as total service time equals at least the number of months required. Holding simultaneous positions does not shorten the required number of months. Positions need not flow from one to the other; there may be gaps between them. This applies to all qualified members including Lone Scouts.

When a Scout assumes a position of responsibility, something related to the desired results must happen.

4.2.3.4.3 Meeting Unit Expectations. If a unit has established documented expectations for positions of responsibility, and if, *within reason* (see the note under "Rank Requirements Overview," 4.2.3.0), based on the Scout's personal skill set, these expectations have been met, the Scout has fulfilled the requirement. When a Scout assumes a position, *something* related to the desired results must happen. It is a disservice to the Scout and to the unit to reward work that has not been done. Holding a position and doing nothing, producing no results, is unacceptable. Some degree of responsibility must be practiced, taken, or accepted.

Regardless of a unit's expectations or policy, if a unit takes time off, such as during the summer months, that time must count toward service in a position of responsibility. (See "Active Participation," 4.2.3.1.)

4.2.3.4.4 Meeting the Requirement in the Absence of Unit Expectations. It is best when a Scout's leaders provide position descriptions, and then direction, coaching, and support. Where this occurs and is done well, the young person will likely succeed. When this support, for whatever reason, is unavailable or otherwise not provided—or when there are no clearly established documented expectations—then an adult leader or the Scout, or both, should work out the responsibilities to fulfill. In doing so, neither the position's purpose nor degree of difficulty may be altered significantly or diminished. Consult the current Scouting America literature published for leaders in Scouts BSA, Venturing, or Sea Scouts for guidelines on the responsibilities that might be fulfilled in the various positions of responsibility.

Under the above scenario, if it is left to the Scout to determine what should be done, and he or she makes a reasonable effort to perform accordingly for the time specified, then the requirement is fulfilled. Even if the effort or results are not necessarily what the unit leader, members of a board of review, or others involved may want to see, the Scout must not be held to unwritten, unestablished expectations.

4.2.3.4.5 When Responsibilities Are Not Met. *If* a unit has *clearly* established documented expectations for position(s) held, then—*within reason*—a Scout must meet them through the prescribed time. If a Scout is not meeting expectations, then this must be communicated early. Unit leadership may work toward a constructive result by asking the Scout what he or she thinks should have been accomplished in that time. What is *the Scout's* concept of the position? What does the Scout think the troop leaders—youth and adult—expect? What has been done well? What needs improvement? Often this questioning approach can lead a young person to the decision to measure up. *The Scout* will tell the leaders how much of the service time should be recorded and what can be done to better meet expectations.

If it becomes clear that performance will not improve, then it is important to remove the Scout from the position immediately. It is the unit leader's responsibility to address these situations promptly. Every effort should have been made while the Scout was in the position to ensure the Scout understood expectations and was regularly supported toward reasonably acceptable performance. It is unfair and inappropriate—after six months, for example—to surprise someone who thinks his or her performance has been fine with news that it is now considered unsatisfactory. In this case, the Scout must be given credit for the time.

Only in rare cases—if ever—should troop leaders inform a Scout that time, once served, will not count.

If a Scout believes the duties of the position have been performed satisfactorily but the unit leader disagrees, then the possibility that expectations are unreasonable or were not clearly conveyed to the youth should be considered. If after discussions between the Scout and the unit leader—and perhaps the parents or guardians—the Scout believes the expectations are unreasonable, then upon completing the remaining requirements, the Scout must be granted a board of review. If the Scout is an Eagle candidate, then he or she may request a board of review under disputed circumstances (see "Initiating Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances," 8.0.3.2).

4.2.3.4.6 "Responsibility" and "Leadership." Many suggest this requirement should call for a position of "leadership" rather than simply of "responsibility." Taking and accepting responsibility, however, is a key foundation for leadership. One cannot lead effectively without it. The requirement as written recognizes the different personalities, talents, and skill sets in all of us. Some seem destined to be "the leader of the group." Others provide quality support and strong examples behind the scenes. Without the latter, the leaders in charge have little chance for success. Thus, the work of the supporters becomes part of the overall leadership effort.

4.2.3.5 Unit Leader (Scoutmaster) Conference

The unit leader (Scoutmaster) conference, regardless of the rank or program, is conducted according to the guidelines in the *Troop Leader Guidebook* (volume 1). Note that a Scout must participate or take part in one; it is not a "test." Requirements do *not* say the Scout must "pass" a conference. While it makes sense to hold one after other requirements for a rank are met, and in fact part of the unit leader (Scoutmaster) conference can be to confirm that all requirements were met, it is not required that it be the last step before the board of review. This is an important consideration for Scouts on a tight schedule to meet requirements before age 18. Last-minute work can sometimes make it impossible to fit the conference in before that time. Scheduling it earlier can allow time for the individualized, personal conversation that is required.

The conference is not a retest of the requirements upon which a Scout has been signed off. It is a forum for discussing topics such as ambitions, life purpose, and goals for future achievement, for counseling, and also for obtaining feedback on the unit's program. In some cases, work left to be completed—and perhaps why it has not been completed—may be discussed just as easily as that which is finished. Ultimately, conference timing is up to the unit. Some leaders hold more than one along the way, and the Scout must be allowed to count any of them toward the requirement, as long as it was a significant, substantial discussion.

Scoutmaster conferences should be held with a level of privacy acceptable under Scouting America's rules regarding Youth Protection. Parents or guardians and other Scouts within hearing range of the conversation may influence the Scout's participation. Since conferences relate not only to the Scouting method of advancement, but also to that of adult association, they are meant to be face-to-face, personal, and individual experiences. Though virtual conferences are allowed, they should only be held when circumstances preclude a more personal approach.

While it is intended that the conference be conducted between the unit leader and the Scout, it may sometimes be necessary for the unit leader to designate an assistant unit leader to conduct the conference. For example, if the Scoutmaster is unavailable for an extended period of time or in larger troops where a Scout's advancement would be delayed unnecessarily, then it would be appropriate for an

assistant Scoutmaster (21 years old or older) to be designated to conduct the conference. Furthermore, while Scoutmasters may conduct conferences with any member, including their own children, wards, or relatives, delegation to an assistant unit leader over the age of 21 in these cases is highly recommended for additional adult association.

Unit leaders do not have the authority to deny a Scout a timely conference when one is required for a rank. Unit leaders must not require the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, the Eagle Scout Rank Application, statement of ambitions and life purpose, or list of positions, honors, and awards as a prerequisite to holding a unit leader conference for the Eagle Scout rank. If a unit leader conference is denied, a Scout who believes all the other requirements have been completed may still request a board of review. See "Boards of Review Must Be Granted When Requirements Are Met," 8.0.0.2. If an Eagle Scout candidate is denied a conference, it may become grounds for a board of review under disputed circumstances. See "Initiating Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances," 8.0.3.2.

4.2.3.6 Fulfilling More Than One Requirement With a Single Activity

At times it may be appropriate for a Scout to apply what was done to meet one requirement toward the completion of another. In deciding whether to allow this, unit leaders or merit badge counselors should consider the following.

When two requirements match up exactly and have the same basic intent—for example, camping nights for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks and for the Camping merit badge—it is appropriate and permissible, unless it is stated otherwise in the requirements, to use those activities for both the ranks and the merit badge.

Where matching requirements are oriented toward safety, such as those related to first aid or CPR, the person signing off the requirements should be satisfied the Scout remembers what was learned from the previous experience.

Some requirements may have the appearance of aligning, but upon further examination differ. These seemingly similar requirements usually have nuances intended to create quite different experiences. The Communication and Citizenship in the Community merit badges are a good example. Each requires the Scout to attend a public meeting, but that is where the similarity ends. For Communication, the Scout is asked to practice active listening skills during the meeting and present an objective report that includes all points of view. For Citizenship in the Community, the Scout is asked to examine differences in opinions and then to defend one side. The Scout may attend the same public meeting, but to pass the requirements for both merit badges the Scout must actively listen and prepare a report, and also examine differences in opinion and defend one side.

Counting service hours for school or elsewhere in the community and also for advancement is not considered double counting since the hours are counted only once for advancement purposes.

4.3.0.0 Mechanics of Advancement in Venturing

Venturing is for young men and women who are 14 through 20, or who are 13 and have completed the eighth grade. It offers them adventure that serves to build character, promote citizenship, enhance leadership, and develop mental and physical fitness. The experience helps participants mature into responsible, caring, and dependable leaders. Each Venturing crew is responsible for achieving these aims by designing a program that appeals to its members. Venturing is a catalyst: It brings together adults and young people and incredible things happen. It is all about asking what is possible, and then setting out to plan and execute toward fulfillment.

4.3.0.1 Venturing Areas of Emphasis

The four areas of emphasis are called the ALPS model:

Adventure. Mentoring, leading, and participating in crew-led activities.

Leadership. Ongoing development through training, mentoring, and hands-on experience in leading others.

Personal Growth. Goal setting to help youth develop skills and character.

Service. Leading and participating in community service.

Each of the requirements for the Venturing ranks falls under one of these areas of emphasis.

4.3.1.0 Advancement in Venturing

The purpose of the Venturing advancement program is to provide a pathway for accomplishment in the ALPS model. Advancement is accomplished when an active program emphasizes and pays attention to the four steps in the process: preparation, learning, qualification, and recognition. Four ranks make up the Venturing advancement track: Venturing, Discovery, Pathfinder, and Summit. Venturers have until the 21st birthday to complete their ranks.

For detailed rank requirements see the webpage link in "Changes to Requirements," 4.0.0.1. For additional information on Venturing advancement or recognition, see the Venturing program handbooks, leader guides, or other official publications or web pages. Venturing ranks and other recognition are available only to registered Venturers.

Note that boards of review are involved with only the Discovery, Pathfinder, and Summit ranks. See "Venturing Boards of Review," 8.0.5.0.

4.3.1.1 The Venturing Ranks



Venturing. This is the beginning of the Venturing experience. The new member learns about the program, what a crew does, what to expect from the experience and the adventures, and makes a commitment to the principles of Venturing. No board of review is involved.



Discovery. Participation and preparing for leadership are the key elements here. The Discovery rank encourages members to design and lead an active program of continuous adventure and service. Venturers who achieve the Discovery rank will have taken part in two crew activities, and as they become more active, they discover talents and learn skills that will help them lead and serve others. In doing so, personal growth will result, and they will gradually recognize the wide variety of opportunities awaiting them.



Pathfinder. In earning Pathfinder, a Venturer should begin to establish a reputation as a skilled leader. The rank seeks to engage Venturers more deeply in the program by delivering further on the ALPS model. One of the key requirements involves leading a crew adventure. The type of adventure—whether an extended bicycle or canoe trip, or even 10 days visiting the museums of Washington, D.C.—is up to the Pathfinder candidate and the crew. The value in the adventure comes from learning how to lead and demonstrate skills through action. Pathfinder candidates will also continue to deliver service to others and to their own crews, ensuring it remains a strong and viable team. Goals set and achieved will continue to help the Venturer grow as an individual.



Summit. While Pathfinder requires a member to lead an adventure, the Summit rank—Venturing's highest—moves a young person into the role of servant leader. The Venturer will serve the crew as a leader—both formally and informally—and become a mentor to others. Additionally, Summit candidates are challenged to carry out a significant and valuable service project, where they will apply many of the lessons they have learned along the way. A crew's program should be built upon a program of continuous, youth-led adventure, leadership, service, and personal growth. Each rank level challenges Venturers to dig deeper into the question of who they are in order to truly develop and enhance their skills and confidence to complete the requirements. To the Summit rank recipient, servant leadership and community service are the cornerstones.

4.3.1.2 [Currently Not Used]

4.3.1.3 Multiple Credit for Venturers

Venturers may receive multiple credit for requirements. Those completed toward ranks and merit badges while registered in Scouts BSA or Sea Scouts may be considered toward Venturing rank and award requirements. For example, if the Backpacking merit badge was earned, the effort may also count toward the backpacking Ranger award elective. Further, experiences such as the Red Cross Emergency Response course may fulfill the Ranger first aid requirement and the first aid and lifesaving electives. Venturers may not receive multiple credit for something like a review, discussion, or a presentation relating to the specific requirement and topic.

Some requirements may call for certification such as Scuba Open-Water Diver or American Red Cross Standard First Aid. Current certifications such as these may be used regardless of when they were earned. For additional information see "Fulfilling More than One Requirement with a Single Activity" 4.2.3.6.

4.3.1.4 Scouts BSA Advancement in Venturing

Venturers who earned First Class when registered in Scouts BSA are qualified until the 18th birthday to continue with Scouts BSA advancement. Registration in a troop is not required to do so. However, if desired, Venturers may maintain multiple (dual) registration in both a troop and a crew, but advancement should be tracked through one unit.

Wherever the youth member is registered, the Scoutmaster and crew Advisor decide, with the youth, who will oversee the Scouts BSA advancement. If the Advisor does so but is unfamiliar with Scouts BSA, they should they should seek guidance from the district advancement committee, and together identify an experienced Scouter to assist. It is important for Venturing leaders to understand that Scouts BSA advancement procedures must be followed.

With the exception of the Eagle, Quartermaster, and Summit service projects, any work done while a Venturer may count toward Scouts BSA, Sea Scouts, and Venturing advancement at the same time. The Eagle, Quartermaster, and Summit service projects must be separate and distinct from each other. Position of responsibility requirements for Scouts BSA ranks may be met by the Venturer serving in crew positions as outlined on the Advancement and Awards web page found at www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/.

If the crew Advisor is overseeing the Scout's advancement, then the crew committee conducts Star and Life boards of review. Otherwise the troop committee conducts those boards of review. Eagle Scout boards follow the local council's established procedure.

4.3.2.0 The Venturing Summit Service Project

A Summit service project must provide a valuable service that meets a need, and it must represent a significant personal growth experience through some combination of its scope and complexity, leadership of others, or a connection to a personal future life-goal related to the Venturer's education, career, or other interest. The impact of a project—the extent to which it makes a meaningful difference—is the most important consideration.

4.3.2.1 Service Project Focus Areas

To determine if a Summit service project is acceptable, the following four focus areas are considered:

Service—A valuable action, deed, or effort carried out to meet a need.

Scope and complexity—The scale of the project; the level of effort and planning involved.

Leadership—Leading others toward a shared vision.

Personal goal connection—Making the most of the experience, including what is important to you.

All four focus areas are considered together. Every Summit project must provide a service, but no particular level of scope or complexity is required. Your crew Advisor and a designated crew member must agree that a project fulfills what is required. The other two focus areas, leadership and personal goal connection, are not absolutely required, but will add great value and depth to the project. While they are optional, one or the other, or both, may help to compensate for a project that requires little in terms of planning and execution. Leadership of others and a personal goal connection may also be important to Venturers who wish to provide a project report to a prospective employer or college admissions board.

Councils and districts do not play a role in reviewing or approving Summit service projects.

4.3.2.2 Restrictions and Other Considerations

There are no required minimum hours for a project. Leadership of others is not required for the Summit service project, though projects that include leadership may compensate in cases where scope and complexity are relatively simple.

Routine labor is not normally appropriate for a project. This might be defined as work or service provided as part of daily life, or a routine maintenance job normally done by the beneficiary (for example, picking up trash on the school football field).

Any limitations on projects for a business are not meant to disallow work for community institutions, such as museums and service agencies (like homes for the elderly, for example), that by their very nature, exist to provide a valuable service to the community.

Projects must not be of a commercial nature, and they must not be efforts that primarily raise money, even for a worthy charity. Fundraising is permitted only for securing materials and facilitating a project, and it may need to be approved by the local council. See the "Summit Service Project Fundraising Application" in the *Summit Service Project Workbook*.

No more than one Summit candidate may receive credit for working on the same Summit service project. It is permissible, however, to have projects that are related, as long as each project can be conducted and evaluated independently.

Summit projects must not include service to Scouting America or its councils, districts, units, or properties.

This project must be different from one that a Venturer used to fulfill requirements for the Eagle Scout rank or the Sea Scout Quartermaster rank.

> Guide to Advancement *topics 9.0.2.10 - 9.0.2.16, that apply to Eagle Scout service projects, also apply to Summit service projects.*

4.3.2.3 Evaluating the Summit Service Project After Completion

After completing the project, the Summit candidate completes the project report found in the service project workbook. The project beneficiary should be the first to provide an approval. This approval is simply agreement that the project was carried out to the beneficiary's satisfaction.

The crew Advisor must then determine if the project meets "What Is Required," found in the project proposal form in the workbook. A thorough review of the four focus areas described in the proposal will provide helpful information, as will a careful review of topic 4.3.2.1, "Service Project Focus Areas," above.

The Summit board of review will have the opportunity to review the service project as well. It should be rare, however, that a project acceptable to a beneficiary and the crew Advisor would be rejected by a board of review.

4.3.3.0 Time Extensions for Earning the Summit Rank

If a Venturer foresees that, due to no fault or choice of his or her own, it will be impossible to complete the Summit rank requirements before age 21, he or she may apply to the local council for a limited time extension. These should be granted only when necessary and are reserved only for work on Summit. **When a time extension is requested, the Venturer should continue working on the requirements until a final decision is delivered.** The tests that apply and the procedures to follow are the same as those outlined for an extension of time to earn the Eagle Scout rank. See "Time Extensions," 9.0.4.0, and "Process for Requesting and Reviewing a Time Extension," 9.0.4.1. Note that references to age 18 in the Eagle Scout procedure would relate to age 21 in Venturing.

4.3.4.0 Submitting the Summit Rank Application

The Summit Rank Application can be found at filestore.scouting.org/filestore/venturing/pdf/512-941.pdf. A copy should be made of the application and the service project workbook. Once copies are in safekeeping, the originals should be delivered *promptly* to the council service center. The candidate's application should not be delayed. Timeliness is especially critical if the Venturer is approaching, or has already turned, 21. Sending materials late can imply the work continued afterward. If possible, everything should be hand-delivered. Otherwise it should be sent by registered or certified mail. There is no requirement that the application must be completed or submitted before the 21st birthday. Councils do not have the authority to reject applications submitted on or after that date.

At the council service center the application is checked against council records. This can be done more efficiently if the crew's records in the Scouting America system have been kept up to date. If everything is correct, the council provides a verification signature, files a copy of the application, and sends the original with the workbook to the board of review chair or other designated volunteer. The board is scheduled only after the council-verified application is received.

After the board of review, an approved application is returned to the council service center, and the workbook is returned to the Venturer. If the board of review denies approval, both the application and the workbook are returned to the council service center.

The Scout executive signs the board of review-approved application. The Summit application is sent via email to the National Service Center at advancement.team@scouting.org where the certificate is produced and returned to the local council service center. The Summit rank is then reported through the Scouting America system by the local council. The Summit rank medal may be purchased from the local Scout shop.

4.4.0.0 Mechanics of Advancement in Sea Scouts

Sea Scouts has its own distinct language, customs, and advancement track. It combines traditions of the past with technology of the future, and whether one looks to the sea as a career or lifelong hobby, it is worth exploring. Sea Scout units, called "ships," use a variety of paddle craft, power boats, and sailing vessels, and promote service to others and advancement that rewards individual pursuits of excellence. Each level marks progressive growth as a seaman and leader, culminating in the prestigious Quartermaster rank.

4.4.0.1 Scouts BSA Advancement in Sea Scouts

Sea Scouts who earned First Class rank when registered in Scouts BSA are qualified until the 18th birthday to continue with Scouts BSA advancement. Registration in a troop is not required to do so. However, if desired, Sea Scouts may maintain multiple (dual) registration in both a troop and a ship, but advancement should be tracked through one unit.

Wherever the youth member is registered, the Scoutmaster and ship's Skipper decide, with the member, who will oversee the Scouts BSA advancement. If the Skipper does so but is unfamiliar with Scouts BSA, they should they should seek guidance from the district advancement committee, and together identify an experienced Scouter to assist. It is important for Sea Scout leaders to understand that Scouts BSA advancement procedures must be followed.

If the Skipper is overseeing the Scout's advancement, then the ship committee conducts Star and Life boards of review. Otherwise the troop committee conducts them. Eagle Scout boards follow the local council's established procedure.

With the exception of the Eagle, Quartermaster, and Summit service projects, any work done while a Sea Scout may count toward Scouts BSA, Sea Scouts, and Venturing advancement at the same time. The Eagle, Quartermaster, and Summit service projects must be separate and distinct from each other. Position of responsibility requirements for Scouts BSA ranks may be met by the Sea Scout serving in ship positions as outlined on the Advancement and Awards web page found at www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/.

4.4.1.0 Sea Scout Ranks and Awards

The ranks and awards in Sea Scouts are described below. All requirements must be completed before the 21st birthday, and the ranks are available to registered Sea Scouts only.

4.4.1.1 Apprentice Rank



Striving for Apprentice rank, active Sea Scouts learn ideals, courtesies, procedures, and responsibilities, and how members of a ship are organized and uniformed. Basic swimming and beginning seamanship skills are required, as is knowledge of safety, emergency procedures, and Safe Swim Defense. Service hours in ship projects, activities, equipment maintenance or in the community fill out the requirements.

4.4.1.2 Ordinary Rank



Active Sea Scouts attain Ordinary rank through additional service, knowledge of the Sea Scout emblem, U.S. flag etiquette, and land and sea protocols. Successful candidates will participate in strengthening ship membership, serve as an event chair, complete quarterdeck training, pass the Swimming merit badge requirements, and qualify on various safety and emergency procedures, drills, communication methods, and Safety Afloat. They learn about the galley, build on seamanship and boat-handling skills, and learn about anchoring, piloting and navigation, and related regulations. Overnight cruise planning and participation provides for application of skills, and completing additional electives broadens horizons.

4.4.1.3 Able Rank



To achieve Able rank, Sea Scouts master ceremony presentation and demonstrate knowledge of maritime history. They also teach others—perhaps Scouts and Venturers—about the program and fulfill leadership responsibilities. They must pass the Lifesaving merit badge requirements and develop further expertise in safety and first aid. There is a continued progression in seamanship, boat-handling skills, anchoring, and piloting and navigation, as well as a deeper understanding of maritime environmental issues. The Sea Scout Long Cruise badge is required for Able, as is completion of additional electives.

4.4.1.4 Quartermaster Rank



The highest award for Sea Scouts presents a challenge that, when met, has lifelong benefits. The Quartermaster candidate must think analytically about how the program is delivered and supported, while developing a deeper understanding of Scouting ideals. Most requirements represent intensification of what was learned for previous ranks, but with significant additions in the Quartermaster service project, study of weather and forecasting, and completion of additional electives.

Note: Sea Scouts must use the *Quartermaster Leadership Service Project Workbook,* No. 420-011, available at www.seascout.org, and secure approval from the Skipper, ship committee, project beneficiary, and the council or district advancement committee. A youth's Quartermaster, Eagle, or Summit service project must be separate and distinct from each other.

4.4.1.4.1 Time Extensions for Earning Quartermaster Rank. If a Sea Scout foresees that, due to no fault or choice of his or her own, it will be impossible to complete the Quartermaster rank requirements before age 21, he or she may apply to the local council for a limited time extension. These should be granted only when necessary and are reserved only for work on Quartermaster. **When a time extension is requested, the Sea Scout should continue working on the requirements until a final decision is delivered.** The tests that apply and the procedures to follow are the same as those outlined for an extension to earn the Eagle Scout rank (see "Time Extensions," 9.0.4.0 , and "Process for Requesting and Reviewing a Time Extension," 9.0.4.1). Note that references to age 18 in the Eagle Scout procedure would relate to age 21 in Sea Scouts.

4.4.1.4.2 Submitting the Quartermaster Application. Once approved by the Skipper, the ship committee, and the board of review, the Quartermaster Application must be approved by the district or council advancement committee. The Scout executive signs the board of review-approved application. The Quartermaster Application is submitted via email to the National Service Center at advancement.team@scouting.org where the certificate is produced and returned to the local council service center. The Quartermaster rank is then reported through the Scouting America system by the local council. The Quartermaster medal may be purchased from the local Scout shop.

4.4.1.5 The Skipper Conference

Skippers hold a conference with youth who indicate they are ready to advance to the next Sea Scout rank. Once the conference has taken place and the other requirements for the rank are fulfilled, the application for rank is forwarded to the ship's board of review. The process is similar to that for a Scoutmaster conference. (See "Unit Leader [Scoutmaster] Conference," 4.2.3.5.)

Sea Scouts working on the Eagle Scout rank follow the procedures listed in "The Eagle Scout Rank," 9.0.0.0.

4.4.1.6 Other Sea Scout Awards

Other awards Sea Scouts may earn include the Small-Boat Handler bar, the Qualified Seaman bar, Sea Scout Marksmanship Awards, and the Long Cruise badge and arcs. The requirements are detailed in the *Sea Scout Manual.* Also available are any Scouting America recognitions that are not limited to Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, or Venturers. Examples that may interest Sea Scouts include Boardsailing, Snorkeling, Paddlecraft Safety, Kayaking, Mile Swim, and many more.

4.4.1.7 Bridges of Honor

A bridge of honor, like a court of honor in Scouts BSA, is the forum where awards are presented. It should be impressive and well planned. It is often held in connection with a social affair. As in any other Scouting America program, it is important that Sea Scouts receive prompt recognition; thus it may be a good idea to present awards informally first at a ship meeting and then again (more formally) at the next bridge of honor.

4.4.2.0 The Sea Scout Board of Review

Topics 4.4.2.1 through 4.4.2.3 below cover board of review procedures that apply to all Sea Scout ranks. These are followed by "Particulars for Apprentice Through Able Ranks," 4.4.2.4; topics 4.4.2.5 through 4.4.2.8 pertain only to the Quartermaster rank.

4.4.2.1 Purpose and Timeliness of Boards of Review

After completing the requirements for any Sea Scout rank, the Sea Scout appears before a board of review. He or she cannot be denied this opportunity. The purpose of the review is to determine the quality of the candidate's experience and decide whether the youth is qualified to advance. The board of review date becomes the effective advancement date.

4.4.2.2 Composition of the Board of Review

A board of review must consist of no fewer than three members and no more than six. For further specifications, see "Particulars for Apprentice Through Able Ranks," 4.4.2.4, and "Particulars for the Quartermaster Rank," 4.4.2.5. Skippers and mates must not serve on a board of review for a Sea Scout in their own ship. Parents or guardians may not serve on a board of review for their son or daughter. The candidate or his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) must have no part in selecting any board of review members.

4.4.2.3 Conducting the Board of Review

Procedures for conducting the Sea Scout board of review are very similar to those for rank boards of review in Scouts BSA. The applicable references, with exceptions noted for Sea Scouts, are listed below. Where there are references to "unit leader" or "Scoutmaster," to "troop" or "unit," or to "Scout," these can be read as "Skipper," "ship," and "Sea Scout."

- **8.0.0.4 Wearing the Uniform—or Neat in Appearance.** The same limitations on requiring a uniform for a Scouts BSA board of review apply to Sea Scouts.
- **8.0.1.0 Conducting the Board of Review.** Note the same exception that parents or guardians who insist on being present at a board of review applies to Sea Scouts.
- **8.0.1.1 Not a Retest or "Examination."** Identical for Sea Scouts.
- **8.0.1.2 What Should Be Discussed.** With the exception that the primary reference is the *Sea Scout Manual,* and that the Sea Scout must also keep the Sea Promise.
- **8.0.1.4 Board Members Must Agree Unanimously on Decisions to Approve.** Identical for Sea Scouts.
- **8.0.1.5 After the Review.** With the exception that if it is thought that a Sea Scout, before his or her 21st birthday, can benefit from an opportunity to properly complete the requirements, the board of review may adjourn and reconvene at a later date.

4.4.2.4 Particulars for Apprentice Through Able Ranks

The preceding applies to boards of review for all Sea Scout ranks, but there are a few differences for those leading up to Quartermaster. See "Particulars for the Quartermaster Rank," 4.4.2.5, below, to learn about the differences for Quartermaster.

1. After a Skipper conference, the youth advancing meets with a board of review made up of three to six members of the quarterdeck (ship youth officers). The boatswain chairs the board and selects the other members. Two adults, age 21 or older who are registered with the ship (preferably from the ship committee) must be present as advisors, though the Skipper and mates may also fulfill this responsibility.
2. The boatswain serves as board of review chair,

conducts the review according procedures, and reports results to the ship advancement coordinator.

3. The location should be comfortable, such as the unit meeting place or another familiar location.
4. The review should take approximately 15 minutes, but no longer than 30 minutes.
5. Ranks must not be presented until the advancement is reported to the local council through Scoutbook Plus for reporting advancement or on the official Advancement Report form.

4.4.2.5 Particulars for the Quartermaster Rank

With the few exceptions listed below, the particulars for handling boards of review for Quartermaster rank are identical to those for Eagle Scout boards of review. Every effort should be made to include at least one board member who is familiar with Sea Scouts advancement. See "Particulars for the Eagle Scout Rank," 8.0.3.0.

4.4.2.6 Quartermaster Board of Review Beyond the 21st Birthday

For information about a Quartermaster board of review after a Sea Scout's 21st birthday, see "Eagle Scout Board of Review Beyond the 18th Birthday," 8.0.3.1. The procedures are the same, with the following exceptions:

- References to the 18th birthday are replaced with the 21st birthday for Sea Scouts.
- Procedures for awarding the Quartermaster rank to someone who completed the requirements as a youth but never received the recognition are the same as those outlined for someone in the same circumstances who is seeking the Eagle Scout rank. The required documentation, however, would relate to proving Quartermaster requirements were met.

4.4.2.7 Initiating Quartermaster Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances

A Quartermaster board of review under disputed circumstances may be requested if:

- A Skipper or ship committee chair does not sign the Quartermaster application.
- A Skipper conference is denied.
- It is thought a ship will not provide a fair hearing.
- The Skipper or Quartermaster service project beneficiary refuses to sign final approval for what might be considered a satisfactory project.

The procedures are the same as those outlined in "Initiating Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances," 8.0.3.2.

4.4.2.8 Appealing a Quartermaster Board of Review Decision

If a board of review does not recommend a candidate for Quartermaster rank, only the Sea Scout or his or her parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the local council. The procedures are the same as those for advancement in Scouts BSA (see "Appealing a Decision," 8.0.4.0, "Filing and Processing an Appeal," 8.0.4.1, and "Appeal Board Must Research the Case," 8.0.4.2); simply replace the Scouts BSA references with those relating to Sea Scouts. Note that only Quartermaster rank may be appealed beyond the ship, and appeals are sent to the National Program Committee or their designee at advancement.team@scouting.org.


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Special Considerations

5.0.1.0 Advancement in Camp Settings

5.0.1.1 Procedures Established by Council Advancement Committee

Procedures for advancement in camp are established by the council advancement committee in compliance with national procedures, and under the direction of the council executive board. The camp director and program director, and the committee responsible for camp program, should be included in the process. Their expertise will be important in evaluating practicality, and their buy-in can improve cooperation from the camp staff.

Once procedures are in place, advancement committee representatives should periodically visit each resident camp to assist in efforts to achieve compliance. The visits can also surface new ideas on improving implementation and building a worthwhile partnership. The desired result of the partnership is a quality merit badge program operated according to the policies, procedures, and best practices outlined in Section 7, "The Merit Badge Program," and especially in topic 7.0.3.2, "Group Instruction." Camps should not have a reputation of "Just show up and get the badge."

5.0.1.2 Procedural Examples

Below are examples of procedures a council advancement committee might consider for camp settings.

1. How to handle staff training on the particulars of advancement in each program—Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts—as appropriate. This training could be conducted or supervised by members of the council advancement committee.
2. Which merit badges may be offered at camp. Note that summer camp is not the best place for some merit badges, such as the citizenship merit badges, which can be earned at home under the direction of merit badge counselors who may be more qualified than those available at camp.
3. Recommendations on reasonable instructor-to-Scout ratios for classes or activities related to advancement.
4. A process by which the council advancement committee will approve camp merit badge counselors. Note that camp leaders should recognize that it may be unlikely for members of the camp staff to have the expertise or maturity to instruct a wide range of merit badge subjects.
5. How to handle the training of merit badge counselors and camp staff to help ensure Scouts meet requirements as written—no more, no less.
6. How to develop lesson plans and guidelines for the instruction of merit badges and other advancement opportunities that make the best use of the time available and assure campers get credit only for requirements they actually and personally fulfill.
7. A process for accepting work completed before camp begins, and for issuing partials for merit badges that take more time to complete than is available at camp.
8. Communication plans to build awareness of camp practices, such as those related to scheduling, prerequisites, Scoutmaster approvals, paperwork, etc.
9. Procedures for approving completion of requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks. It is appropriate for camps to offer "Trail to First Class" programs, and camp staff members are permitted to sign off related requirements; however, they should offer unit leaders the opportunity to do so.
10. Record-keeping practices that facilitate accurate reporting to unit leadership of completed requirements and partial merit badges and provide documentation if units need it later.
11. Collecting and making use of feedback on camp advancement program quality.

While Cub Scout outdoor programs such as day camp and resident camp should support advancement, this should not be the focus *of the camp activities. Instead, advancement should occur naturally as an end product of the experience. The keys to facilitating this approach lie in implementing the Cub Scouting performance standard of "Do Your Best" and ensuring programs are age appropriate. It is important to understand that skill mastery is not the objective in Cub Scouting, and that youth—even of the same age, grade, and gender—can have very different developmental time tables.*

5.0.1.3 Advancement Committee Approves Merit Badge Counselors

Resident camp standards require a letter from the council advancement committee approving merit badge counselors. There are no camp-related exemptions from the qualifications described under "Supervisory Qualifications and Certifications," 7.0.1.1. Councils are not permitted to change the rules about who qualifies. Staff members under 18 are not to serve as, or be treated as, merit badge counselors; however, those with subject-matter knowledge may assist qualified and approved counselors with instruction. Classes and activities may take place in group settings, but this must be done in accordance with the procedures described in "Group Instruction," 7.0.3.2, assuring that only Scouts who actually and personally fulfill requirements receive credit.

No council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to or subtract from advancement requirements.

5.0.1.4 Statement on Unauthorized Changes to Advancement in Camp Programs

Though stated earlier in this publication, it bears repeating here: *No council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to or subtract from advancement requirements*. There are no camp-related exemptions except those described in "Advancement for Members With Special Needs," 10.0.0.0.

Camp counselors and those assisting them, regardless the circumstances, are not permitted to modify requirements. If requirements as written cannot be completed at camp, they must be done elsewhere, before or after the camp experience. The Application for Merit Badge "blue card" (see "About the Application for Merit Badge ("Blue Card")," 7.0.0.2) has space to record and initial what is finished, and age 18 is the only limit to finishing partials.

If unit leadership or others dissatisfied with the quality of advancement instruction at camp become concerned Scouts are being approved for merit badges they have not earned, a report should be filed with the council advancement committee. The form found in the appendix (see "Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns," 11.1.0.0) may be used for this purpose. See also "Once It Is Earned, It's Earned," 7.0.4.6, and "Limited Recourse for Unearned Merit Badges," 7.0.4.7.

5.0.1.5 Advancement Committee as a Partner in Camp-Related Advancement

Council advancement committees that partner with camp staffs and approach solutions jointly are more likely to see strong programs. Implementing a merit badge program at camp is not a simple task. It is not something to consider from afar and then make rules about. Committees with members who make the trip and lend a hand are more likely to see successful results. An example might be helping the staff meet the camp standards requiring training in several areas around advancement.

5.0.2.0 Extended Absence From Scouting

Members who leave a Scouting program are welcome to return if they are eligible and in good standing. They take up where they left off, assuming the last verifiable rank or award. It may be necessary for them to produce advancement documentation, or to have records updated or transferred from another council. The time away must not be held against them, and they must not be made to redo requirements.

Because time spent in positions of responsibility ("Positions of Responsibility," 4.2.3.4) or active participation ("Active Participation," 4.2.3.1) need not be continuous, any periods of activity before leaving count toward the next rank. The new unit leader, however, may check with past unit leaders, parents, guardians, or others to confirm time spent meets the respective requirements.

5.0.3.0 Lone Scouting

Youth who do not have access to traditional Scouting units can become Lone Cub Scouts and Lone Scouts. In the following or similar circumstances, they may find this an appropriate option:

1. Home-schooled where parents do not want them in a youth group
2. U.S. citizens living abroad
3. Exchange students away from the United States
4. Disability or communicable illness that prevents meeting attendance

5. Rural communities far from a unit
6. Conflicts with a job, night school, or boarding school
7. Families who frequently travel or live on a boat, etc.
8. Living arrangements with parents in different communities
9. Environments where getting to meetings may put the Scout in danger

Lone Scouts is limited to Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA. Venturing and Sea Scouts do not offer equivalent experiences.

Each Lone Scout in Cub Scouting or Scouts BSA must work with a Lone Scout friend and counselor—preferably the Scout's parent, but the counselor might also be a religious leader, teacher, neighbor, or Scouting volunteer. Regardless, even if a parent, he or she must complete Youth Protection training, be at least 21 years of age, registered with Scouting America, and meet its adult membership requirements. More details can be found in the *Lone Scout Friend and Counselor Guidebook,* an essential tool in carrying out this program. The guidebook can be found at www.scouting.org/advancement.

To register as a Lone Cub Scout or Lone Scout, application can be made through the council service center. Lone Scout friends and counselors must register using the standard adult application. Those living abroad should contact the National Council at 972-580-2000 to learn which local council serves their location. Lone Scouting is not an alternative for those who just don't like the local units or cannot get along with them.

It is permissible and even beneficial for Lone Scouts to meet from time to time with others in the area, or visit a unit if possible. These meetings can provide additional instruction and counseling to promote further advancement, and also a more public forum for recognizing achievement.

5.0.3.1 Lone Scout Advancement Procedures

Because Lone Scouts are not registered with units, we can exercise some responsible flexibility with advancement. This is not to say anything goes: Lone Scouting is not a place to register a youth simply to facilitate parental approval of advancement. Requirements for ranks, merit badges, or any other advancement-related awards that can be met by one Scout working with a counselor must be fulfilled as written. In some instances, family members, neighbors, or friends can be used in place of a "den" or "troop" to increase the number of requirements that can be met as stated.

Some wording issues are simple and do not require council approval. For example, a Lone Scout may fulfill a position of responsibility by serving in school, a place of worship, a club, etc. Where it is not possible to meet requirements as written, a Lone Scout friend and counselor may suggest equal or very similar alternative requirements. These must have council advancement committee approval. Dissimilar requirements should be allowed only in extreme circumstances, or when they cannot be met without extreme hazard or hardship. See the *Lone Scout Friend and Counselor Guidebook* for details.

5.0.3.2 Lone Scouts and Merit Badges

A Lone Scout earns merit badges by working with adult counselors who meet the qualifications as stated under "Supervisory Qualifications and Certifications," 7.0.1.1. They can be recruited from teachers, hobbyists, business leaders, members of various clubs, etc., and must register with the council as a merit badge counselors. A list of preapproved counselors can be obtained by calling the local council service center. For more information, see "The Merit Badge Program," 7.0.0.0. In instances where the Lone Scout is unable to meet a merit badge requirement as written, the procedure outlined in 5.0.3.1 is to be followed.

5.0.3.3 Eagle Scout Applications for Lone Scouts

A Lone Scout who has completed the Eagle Scout requirements works with the district or council advancement committee according to local practices (see "Boards of Review," 8.0.0.0). The Eagle Scout Rank Application is reviewed and processed according to topics 9.0.1.0 through 9.0.1.10. These steps include verification at the local council, scheduling and conducting a board of review, and submitting the application to the National Program Committee or their designee.

Since the Lone Scout is not affiliated with a unit, the local council processor must send the application to the National Program Committee or their designee for processing. It cannot be submitted electronically. Since there is no "unit committee" for a Lone Scout, the unit committee chair signature line on the Eagle Scout application is left blank. No unit committee approval is required for the Eagle Scout service project proposal. The Lone Scout friend and counselor conducts the unit leader conference and signs as the unit leader on the Eagle Scout Rank Application and in the project workbook.

5.0.4.0 Youth From Other Countries

Youth from other countries who temporarily reside in the United States, or have moved here, may register in a Scouting America unit and participate in advancement. If progress from a foreign Scouting association is to be considered and applied to Scouting America requirements, then the foreign Scout must meet in person (or over electronic media) with members of the council or district advancement committee, along with at least one adult leader or committee member of the receiving unit. Previous advancement work is reviewed to determine the Scouting America rank—up to, but not including Eagle Scout rank—the youth is qualified to receive. The candidate must present evidence of membership and advancement from the previous association. Once a rank is determined, it is reported through Scoutbook Plus or other internet portals for reporting advancement or on an advancement report.

This procedure applies to all ranks except Eagle Scout, which is not considered equivalent to any other association's rank. If it can be established that Life rank has been achieved, then the council or district advancement committee can determine which Scouting America merit badges may be awarded based on previous effort and experiences that meet Scouting America merit badge requirements as written. This may leave a number of additional badges to earn—required or not—to achieve Eagle.

Requirements for active participation, position of responsibility, Scout spirit, the service project, and the unit leader conference must be completed in a Scouting America unit. This procedure also applies to members of Scouting America who, while living abroad, have earned advancement in another Scouting association.

5.0.5.0 Religious Principles

From time to time, issues related to advancement call for an understanding of the position of Scouting America on religious principles.

Scouting America does not define what constitutes belief in God or practice of religion. Neither does Scouting America require membership in a religious organization or association for membership in the movement. If a Scout does not belong to a religious organization or association, then the Scout's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be considered responsible for religious training. All that is required is the acknowledgment of belief in God as stated in the Declaration of Religious Principle and the Scout Oath, and the ability to be reverent as stated in the Scout Law.

5.0.6.0 Bestowing Posthumous Awards

If, prior to death, a youth member in any Scouting America program met the requirements for a rank or award, including age and service, he or she may receive it posthumously. If a required board of review has not been conducted, it is held according to the methods outlined in "Boards of Review," 8.0.0.0. It is appropriate to invite parents or guardians and friends to discuss the efforts made toward the rank.

For the Eagle Scout rank, the application is verified at the council service center, but it must be sent to the National Program Committee or their designee for processing. A cover letter from the Scout executive or designee must indicate it as posthumous. This triggers changes to the congratulatory letter returned with the pocket card and certificate. Note that the same procedures regarding timing of an Eagle Scout board of review apply in posthumous cases. See "Eagle Scout Board of Review Beyond the 18th Birthday," 8.0.3.1.

5.0.7.0 Spirit of the Eagle Award

Scouting America has created the Spirit of the Eagle Award as an honorary posthumous recognition for registered youth members who have lost their lives through illness or accident. It is offered by the National Court of Honor as a final salute and tribute in celebration of the recipient's life. It also publicly recognizes the recipient's contributions to the mission of Scouting.

An application can be found at www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/spirit-of-the-eagle. A unit committee must complete and submit it to the local council within six months of the member's death. The application is reviewed, approved, and processed by the local council where the certificate is ordered from National Supply.



5.0.8.0. Using Technology-Based Tools in Advancement

The use of technology has rapidly expanded into the culture of Scouting with tools such as videoconferencing, live streaming webinars, and mobile and web-based applications. These tools are useful and can save time for administrative tasks, especially in managing records for membership, training, and advancement. But Scout leaders must take care when using these tools to *deliver and implement* the advancement program. The preferred method for rank advancement and merit badge counseling is still face-to-face interaction that supports the Scouting America method of adult association, but there are occasions when use of technology might be supportive.

Procedures for using web-based tools in advancement are established by the council advancement committee in compliance with national procedures. Below are examples of actions that might be considered.

- Create a plan for promoting compliance with Youth Protection guidelines related to electronic communications within units.
- Develop a process for approving technology-based boards of review (see "Boards of Review Through Videoconferencing," 8.0.1.6).
- Plan how to approve and monitor merit badge counselors who offer their services online to Scouts in your council, and the quality of the experience for Scouts who take advantage of these offers.
- Consider how to confirm with their home councils that counselors operating online are registered and approved for the merit badges they counsel.
- Produce guidelines for technology—or web-based merit badge instruction that places the actual testing in a personal setting.

For today's youth, communication via social media is second nature. In all aspects of technology-based advancement, both adults and youth must adhere to Scouting America Youth Protection policies as well as Scouting America Social Media Guidelines (www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection).

When a requirement says to "attend a meeting," in-person participation is strongly recommended. While virtual participation may be convenient, in-person attendance allows for a significantly richer experience, with more socialization and more focus. Virtual attendance should be extremely rare, when extenuating circumstances prevent in-person participation, and the merit badge counselor must approve the substitution **in advance**.

Digital technologies can enhance or hinder our interactions with the world around us. With that in mind, when working on Scouting America rank, merit badge, and other advancement activities, the following definitions should be used:

- **Discuss** requires a back and forth, interactive conversation between the Scout and the merit badge counselor. Exchanging a few text messages does not meet this standard, but a video conversation might.
- **Explain** can be accomplished in a written or oral format but must be a substantive description, more than just a few words.
- **Demonstrate** means to physically do the activity, ideally in the presence of the counselor. If this is not possible, a video of the Scout doing the activity can be used, provided both the video and the activity can be done in a safe manner. Video evidence must only be accepted if the Scout performs the skill correctly, and all essential aspects of the task can be clearly seen in the video.

Generative artificial intelligence and other tools (spell checkers, grammar checkers, autofill, etc.) may be used by a Scout to assist with written requirements, but their use must be fully disclosed to the person reviewing the work, and the final output must be the Scout's own original work.



Electronic Advancement Reporting

Reporting advancement is a requirement of Scouting America, and entering it directly into the Scouting America system through Scoutbook Plus or another internet portal is the most straightforward way to get it done.

6.0.0.1 Importance and Benefits of Electronic Advancement Reporting

Internet portals are available for reporting ranks, advancement awards, merit badges, and many other achievements earned across Scouting America programs, using a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

As stated in "Reporting Advancement," 4.0.0.2, all advancement must be reported to local councils.* This is important for keeping member records up to date. "Unit Advancement Responsibilities," 3.0.0.3, suggests the unit advancement coordinator should use one of methods described in the preceding paragraph to accomplish the reporting. When this is done, it alleviates issues in documenting progress as Scouts submit Eagle applications or transfer from one unit to another within a council or between councils. Consistent and constant reporting also assures accurate records for use by commissioners, other district and council volunteers, and the National Council.

This information is critical in evaluating unit health, adjusting service delivery, and reviewing changes in programs and requirements. It is recommended that units report advancement at least monthly with a final annual report each December.

Benefits of Electronic Advancement Reporting

- *Provides straightforward and direct method of reporting*
- *Eliminates transcription errors due to handwriting*
- *Helps in local council verification of Eagle Scout Rank Applications*
- *Records ranks, badges, and awards in accordance with advancement rules*
- *Consolidates data files to reduce or eliminate record gaps when Scouts transfer units*
- *Supports national data analysis for advancement statistics*
- *Helps to assess and support unit success*

*An advancement report is not required to purchase Adventure loops or pins. However, to ensure that each Cub Scout's record is complete and accurate, all Adventures—required and elective—should be recorded.

6.0.0.2 About Advancement Reporting

To initiate the process for reporting advancement, the unit leader, committee chair, or chartered organization representative must go into Scoutbook Plus and identify the unit advancement coordinator or delegate authority to someone else to record and report all advancement and awards.

When a unit uses Scoutbook Plus (scoutbook.scouting.org) to record its advancement, awards, and other Scout-level information, the data is automatically saved in Scouting America's official database.

Questions about entering or uploading data using any internet portal may be directed to appropriate council-level staff or help.scoutbook.com.

6.0.0.3 [Currently Not Used]

Value of Using Scoutbook Plus

- *Scouts and their parents or guardians can track the Scout's progress and confirm the accuracy of the information*
- *Scouts or their parents or guardians may indicate that a Scout is ready to finish requirements or rank*
- *Unit leaders are able to track the progress of all their Scouts*
- *Advancement, awards, and other activities, such as service hours and camping, are promptly recorded*
- *Leaders enjoy having one place to go — on their smartphones, tablets, or computers — to track and approve advancement and other information*

6.0.0.4 Electronic Advancement Miscellany

Board of Review Signatures. Because entering rank advancement into the internet portals, either directly or after being uploaded from third-party software, and printing the system-generated Unit Advancement Reports typically occur sometime after boards of review are held, obtaining signatures on the report may not be practical. Therefore, after a board of review is held, it is permissible for board members to sign a completed copy of the Unit Advancement Report found at www.scouting.org/forms. This signed report may then be attached to the electronically generated report and submitted to the local council.

Scout Transfers. Member identification numbers for youth are unique to the individual. Entering a Scout's name and Scouting America identification number on a youth application—on paper or in online registration—exactly as they appear in the records is imperative. Nicknames and other differences, including typos, will delay the process.

The easiest way to transfer a Scout from one unit to another is to use online registration at my.scouting.org. The parent or guardian completing the online form should indicate that the Scout is already a member of Scouting America. Once the online registration form has been completed and submitted, the unit must accept the application for the process to be completed. The Scout's history, as it has been recorded in Scouting America's records, will then sync over to the new membership and be available to the receiving unit. Online registration is available to effect a transfer of Scouts within a council or between councils.

Other ways to document and complete a transfer are as follows:

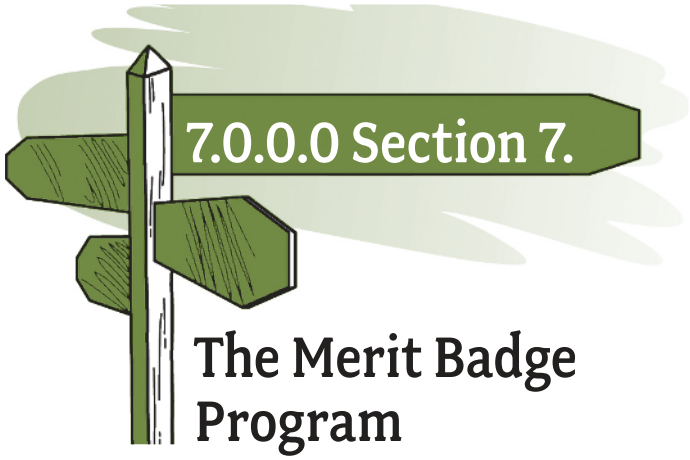
1. If the old unit uses Scoutbook Plus to record advancement and the new unit also uses Scoutbook Plus, then the new unit can access the data directly from Scoutbook Plus after the council processes the application.

2. If the old unit uses Scoutbook Plus to record advancement, but the new unit uses third-party software, then the Scout must obtain a printout or transferrable electronic file of his or her advancement record from the previous unit(s), and his or her person profile from the former council.

3. If the old unit used third-party software to record advancement, then the Scout must obtain a printout or transferrable electronic file of his or her advancement record from the previous unit(s), and his or her person profile from the former council regardless of what system the new unit uses to record advancement.

Dual Registration. If a Scout has multiple registrations with different units, advancement records should be maintained in only one of the units. As the Scout passes requirements in the other unit, the information should be relayed to the primary unit so that only one advancement record is maintained. If advancement records are maintained in multiple units, then cooperation between the units will be required in order to generate the reports necessary to report and obtain the awards. It is not possible to electronically consolidate data across different units in different councils.





The Merit Badge Program

7.0.0.1 The Benefits of Merit Badges

There is more to merit badges than simply providing opportunities to learn skills. There is more to them than an introduction to lifetime hobbies, or the inspiration to pursue a career—though these invaluable results occur regularly. It all begins with a Scout's initial interest and effort in a merit badge subject, followed by a discussion with the unit leader or designated assistant, continues through meetings with a counselor, and culminates in advancement and recognition. It is an uncomplicated process that gives a Scout the confidence achieved through overcoming obstacles and growth opportunities from association with enthusiastic subject matter experts. Social skills improve. Self-reliance develops. Examples are set and followed. Fields of study and interest are explored beyond the limits of the school classroom.



APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

is a registered

☐ Scout ☐ Venturer ☐ Sea Scout

of _____ No. _____
Troop, crew, ship

District _____

Council _____

I have discussed this merit badge with this Scout and recommended at least one merit badge counselor.

_____ _____
Date Signature of unit leader

Scouting America

34124

All merit badge requirements must be met while a registered Scout in Scouts BSA, or a qualified Venturer or Sea Scout. Accomplishments before joining, or while a Cub Scout, do not apply.

7.0.0.2 About the Application for Merit Badge ("Blue Card")

For decades, the "blue card" has been the nationally recognized merit badge record. Even though technological advances provide a number of benefits, blue cards can support the intended interaction between Scout, unit leader, and merit badge counselor, and provide a hard copy for evidence and reference. Councils are encouraged to take advantage of innovations such as Scouting America's Scoutbook Plus system, spreadsheets, etc. Units and other councils must accept these alternative forms of documentation as long as it provides the information necessary to track and record the Scout's progress and all steps of the merit badge process were followed.

Since blue cards support the merit badge process as it is intended to function, the Guide to Advancement *continues to reference them. It is required that when alternatives to blue cards are used, advancement administrators at all levels will carry on the processes, adult interactions, documentation, and other nuances that make the merit badge process such a critical element in Scouting America mission achievement.*

How the blue card works. The blue card has three parts: the "Application for Merit Badge" portion, the "Applicant's Record," and the "Counselor's Record." It requires a total of four signatures—two each from the unit leader and a merit badge counselor. The unit leader signs first on the front of the Application for Merit Badge portion and gives the entire blue card to the Scout. Each signature represents interaction with a registered adult. It is through this interaction and association with adults—the conversations, the counseling, the instruction and learning experiences—that mission-oriented Scouting takes place. This association must occur even if blue cards are not used. See "The Scout, the Unit Leader, and the Merit Badge Counselor," 7.0.0.3.

After the unit leader signs the blue card, the Scout, using appropriate Youth Protection measures, contacts the merit badge counselor and sets an appointment. If a Scout does not complete all the requirements, the counselor does not sign for completion, but initials those requirements that *were* fulfilled in the spaces provided on the back of the Applicant's Record part. This is called a

"partial" (see "Partial Completions," 7.0.3.3). Note that when it comes to partials, tracking which requirements have been met is essential. Whichever system is used, completion of individual requirements should be recorded in a manner that both the Scout and counselor can use to easily track the Scout's progress.

Once satisfied that all the requirements have been met, the merit badge counselor signs the blue card in two places: on the reverse of the Application for Merit Badge (to the left) and on the Applicant's Record (in the middle). These two parts are returned to the Scout. The approving counselor should retain the part of the card called the Counselor's Record for at least one year—in case questions are raised later. Once a registered and approved counselor signs that all requirements have been met, the Scout and the unit leader should meet to discuss the Scout's experience and celebrate their success. Note that this discussion is not to be a retesting on the requirements, as the merit badge counselor has done the testing (4.2.1.2). If the unit leader believes the badge was unearned, they may conduct a review as outlined in 7.0.4.7. If they believe the counselor did not uphold BSA standards, this should be reported (see 11.1.0.0). The unit leader then signs the Applicant's Record portion and returns it to the Scout, who should retain it permanently.

7.0.0.3 The Scout, the Unit Leader, and the Merit Badge Counselor

When the tremendous variety of badges are considered, the merit badge program supports all eight of the methods that Scouts BSA puts to use in meeting its mission (see "The Methods of Scouting," 2.0.0.4). Universal to all the merit badges, however, are the methods of advancement, personal growth, and adult association. Here we will focus on adult association, which is furthered through experiences involving discussion, counseling, and learning that are facilitated not only by a merit badge counselor, but also by the unit leader.

The Scout and the unit leader. Any registered Scout, or qualified Venturer or Sea Scout, may work on the requirements for any merit badge at any time. However, before working with a counselor or attending a group or virtual merit badge opportunity, a Scout must meet with their unit leader or their delegate. This is the leader's opportunity to give guidance on the wisdom of pursuing a selected badge, to advise the Scout on how work might be approached and what may be encountered along the way. It is also the time to provide the names and contact information for one or more approved counselors. The best outcome, however, is that a growth-oriented, positive dialog occurs that provides inspiration and direction in a Scout's life and even leads to conversations about talents and interests, goal setting, and the concept of "challenge by choice." The benefits can be much like those of a well-done Scoutmaster conference. It must be noted that this meeting is a required part of the merit badge process, and that it should be documented either by the unit leader's signature (or their delegate's) on the Application for Merit Badge (blue card) or in Scoutbook Plus or other method.

Even though a leader may voice concerns about a particular Scout pursuing a particular merit badge, it is the Scout's decision whether or not to proceed. Units must not impose rank or age requirements for merit badge work.

The Scout may want to take advantage of opportunities at merit badge fairs or midways, or at rock-climbing gyms or whitewater rafting trips, etc. This is acceptable, but must be discussed with the unit leader well before the event. Group instruction has advantages and disadvantages (see "Group Instruction," 7.0.3.2 and related topics 7.0.4.9, 7.0.4.12, and 7.0.4.10). Another discussion with the unit leader must take place if a Scout wants to change counselors.

Because of the counseling opportunity presented, it is the unit leader's responsibility to sign blue cards, or to otherwise document the visit that takes place before a Scout contacts a merit badge counselor. In the role of giving leadership to the delivery of the troop program, a Scoutmaster, for example, has a better opportunity than other leaders to get to know the youth. This background with the Scouts allows a unit leader to add greater value in the discussion and counseling intended to take place. However, in circumstances when this may be impractical—for example, in large units or when the unit leader may be absent—the unit leader may delegate authority to conduct and document the discussions to a knowledgeable assistant unit leader.

Regardless how they come to work with a Scout, all merit badge counselors must be registered and approved. See topics 7.0.1.2, 7.0.1.3, and 7.0.1.4.

A Scout who avoids or ignores the unit leader's role and completes a badge without first discussing it with the leader should be counseled about the proper way to start a merit badge, and the discussion should be documented. If the Scout (or the parents) continue to ignore the established process, merit badges will not be recorded as "earned" until the Scout has demonstrated, told, shown, etc. that they have met all the requirements to the satisfaction of a merit badge counselor acceptable to the unit leader.

The Scout and the merit badge counselor. Although it is the unit leader's responsibility to see that at least one merit badge counselor is identified from those approved and available, the Scout may already have one in mind. The unit leader and Scout should agree on the counselor to be used.

Lacking agreement, the Scout must be allowed to work with the registered and approved counselor of their choice.

To ensure they understand what needs to be done, Scouts may benefit from reviewing requirements with a merit badge counselor before getting to work, a Scout may begin the effort on any badge at any time after registering in Scouts BSA or becoming a qualified Venturer or Sea Scout. Scouts may work on any merit badge at any time, regardless of how many other merit badges they are working on, rank, age, or other circumstances. It is the counselor's decision whether to accept prior work. Common sense should prevail, however. For example, nights already camped as a Scout in Scouts BSA or as a qualified Venturer or Sea Scout, or coins or stamps already collected, would count toward their respective badges, but work that did not meet the requirement as written must not be accepted. The Scout should be gently informed as to why the requirement was not met, and how they can rectify the issue (up to and including repeating the activity, if necessary).

The National Council does not limit the number of merit badges a youth may earn from one counselor, though a unit leader may do so as long as the same limit applies to all Scouts in the unit. Ideally, Scouts should work with a variety of adults so they can gain insight and learn from examples offered from a variety of perspectives and approaches to life.

It is acceptable for a registered counselor to approve merit badges for Scouts in any council. This is important in areas where counselors are scarce, when Scouts are away from home and want to continue advancing, or when merit badge experiences include high-quality online components provided in another council. However, they must still follow all procedures, including the conversation between Scout and unit leader prior to working with a counselor.

Earning a large number of merit badges from a small number of counselors, or only from counselors known to the Scout, robs the Scout of the opportunity to learn and grow.

Counselors may work with and pass any member, including their own children, wards, or relatives. However, association with adults is one of the methods of Scouting, and working with family members and known adults can deprive Scouts of the opportunity to learn and grow. Scouts meeting with counselors beyond their families and beyond own units will benefit from the perspectives of many "teachers" and will learn more as a result. Scouts should be encouraged to reach out if at all possible.

All camps, events, or other merit badge opportunities, and all advancement recording systems are expected to promptly document merit badge partials and completions in a format that is easy for Scouts, adult volunteers, and merit badge counselors to use and understand.

7.0.1.0 Merit Badge Counseling Risk Management and Quality Control

7.0.1.1 Supervisory Qualifications and Certifications

Several badges involve activities for which Scouting America has implemented strategies to improve safety, enhance the Scouts' experiences, and manage risk. These activities often require supervision with specialized qualifications and certifications. Merit badge counselors who do not meet the specific safety requirements may use the services of helpers who do. Details can be found below, in the *Guide to Safe Scouting,* and in merit badge pamphlets.

General Supervision Requirements

- All merit badge activities must be conducted in accordance with Scouting America safety strategies, and be supervised by mature and conscientious adults at least 21 years old and trained in the applicable program. For example, Safe Swim Defense for swimming, Safety Afloat for watercraft, and Winter Activities (www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss12/#b) for snow sports. Counselors must be so trained, or use helpers who are.
- All physical activities presented in any Scouting program must be conducted in accordance with the "SAFE Checklist." These four points, embodying good judgment and common sense, can be found at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safe.
- CPR instruction, wherever it is required, must be taught by people currently trained as CPR instructors by a nationally certified provider, such as the American Red Cross, the Emergency Care and Safety Institute, or the American Heart Association.

The following merit badges have special qualifications or certifications for either the merit badge counselor or the supervisor of certain activities. Counselors and advancement administrators should consult the merit badge pamphlets for details and to maintain awareness of changes and updates as pamphlets are revised.

Citizenship in Society. Completion of the DEI volunteer training is strongly recommended for all counselors; it includes integral information on key concepts the Scouts will be studying: training.scouting.org/courses/SCO_1800/.

Climbing. All climbing, belaying, and rappelling exercises and activities must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult rock-climbing instructor, age 21 or older, who has completed Climb On Safely training and who understands the risks inherent to these activities. Training as a Scouting America climbing Level 2 Instructor is highly recommended. Someone with certification in First Aid/ CPR/AED from the American Red Cross (or

equivalent) must be present at these activities. Current policies are found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* at www.scouting.org/ health-and-safety/gss/gss08/#a and supersede any other publications or literature.

Snow Sports. Activities in the field must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult 21 years or older who is committed to compliance with Winter Sports Safety. Current policies are found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss12/#b/.

The qualifications below for aquatics-related merit badge counseling and supervision not only assist in managing risk, but also give counselors credibility. All counselors should have formal training in the knowledge and skills indicated by the requirements, experience in teaching such skills to youth, and experience in identifying and managing risks associated with the activities involved. Current policies are found at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss02 and supersede any other publications or literature.

Canoeing. Appropriate credentials include: current or previous certification as Scouting America Aquatics Instructor, designation as an instructor or successful completion of council sponsored or council approved training courses in canoeing such as the Scouting America Paddlecraft Safety course or current or previous certification as an instructor in canoeing by the American Canoe Association Level One. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

Kayaking. Appropriate credentials include: current or previous certification as Scouting America Aquatics Instructor, designation as an instructor or successful completion of council sponsored or council approved training courses in kayaking such as the Scouting America Paddlecraft Safety, current American Canoe Association Level One Kayak Instructor Certification or a higher level of ACA Kayak Instructor Certification. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

Lifesaving. An appropriate credential is current or previous certification as BSA Aquatics Instructor. Persons trained as instructors for Aquatics Supervision: Swimming & Water Rescue or as lifeguard instructors (e.g. BSA, American Red Cross, or YMCA) are also qualified provided they self-study and practice the material in the pamphlet. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

Motor Boating. Appropriate credentials include: current or previous certification by an organization (such as the National Safe Boating Council, the U.S. Power Squadrons, the US Coast Guard Auxiliary or the U.S. Powerboating component of U.S. Sailing) that meets the voluntary National On-Water Standards for Powerboating or the NASBLA National Boating Education Standards for Powerboating. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

Rowing. Appropriate credentials include: current or previous certification as Aquatics Instructor, Scouting America or U.S. Rowing provided they self-study and practice material in the pamphlet. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

Scuba Diving. Appropriate credentials include an Open Water Scuba Certification (or higher rating) for all requirements except Requirement #4. Requirement #4 must be accomplished by a Scuba Instructor from a certification agency recognized by Scouting America and verified by the counselor. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

Small Boat Sailing. Appropriate credentials include instructor certification with a recognized sailing agency or school, U.S. Sailing, American Sailing Association for sailing experience with different hull types including the rig being used for instruction. Counselors should also be familiar with the requirements for the Small Boat Sailing Merit Badge and be able to perform the skills associated with each requirement. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

Swimming. At a minimum, current or previous certification as Aquatics Instructor, Scouting America or instructors from the American Red Cross or YMCA. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

Water Sports. Appropriate credentials include: current or previous certification by an organization (such as the National Safe Boating Council, the U.S. Power Squadrons, the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, BoatUS or the U.S. Powerboating component of US Sailing that meets the voluntary National On-Water Standards for Powerboating or the NASBLA National Boating Education Standards for Powerboating. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

Whitewater. Appropriate credentials include American Canoe Association Level Three River Kayak or River Canoe Instructor Certification, or a higher level of ACA River Kayak or River Canoe Instructor Certification. The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

The qualifications for range and target activities merit badge counseling and supervision not only assist in managing risk but also give counselors credibility. Current policies are found at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss08/#a and supersede any other publications or literature. See the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and the *National Range & Target Activities Manual* for further details.

Archery. Archery activities must be supervised by a National Camping School-trained Range & Target Activities Director, a USA Archery Instructor, a National Field Archery Association instructor, or an Archery Rangemaster. To qualify as an Archery Rangemaster, the individual must be at least 18 and trained by a National Camping School-trained Range & Target Activities Director or a USA Archery/NFAA Instructor using the syllabus found in the National Range & Target Activities Manual.

Rifle Shooting. The merit badge counselor is responsible for ensuring all instruction or other activities involving the handling of firearms or live ammunition is consistent with state and federal law and supervised by a certified National Camping School (NCS) Range & Target Activities Director, or National Rifle Association (NRA) Rifle Shooting Instructor. Instruction or other activities involving handling muzzleloaders must be supervised by an NCS Range & Target Activities Director or NRA/National Muzzleloader Rifle Association (NMLRA)-certified Muzzleloader Firearms Instructor. Live fire must be supervised by an NRA-certified Range Safety Officer (RSO) and an NRA/NMLRA-certified Instructor in the discipline of the firearm being shot. The Instructor and the RSO may not be the same person. Note: commercial shooting ranges may provide properly certified RSOs Please reference the National Range & Target Activities Manual for required range supervision ratios.

Shotgun Shooting. The merit badge counselor is responsible for ensuring all instruction or other activities involving any handling of firearms or live ammunition is consistent with state and federal law and supervised by a certified NCS Range & Target Activities Director or NRA Shotgun Instructor or Coach. Instruction or other activities involving handling muzzle-loading shotguns must be supervised by an NCS Range & Target Activities Director or NRA/NMLRA-certified Muzzleloading Shotgun Instructor. Live fire must be supervised by an NRA-certified Range Safety Officer (RSO) and an NRA-certified Instructor in the discipline of the firearm being shot. The Instructor and the RSO may not be the same person. Commercial shooting ranges may provide properly certified RSOs. Please reference the National Range & Target Activities Manual for required range supervision ratios.

All certifications listed above must be current.

7.0.1.2 Merit Badge Counselor Registration

There are two aspects to merit badge counselor registration: approval for registration in the position of merit badge counselor and approval for the badges to be counseled. Both functions are the responsibility of the council advancement committee, though how they are carried out is left to council determination. That said, the council advancement committee must assure the provisions below in topics 7.0.1.3, and 7.0.1.4 are met. Processes used should not be rushed to the point where unqualified counselors are allowed to serve. The Merit Badge Counselor Information sheet (filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf) is an excellent tool to use in these efforts.

Note that both aspects of merit badge counselor approval apply also to those serving as counselors at summer camp or in any virtual or group instruction setting.

7.0.1.3 Qualifying and Registering as a Merit Badge Counselor

To function as a merit badge counselor one must be registered as such. Only adults of good character, age 18 or older, are permitted to register as merit badge counselors. It is important too, that potential counselors have a good rapport with unit leaders and Scout youth. Counselors register using Scouting America's standard adult registration form with position code 42, and they must reregister annually.

Council advancement committees determine who at the council or district level approves a counselor's adult application form. Note that counselors must reregister annually to continue serving. See "Counselor Reregistration," 7.0.1.5.

7.0.1.4 Approving Badges To Be Counseled

Council advancement committees have the responsibility to implement an approval procedure that assures merit badge counselors have the necessary skills, education, and training to offer safe, quality experiences in the badges they counsel. The intent is for Scouts to learn from those with an appropriate level of expertise and enthusiasm for the subject matter. Counselors are approved for specific merit badges, and may only sign off on those for which they have been approved by the Council Advancement Committee or their designee.

A well-qualified and enthusiastic counselor can extend a young person's attention span: more will be heard and understood, discussions will be more productive, and true interest will be developed. The conversations can lead to a relationship of mutual respect where the Scout is confident enough to offer thoughts and opinions and to value those

of the merit badge counselor. Thus social skills and self-reliance grow, and examples are set and followed.

Note that the National Council does not limit the number of merit badges an individual may be approved to counsel. It is permissible, however, for councils to do so—as long as Scouts' choices, especially in small or remote units, are not so limited as to serve as a barrier to advancement.

Anyone who is desires to serve as a merit badge counselor, whether currently unregistered or registered in another position, must complete an adult application.

Scoutmasters serving as merit badge counselors. Scoutmasters wishing to counsel and sign off on merit badges must qualify and register in the position of merit badge counselor and be approved according to council procedures just like any other adult leader.

Reporting merit badge counselor concerns. In the event unit leaders or other volunteers discover that any merit badge counselors are not following mandated procedures such as working with the requirements as they are written, they should complete and submit to the council advancement committee the Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns form found in the appendix (See 11.1.0.0). Unit leaders should regularly review the policies and procedures related to the merit badge process with Scouts, parents, guardians, and leaders, and counsel them on proper methods as the need arises.

7.0.1.5 Counselor Reregistration

Merit badge counselors will receive an email from national around the annual anniversary of their registration date, reminding them to renew their membership for the next year. If they do not renew, they will be dropped from the roles and will no longer be approved to verify completion of requirements.

Addition and deletion of specific merit badges for individual merit badge counselors will be handled by the local council.

7.0.1.6 Training for Counselors

The council or district advancement committee must assure counselors understand Scouting America's mission, aims, and methods. It is also important they know how Scouts can learn and grow through the merit badge process. Every merit badge counselor should take Merit Badge Counselor Position Specific Training, which is available online at training.scouting.org. Well trained counselors will have a better understanding of how Scouting furthers a Scout's personal growth as they share their passion for their subject matter.

If a counselor corps is organized into groups based on the popularity or subject matter of badges, with "head counselors" for each group (see "Getting Started," 7.0.2.1), there is also an opportunity for "on-the-job coaching." This is helpful where individual counselors need a better understanding of the merit badge plan.

In multicultural communities, local councils should endeavor to offer bilingual training and mentoring.

7.0.2.0 Merit Badge Counselor Lists

7.0.2.1 Getting Started

The council advancement committee is responsible to assure that listings or databases of registered and approved counselors are kept current and maintained on a council-wide or district-level basis.

To get started, the council or district advancement committees should organize the badges into logical groups—such as citizenship, outdoor activities, Scout skills, STEM, trades, hobbies, personal development, business and industry, communications, and public service—and recruit a head counselor for each group.

Head counselors are not expected to be experts in each badge, but they should be capable of recruiting those who meet the qualifications. Remember that counselor recruiting is an ongoing responsibility. As new ones are added and others drop off, it is vital these changes be communicated to the district or council advancement committee and the list of counselors updated.

The number of counselors needed for the list depends on badge popularity. First consider merit badges required for Eagle Scout rank, which are obvious "musts." Next think about those most popular in the local area. Reports on merit badges earned can be generated at your council service center. For low-demand subjects, counselors may appear on more than one district list. Urge troops, crews, and ships to make as many of their counselors as possible available district- or council-wide.

The council or district counselor list or database is made available to troops, crews, and ships. Scouts must not have access. It is most efficient to set the list up as an electronic document that includes all counselors in the council. Establishing it as a spreadsheet or database can allow sorting for counselors willing to serve at the council, district, or unit level. It is important to maintain and update this list regularly so users can depend upon it.

7.0.2.2 Web-Based Counselor Lists

Online counselor lists present a number of challenges. They should only be available from official council websites or tools such as Scoutbook Plus that conform to the National Council guidelines. Council sites must consider the safety and privacy of their members and participants by obtaining the necessary permissions to release information about or images of any individual. Give attention to protecting counselor privacy. Limit access to those who have merit badge-related responsibilities, such as advancement committee members and chairs, or unit leaders and selected assistants. Scouts must not have access. Their interaction with the Scoutmaster in discussing work on a badge, and obtaining a counselor's name and contact information, is an important part of the merit badge plan.

7.0.2.3 Unit Counselor Lists

Units may establish their own lists of counselors, but these lists are sub-sets of the official district or council list. Counselors included on a unit list may or may not opt to work with youth in other units. It is helpful to have ready counselors for the most popular badges, but it is worth remembering that Scouts learn from the perspectives of counselors outside their own troop. Note that all merit badge counselors, including those serving only one unit, must be registered and be approved according to topics 7.0.1.2, 7.0.1.3, and 7.0.1.4.

Due to concerns about merit badge counselor privacy and since Scouts should receive the names and contact information from the Scoutmaster, unit counselor lists must not be made available to Scouts.

7.0.2.4 Sources of Merit Badge Counselors

District or council advancement committees are charged with recruiting and training sufficient counselors to meet unit needs. As with any recruitment effort, it begins with prospecting: gathering names of people who may be qualified to serve. This can be done in a group setting through brainstorming or considered on an individual basis. Merit badge counselor prospects are most often found from the following sources:

- Schools and colleges
- Parents groups
- Local businesses
- Service clubs
- Trade groups
- Religious organizations
- Neighborhood associations
- Government agencies
- The armed services
- Chartered organizations
- Nonprofit organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- Parents and guardians of Scouts

A Guide for Merit Badge Counseling can be useful in recruiting. Visits to district meetings, roundtables, training sessions, and other events may also uncover prospects. While there, unit and district volunteer feedback may be sought on the quality of those currently active.

To learn more about Friendstorming, see the booklet *Friendstorming On Tour*, which can be accessed at www.scouting.org/advancement/.

7.0.2.5 Venturing Consultants as Merit Badge Counselors

Venturing consultants are people whose special skills or talents are needed for a crew activity or project. Usually they are adults recruited on a one-time basis. More information can be found in the *Venturing Advisor Guidebook*. Consultants generally would be considered qualified to counsel merit badges related to their expertise. To serve as merit badge counselors, however, they must be registered and approved as merit badge counselors, according to topics 7.0.1.2, 7.0.1.3 and 7.0.1.4.

7.0.3.0 The Process of Counseling

Earning merit badges must be Scout-initiated, Scout researched, and Scout learned. It should be hands-on and interactive, and should not be modeled after a typical school classroom setting. Instead, it is meant to be an active program so enticing to Scouts that they will want to take responsibility for their own full participation.

Counseling must take place at a location conducive to the subject matter at hand that satisfies youth protection requirements. In-person meetings are preferred because they enrich the experience. Counselors must first confirm with the Scout that they have discussed with the unit leader their interest in working on the merit badge. Then counselors should move on with discussions about what the Scout already knows. This could be followed with coaching, guidance, and additional meetings, not only for passing the candidate on the requirements, but also to facilitate understanding of the subject.

The sort of hands-on interactive experience described here, with personal coaching and guidance, is hardly ever achieved in any setting except when one counselor works directly with one Scout or with a very small group, generally no more than three Scouts, and always following all current Youth Protection guidelines. Thus, this small-scale approach is the recommended best practice for merit badge instruction and requirement fulfillment. Units,

The Merit Badge Process

1. *The Scout develops an interest in a merit badge and may begin working on the requirements.*
2. *The Scout and unit leader discuss the Scout's interest in the merit badge.*
3. *The unit leader signs a blue card or otherwise documents the conversation and provides the Scout with at least one counselor contact.*
4. *The Scout contacts the counselor.*
5. *The counselor considers any work toward requirements completed prior to the initial discussion with the unit leader.*
6. *The Scout and the counselor meet, as many times as necessary. The counselor reviews work, to verify that the Scout has* ***actually and personally*** *completed each requirement exactly as written. For merit badge counselor meetings only, the Scout, parent or guardian, and counselor can meet. In a group setting with two or more Scouts, there must be at least two registered leaders present, in accordance with the* Guide to Safe Scouting.
7. *Partial progress is recorded as requirements are completed.*
8. *The Scout finishes the requirements.*
9. *The counselor approves completion and signs the blue card or other documentation.*
10. *The Scout gives the blue card or other evidence of completion to the unit leader. The unit leader signs the applicant record section of the blue card or otherwise documents completion of the merit badge.*
11. *The unit leader gives the Scout the applicant record portion of the blue card or other hard copy record that the Scout may retain.*
12. *The unit reports completion of the merit badge.*
13. *The Scout receives the merit badge.*

districts, and councils should focus on providing the most direct merit badge experiences possible. Large group and web-based instruction, while perhaps efficient, do not measure up in terms of the desired outcomes with regard to learning and positive adult association.

The health and safety of those working on merit badges must be integrated with the process. Besides the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, the "SAFE Checklist" must be consulted as an appropriate planning tool. It can be found online at "Scouting Safely," www.scouting.org/health-and-safety.

7.0.3.1 Counseling Sessions and Certifying Completion

A youth member must never meet one-on-one with an adult. Sessions with counselors must take place in accordance with the *Guide to Safe Scouting* (www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss01). Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided. If merit badge counseling includes any web-based interaction, it must be conducted in accordance with the social media guidelines (www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection). For example, always copy one or more authorized adults on email messages between counselors and Scouts.

When meeting with the counselor, the Scout should bring any required projects. If these cannot be transported, the Scout should present evidence, such as photographs or adult verification. The unit leader, for example, might state that a satisfactory bridge or tower has been built for the Pioneering merit badge or that meals were prepared for Cooking. The counselor and Scout then discuss what was done, and how. If there are questions that requirements were met, a counselor may confirm with adults involved. Once satisfied, the counselor signs the blue card or otherwise documents completion using the date upon which the Scout completed the requirements, or in the case of partials, records the individual requirements passed.

Note that from time to time, it may be appropriate for a requirement that has been met for one badge to also count for another. See "Fulfilling More Than One Requirement With a Single Activity," 4.2.3.6.

7.0.3.2 Group Instruction

It is acceptable—and sometimes desirable—for merit badges to be taught in group settings. This often occurs at camp and merit badge midways, fairs, clinics, or similar events, and even online through webinars. These can be efficient methods, and interactive group discussions can support learning. Group instruction can also be attractive to "guest experts," allowing them to reach more Scouts while assisting registered and approved counselors. Slide shows, skits, demonstrations, panels, and various other techniques can also be employed, but as any teacher can attest, not everyone will learn all the material. Because of the importance of individual attention and personal learning in the merit badge program, group instruction should be focused on those scenarios where the benefits are compelling.

There must be attention to each individual's projects and fulfillment of all requirements. We must know that every Scout—actually and personally—completed them. If, for

example, a requirement uses words like "show," "demonstrate," or "discuss," then every Scout must do that. It is unacceptable to award badges on the basis of sitting in classrooms *watching* demonstrations, or remaining silent during discussions.

It is sometimes reported that Scouts who have received merit badges through group instructional settings have not fulfilled all the requirements. To offer a quality merit badge program, council and district advancement committees should ensure the following are in place for all group instructional events.

- A culture is established for merit badge group instructional events that partial completions are acceptable expected results.
- A guide or information sheet is distributed in advance of events that promotes the acceptability of partials, explains how merit badges can be finished after events, lists merit badge prerequisites, and provides other helpful information that will establish realistic expectations for the number of merit badges that can be earned at an event.
- Merit badge counselors are known to be registered and approved.
- Any guest experts or guest speakers, or others assisting who are not registered and approved as merit badge counselors, do not accept the responsibilities of, or behave as, merit badge counselors, either at a group instructional event or at any other time. Their service is temporary, not ongoing.
- Counselors agree to sign off only requirements that the specific Scout has actually and personally completed.
- Counselors agree not to assume that stated prerequisites for an event have been completed without some level of evidence that the work has been done while the youth was a registered Scouts BSA or qualified Venturer or Sea Scout. Pictures, initialed partial blue cards from other counselors, and letters from other merit badge counselors or unit leaders are the best form of prerequisite documentation when the actual work done cannot be brought to the camp or site of the merit badge event.
- There is a mechanism for unit leaders or others to report concerns to a council advancement committee on summer camp merit badge programs, group instructional events, and any other merit badge counseling issues— especially in instances where it is believed Scouting America procedures are not followed. See "Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns," 11.1.0.0.
- Additional guidelines and best practices can be found in the "Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide," developed by volunteers in conjunction with the National Program Committee. This guide for units, districts, and councils includes several important event planning considerations as well as suggestions for evaluating the event after it is over to identify opportunities for improvement. The guide can be downloaded from www.scouting.org/advancement.

There must be attention to each individual's projects and fulfillment of all requirements. We must know that every Scout—actually and personally—completed them.

It is permissible for guest speakers, guest experts, or others who are not merit badge counselors to assist in the counseling process. Those providing such assistance must be under the direction of a registered and approved counselor who is readily available on-site and provides personal supervision to assure all applicable Scouting America policies and procedures—including those related to Youth Protection—are in place and followed.

7.0.3.3 Partial Completions

Scouts need not pass all the requirements of one merit badge with the same counselor. It may be that due to timing, location issues, etc., they must meet with different counselors to finish a badge. The Application for Merit Badge has a place to record what has been finished—a "partial." In the center section on the reverse of the blue card, the counselor initials and dates each requirement passed. In the case of a partial completion, the counselor does not sign or retain their portion of the card. A subsequent counselor may choose not to accept partial work, but this should be rare. A Scout who believes he or she is being treated unfairly may work with the unit leader to find another registered and approved counselor. An example for the use of a signed partial would be to take it to camp as proof that the camp's prerequisites have been met. Partials have no expiration except the Scout's 18th birthday. Units, districts, or councils must not establish other expiration dates for partial merit badges.

If blue cards are not used, the council advancement committee must assure that an alternative system for recording partial merit badge completion is available.

7.0.4.0 Merit Badge Miscellany

7.0.4.1 New Merit Badges

Suggestions for new merit badges may be sent to merit.badge@scouting.org. Ideas are researched for relevance to the Scouting America mission and the needs of today's youth and families. Subject matter must spark interest in Scout–age youth; thus part of the process has often involved presenting submissions to a youth panel.

7.0.4.2 Revising Merit Badges

Requirements for each merit badge are reviewed at least every two years to improve relevance, consistency, and also requirement and content accuracy. Merit badge counselors, unit leadership, parents, and youth are encouraged to send suggestions or comments to merit.badge@scouting.org. All submissions are reviewed and considered as merit badges and pamphlets are revised. Feedback has been invaluable in correcting errors, updating material, and enhancing content.

7.0.4.3 What to Do When Requirements Change

Merit badge requirements, along with changes to them, can be found at the Scouting.org Merit Badges web page: www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges. Once new or revised requirements appear there, any Scout beginning work on a merit badge must use the new or revised requirement. Scouts who have started work on a merit badge under the old requirements may finish using the old requirements.

Changes may also be introduced in a revised merit badge pamphlet, youth handbook, or other official Scouting America publication or release before appearing on the Merit Badges web page. In this case, unless official communications set forth a different procedure or establish a date by when use of the old requirements must cease, youth members have through December 31 of that year to decide what to do. They may continue—or begin work—using the old requirements, or they may switch to—or begin work—using the new requirements. Scouts who choose to use the old requirements may continue using them until the merit badge is completed. Scouts who have not begun work on a badge by December 31 of the year a change in its requirements is announced must use the new requirements.

7.0.4.4 Discontinued Merit Badges

Scouts are not allowed to begin work on discontinued merit badges. If actual and purposeful effort that is more than simply incidental to participation in Scouting activities has already begun by the time discontinuation becomes effective, and work actively continues, then the badge may be completed and can count toward rank advancement. However, presentation of the badge itself will be subject to availability. It is a misconception that discontinued merit badges may be earned as long as the patch and requirements can be found. When Scouting America announces updated requirements for a merit badge, Scouts may continue working on the version they have started, unless the announcement specifically says otherwise (e.g. because of a safety concern). Merit badge versions that are no longer available for advancement recording on a digital application (i.e. Scoutbook Plus, Scouting App, etc.) will have to be tracked independently. When all requirements from that version have been completed, users may record a final completion date without recording work on individual requirements.

7.0.4.5 Earning Eagle-Required Merit Badges for Star or Life Rank

Candidates for Star or Life, in the selection of "any four" or "any three," respectively, of the merit badges required for Eagle, may choose from all those listed, including where alternatives are available: Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving; Cycling OR Hiking OR Swimming; and Environmental Science OR Sustainability. For example, if a Scout earns Cycling, Hiking, and Swimming, all three of them count as Eagle-required for Life rank. Only one, however, would serve toward the required merit badges for the Eagle Scout rank. The other two would count toward the optional merit badges required to make up the total of 21 merit badges.

Note that Star and Life requirements each allow two non-Eagle-required merit badges. It is the Scout's decision, however, to earn more—or all—of the merit badges for the Star and Life ranks from the Eagle-required list.

7.0.4.6 Once It Is Earned, It's Earned

A Scout who has *earned* a merit badge from a registered and approved counselor by actually and personally fulfilling the requirements as written will have met the purpose of the merit badge program and the contribution to the aims of Scouting. The Scout may keep the badge and count it toward advancement. See "Personal Growth Is the Primary Goal," 2.0.0.3. The same holds true if a Scout, without intent to violate national Scouting America procedures or policies, fulfills merit badge requirements with someone who is not registered and approved as a counselor. This could happen, for example, if a Scout, in good faith, contacts someone who has inadvertently been dropped from a unit or district charter or otherwise has an expired membership, but who remains on an approved list of counselors.

In cases where it is discovered that unregistered or unapproved individuals are signing off merit badges, this should be reported to the council or district advancement committee so they have the opportunity to follow up. But it is also the responsibility of unit leaders to help Scouts understand that only registered and approved counselors are to be used. If a Scout to whom this mandated

procedure has been made clear has ignored it, then the unit leader may require the youth to work with another counselor who is properly documented and who will verify or ensure that requirements are met. A unit leader should discuss any potential follow-up counselors with the Scout and provide the name of at least one, but the Scout must be allowed to work with registered and approved counselors of their choice.

7.0.4.7 Recourse for Unearned Merit Badges

From time to time, it may be discovered that merit badges could not actually have been *earned*. For example, a Scout who returns from summer camp or a merit badge fair with evidence for an extraordinary number of badges could raise concerns. If, after consulting with those involved in the merit badge program—such as an event coordinator, the camp director, or a merit badge counselor—it becomes plainly evident that a youth could not have actually and personally fulfilled requirements as written, then the recourse outlined below is available. It may result in a decision that some or all of the requirements for a badge could not have been fulfilled, and thus, that the badge was not actually earned.

After such a consultation, the unit leader, in a positive environment similar to that of a unit leader conference, discusses with the Scout the circumstances under which a merit badge in question was approved. A parent or an assistant unit leader should attend as an observer. The Scout must not be retested on the requirements, but a conversation with the Scout can reveal if he or she attended the class, and actually and personally fulfilled all the requirements. Such a discussion could cover who taught a class, what sort of activities took place, where and when they occurred, how testing was done, what the Scout might have brought home from the class, and other similar process-oriented details.

In most cases, with a fair and friendly approach, a Scout who did not complete the requirements will admit it. Short of this, however, if it remains clear under the circumstances that some or all of the requirements could not have been met, then the merit badge is not reported or awarded, and does not count toward advancement. The unit leader then offers the name of at least one other merit badge counselor through whom any incomplete requirements may be finished. Note that in this case a merit badge is not "taken away" because, although signed off, it was never actually earned.

Just as we avoid penalizing Scouts for the mistakes of adults, it should be a rare occurrence that a unit leader finds the need to question whether merit badges have been earned. This procedure for recourse is limited and reserved only for clear and evident cases of noncompletion or nonparticipation. For example, the recourse could be allowed when it would not have been possible to complete a specific requirement at the location of the class, event, or camp; if time available was not sufficient—perhaps due to class size or other factors—for the counselor to observe that each Scout personally and actually completed all the requirements; if time available was insufficient for a "calendar" requirement such as for Personal Fitness or Personal Management; or if multiple merit badges in question were scheduled at the same time.

This procedure is not to be viewed as an opportunity for retesting on requirements, for interjecting another set of standards over those of a merit badge counselor, or for debating issues such as whether a Scout was strong enough, mature enough, or old enough to have completed requirements.

Unit leaders who find it necessary to make use of this recourse must act quickly—if possible, within 30 days of discovery. It is inappropriate to delay a Scout's advancement with anything less than a prompt decision.

If Scouts or their parents or guardians believe a unit leader has incorrectly determined that a merit badge was not earned, or more than 30 days have passed without a reasonable explanation for the lack of a decision, they should address their concerns with the unit committee. They should first, however, develop a thorough understanding of the merit badge requirements and that each one must be passed exactly as it is set forth.

Upon encountering any merit badge program where Scouting America standards are not upheld, unit leaders are strongly encouraged to report the incident to the council advancement committee, preferably using the form found in the appendix (see "Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns," 11.1.0.0).

7.0.4.8 Unofficial Worksheets and Learning Aids

Worksheets and other materials that may be of assistance in earning merit badges are available from a variety of unofficial sources. Use of these aids is permissible as long as the materials can be correlated with the current requirements that Scouts must fulfill. Completing "worksheets" may suffice where a requirement calls for something in writing, but not for a requirement where the Scout must discuss, tell, show, or demonstrate, etc. Note that Scouts must not be required to use these learning aids in order to complete a merit badge.





7.0.4.9 Merit Badge Opportunities With Non-Scouting Organizations or Businesses

There may be opportunities for Scouts to earn merit badges through participation in activities presented by organizations or businesses not affiliated with Scouting America. Zoos, museums, recreation centers, major home improvement stores, and even individuals may be involved. There are, however, a number of important considerations council advancement committees should keep in mind.

It is permissible for outside organizations or businesses to present various programs where fulfilling merit badge requirements is *incidental*. For example, a youth recreation center or school could present a computer camp for the purpose of teaching computer coding skills—even charge a participation fee—and mention in promotional material that participants may fulfill some of the requirements for the Programming merit badge. That some merit badge requirements might be fulfilled during such an activity does not make it a Scouting activity, and therefore the activity would not require Scouting America approval. A registered and approved merit badge counselor, however, would have to sign off on each requirement passed.

Even when merit badge opportunities are incidental to the programs presented, outside organizations are not allowed to use protected Scouting America trade names, images, logos, or artwork without the express written consent of Scouting America. If registered and approved merit badge counselors are available within the organization, then merit badges may be signed off according to Scouting America policies and procedures. That counselors are present, however, and approving completions, does not make the program a Scouting activity.

Outside organizations and businesses are not allowed to present classes, events, or similar activities that are largely for the purpose of offering merit badges—even if no fee is involved—without approval from the local council. For example, the recreation center mentioned above would not be allowed to present a "Sports merit badge camp" without permission. A written agreement should be involved in approving such a merit badge opportunity. The council must assure compliance with applicable Scouting America policies and procedures, including those related to Youth Protection and safety, National Council consent to use protected brand images, and the merit badge counseling and approval process.

The council advancement committee should be involved in the approval. However, because there are issues beyond advancement, the Scout executive should be the one to grant final permission. Council approval should not be granted if it is believed merit badge opportunities will generate a profit or revenue that is surplus to recovering costs related to presenting the opportunity.

7.0.4.10 Charging Fees for Merit Badge Opportunities

Council, district, and multiunit merit badge fairs have become increasingly popular over the past several years. While they provide a service to our Scouts, they must not be used as fundraisers. There are many other methods available to raise the funds necessary to operate the Scouting programs at any level.

Although charging fees for merit badge fairs, clinics, or similar events is not prohibited, any fees charged must be limited to recovering the direct costs related to presenting the opportunity. Local councils and districts may include in the fee a reasonable contribution to the council's overhead and administrative costs. Using merit badge events as fundraisers, however, is prohibited, and councils must not approve them.

In considering whether to approve outside organizations, businesses, or individuals for the presentation of merit badge opportunities, the same limitations should be placed on fees. Any fees should cover only those costs directly related to presenting the opportunity.

Such costs could include wages an organization or business pays to employees who present classes. However, if employees are to serve as merit badge counselors, they must be registered and approved (see topics 7.0.1.2, 7.0.1.3, and 7.0.1.4).

Scouting America is proud of its tradition of volunteer service. It does not allow merit badge opportunities where fees are paid directly to individuals, or to groups of individuals, especially if the individuals are looking to Scouting as a source of income that could be considered taxable. The council advancement committee should not approve merit badge counselors who will not honor the tradition of volunteer service.

7.0.4.11 About Merit Badge Prerequisites

Some merit badges appear to have "prerequisites." The Emergency Preparedness merit badge, for example, requires the earning of the First Aid merit badge. But since the requirement does not state that First Aid must be earned before beginning work on the other Emergency Preparedness requirements, it is not, by definition, a prerequisite. It is just another requirement. Even though "Earn the First Aid Merit badge" is the first requirement, it need not be the first requirement fulfilled. It is just that the Emergency Preparedness merit badge is not finished until after the First Aid merit badge is completed.

The First Aid merit badge, too, has a requirement that reads a little like a prerequisite. It calls for current knowledge of the first-aid requirements for Tenderfoot through First Class ranks. It would make sense that a counselor and a Scout would explore this knowledge first, but doing so is not mandated. Other requirements could be learned and tested before this one.

On the other hand, the Swimming merit badge, for all practical purposes, is a very real prerequisite for the Scuba Diving merit badge. Requirement 2 for Scuba Diving clearly states that the Scout must earn the Swimming merit badge before completing the remaining requirements.

7.0.4.12 Online Merit Badge Classes

Merit badges are meant to be a personal activity, involving real interaction between a Scout and an enthusiastic expert in the subject at hand. Group instruction, online meetings, etc., may, depending on the implementation, dilute the value of this experience. While some merit badges easily lend themselves to virtual interaction, others are better conducted in an in-person environment. While the lack of merit badge counselors in some areas and advances in technology have increased use of virtual platforms, care must be taken that this does not diminish the learning experience.

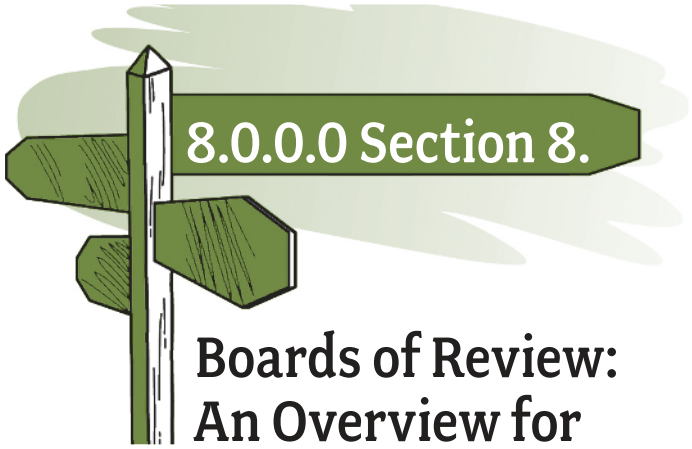
Councils may implement guidance for virtual options, with specific policies based on availability of counselors, Scout's medical conditions, and so on. The following guidance will help determine whether or not virtual options should be authorized. As discussed in 5.0.8.0, requirements to show, tell, discuss, explain, or demonstrate must not be substituted with checklists or forms under any circumstances.

- Just registering and being logged in is not sufficient. The Scout must be engaged, and must actually and personally complete all requirements exactly as written, just as they would for an in-person class.
- Chat options should be disabled, to prevent one-on-one contact with Scouts.
- Cameras should be on, and a parent or guardian present with the Scout. Requirements to show, tell, or demonstrate may not be substituted with checklists or forms under any circumstances.
- Any merit badge counselors not following all procedures and policies outlined by this document and local councils, including but not limited to all youth protection policies, must be reported to their local council advancement committee for investigation.

Online Merit Badge Class Guidelines At A Glance

	GOOD	CONCERNING	AVOID
Number in class	1 to 3 Scouts	4 to 8 Scouts	More than 8 Scouts
Counselor-to-Scout ratio	1:3 or lower	1:4 or higher	1:10 or higher
Sign-up	Scout initiated	Unclear	Parent initiated
Requirements covered	Expressly addressed	Not addressed or unclear	Altered or deleted requirements
Partials	Expressly addressed	Not addressed or unclear	Completion guaranteed
Cost	$0 to minimal	Any unexplained amount	Amount clearly exceeds costs
Cost explanation	Clearly provided	Not clear	Refuse to provide

Note: *For merit badge counselor meetings only, the Scout and counselor may meet as long as a parent or guardian also is present. In a group setting with at least two Scouts, there must be at least two registered leaders present. All merit badge classes and counseling sessions must always be conducted in accordance with the* Guide to Safe Scouting. *See also section 7.0.3.1.*



Boards of Review: An Overview for All Ranks

This section first covers board of review procedures for all Scouts BSA ranks. Then it addresses "Particulars for Tenderfoot Through Life Ranks" 8.0.2.0; and "Particulars for the Eagle Scout Rank," 8.0.3.0.

Procedures for Sea Scout boards of review, and several related topics, are much the same as those for Scouts BSA. There are some exceptions, however, as noted in the sections beginning with "The Sea Scout Board of Review," 4.4.2.0, and ending with "Appealing a Quartermaster Board of Review Decision," 4.4.2.8. Boards of review for the Discovery, Pathfinder, and Summit ranks in Venturing are covered in the topics beginning with "Venturing Boards of Review," 8.0.5.0.

8.0.0.1 Purpose and Timeliness of Boards of Review

After a Scout has completed the requirements for any rank (except Scout rank), they appear before a board of review. The Board of Review should happen promptly and not be delayed for reasons unrelated to rank requirements. A board of review must be a personal and individual experience. Its purpose is to determine the quality of the Scout's experience and decide whether the requirements for the rank have been fulfilled. If so, the board not only approves the Scout's advancement but also provides encouragement to continue the quest for the next rank. Because the board of review date becomes the effective advancement date, boards should be scheduled promptly as Scouts are ready or set up on a regular basis that assures Scouts are not delayed in beginning time-oriented requirements for the next rank. Unit leadership should be actively tracking advancement for all Scouts, and encouraging them to request boards as soon as all requirements are completed.

Note that Scouts must be registered through the time they are working on advancement requirements, but need not be registered thereafter or when their boards of review are conducted. While unit leaders and Eagle coaches should discuss the types of questions to be expected, conducting "practice boards of review" is not allowed at any level.

Any advancement errors discovered after a board of review must not be held against a Scout in considering any future advancement, even if requirements were not properly completed.

8.0.0.2 Boards of Review Must Be Granted When Requirements Are Met

A Scout must not be denied this opportunity. When a Scout believes that all the requirements for a rank have been completed, including a Scoutmaster conference, a board of review must be scheduled promptly. Unit leadership—or councils or districts in the case of the Eagle Scout rank—for example, do not have authority to expect a Scout to organize one, or to "defer" the Scout, or to ask the Scout to perform beyond the requirements in order to be granted one. Neither can a board of review be denied or delayed due to issues such as uniforming, payment of dues, participation in fundraising activities, etc.

In a case where there is concern that the requirements for a rank as written have not been fulfilled, it is appropriate to advise the Scout that he or she might not pass the board and to make suggestions about what might be done to improve the chances for success. It is, however, the Scout's decision to go ahead with a board of review or not.

8.0.0.3 Composition of the Board of Review

A board of review must consist of no fewer than three members and no more than six, all of whom must be at least 21 years of age. For further specifications, see "Particulars for Tenderfoot Through Life Ranks," 8.0.2.0, and "Particulars for the Eagle Scout Rank," 8.0.3.0. Unit leaders and assistants must not serve on a board of review for a Scout in their own unit. Parents, guardians, or relatives must not serve on a board for their child. The candidate or the candidate's parent(s) or guardian(s), or relative(s) must have no part in selecting any board of review members.

8.0.0.4 Wearing the Uniform—or Neat in Appearance

It is preferred a Scout be in full field uniform for any board of review. As much of the uniform as the Scout owns should be worn, and it should be as correct as possible, with the badges worn properly. It may be the uniform as typically worn by the Scout's troop, crew, or ship. If wearing all or part of the uniform is impractical for whatever reason, the candidate should be clean and neat in appearance and dressed appropriately, according to the Scout's means, for the milestone marked by the

occasion. Regardless of unit, district, or council expectations or rules, boards of review must not reject candidates solely for reasons related to uniforming or attire, as long as they are clean and neat in appearance. Candidates must not be required to purchase uniforming or clothing to participate in a board of review.

8.0.1.0 Conducting the Board of Review

Most adults would admit to nervousness if told they were to appear before a "board of review." Imagine how a Scout must feel. A certain level of formality and meaningful questioning should exist, but it is important that the atmosphere be relaxed and that the review is conducted with the Scout Law in mind. It may help if the unit leader introduces the candidate and if a few minutes are spent getting acquainted.

The unit leader may remain in the room, but only to observe, not to participate unless called upon. The number of "observers" at a board of review should otherwise be minimized. The members of the board of review, however, have the authority to exclude the unit leader or any other observers if they believe their presence will inhibit open and forthright discussion. Youth observers are not permitted in boards of review for Scouts BSA advancement.

The Scout's parents, relatives, or guardians should not be in attendance in any capacity—not as members of the board, as observers, or even as the unit leader. Their presence can change the discussion dynamics. In cases where parents or guardians *insist* on attending a board of review, they should be counseled that their presence can change how their child addresses questions and that the opportunity to further self-reliance and courage may be lessened. However, if parents or guardians still insist on being present, they must be permitted to attend as observers. For Scouts with special needs, see additional information under "Advancement in Scouts BSA for Scouts With Special Needs," 10.2.2.0.

In situations where—before a board is held—one or more members are of an opinion the Scout should be rejected, they should discuss their reasoning with the unit leader or others who know the Scout. Generally, a unit leader is closer to the youth; he or she may be able to present a different perspective and prevent an uncomfortable or unfair scenario. Board members who cannot be fair and impartial should recuse themselves.

Practice boards of review are not allowed at any level. "Practice" reviews may imply that board members will ask predetermined questions or that the board of review is anticipated to be other than a positive experience. Instead, the advancement committee should aim for unrehearsed, spontaneous answers revealing character, citizenship, leadership, and mental and physical fitness at the boards of review.

8.0.1.1 Not a Retest or "Examination"

Though one reason for a board of review is to help ensure the Scout did what was supposed to have been done to meet the requirements, it must never become a retest or "examination," nor a challenge of the Scout's knowledge. In most cases it should, instead, be a celebration of accomplishment. Remember, it is more about the journey. A badge recognizes what a Scout has done toward achieving the primary goal of personal growth. See "Personal Growth Is the Primary Goal," 2.0.0.3. It is thus more about the learning *experience* than it is about the specific skills learned. See also "Mechanics of Advancement in Scouts BSA," 4.2.0.0.

A Scout must not be rejected at a board of review for reasons unrelated to advancement requirements. For example, the Scout must not be rejected for not bringing a Scouts BSA Handbook or being tardy for a board of review, but the reason for the tardiness may certainly be a topic for discussion.

8.0.1.2 What Should Be Discussed

During the review, board members may refer to the *Scouts BSA Handbook, Troop Leader Guidebook, Guide to Advancement,* and other such references. The *Troop Committee Guidebook* has examples of appropriate questions. Board members may ask where skills were learned by the Scout, who the Scout learned from, and what was gained from fulfilling selected requirements. Asking "Tell us about when you learned how to tie a square knot" is appropriate, but "Here is a rope; tie a square knot" is not. Questions about specific rank requirements may only be about the rank under discussion; a Star or Life Scout should not be asked about Tenderfoot requirements. The answers will reveal what was done to earn the rank. It can be determined, then, if this was what the Scout was supposed to do. Discussion of how the Scout has lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law at home, at school, in the unit, and in the community should be included. We must remember, however, that though we have high expectations for our members, as for ourselves, we do not insist on perfection. It is most important that the Scout has a positive attitude, accepts Scouting's ideals, and sets and meets good standards in daily life.

If answers are inconsistent with the Scout Oath or Law, or demonstrate that the Scout failed to meet a requirement, then it is appropriate to suspend the board and reconvene at a later date, when the issue has been addressed. For example, in discussing the Scout's favorite camping experience, it might come out that they never actually "planned and cooked a hot breakfast or lunch" on a campout. If so, the board can be adjourned, the Scout can complete the requirement on the next campout, and then the board can reconvene (as long as the Scout is still eligible). See also 8.0.1.5.

It is most important that the Scout has a positive attitude, accepts Scouting's ideals, and sets and meets good standards in daily life.

A board is not required to record "minutes," but it is a good idea. Any such notes must remain confidential to the members of the board or to administrators with a need to know. They may be used in preparing a follow-up letter, should a Scout be turned down, and they can be helpful in an appeal process. In any case, once a review or appeal is completed, all notes must be destroyed. Taking notes during a Board of Review is acceptable, and even recommended for Eagle Scout Boards of Review, but recording, either voice or video, is prohibited. Notes should be destroyed after the Scout passes the board, or after final decision by national in case of appeal for the rank of Eagle Scout.

A board of review may be conducted posthumously if all the requirements were met prior to the Scout's death. See "Bestowing Posthumous Awards," 5.0.6.0, for more information.

8.0.1.3 How Boards Can Lead to Program Improvement

Periodic reviews of members' progress can provide a measure of unit effectiveness. A unit might uncover ways to increase the educational value of its outings, or how to strengthen administration of national advancement procedures. For example, if it is discovered troop leaders are not ensuring that all requirements have been met before Scouts present themselves for the board of review, then process improvements can be recommended. A board can also help by considering the style of leadership best suited to current circumstances and ways to adjust it to different needs. Note that boards of review may also be held for Scouts who are *not* advancing. Much can be learned from them, as well.

8.0.1.4 Board Members Must Agree Unanimously on Decisions to Approve

After the board of review the Scout is asked to wait outside the room or out of hearing range while the board deliberates. To approve awarding a rank, the board must agree unanimously. Every effort should be made to deliberate with careful consideration of each member's perspective and in sufficient detail as to avoid factual misunderstanding. It is appropriate to call the candidate back if additional questions may provide clarification. Still, if any member dissents, the decision cannot be for approval. In the case of such disagreement, the Scout must not be informed about the specifics of the conversations or any arguments taking place. As indicated below ("After the Review," 8.0.1.5), the Scout is only told what improvements need to be made.

8.0.1.5 After the Review

If the members agree a Scout is ready to advance, the Scout is called in and congratulated. The board of review date—not that of a subsequent court of honor—becomes the rank's effective date.

If a board does not approve, the candidate must be so informed and told what can be done to improve. Most Scouts accept responsibility for their behavior or for not completing requirements properly.

If it is thought that a Scout, before his or her 18th birthday, can benefit from an opportunity to properly complete the requirements, the board may adjourn and reconvene at a later date. If the candidate agrees to this, then if possible, the same members should reassemble. If the candidate does not agree, then the board must make its decision at that point. In any case, a follow-up letter must be promptly sent to a Scout of any rank who is turned down. A copy of the letter should also be sent to the council's designated appeals coordinator, council advancement chair, and advancement staff advisor. The letter must include actions advised that may lead to advancement, and also an explanation of appeal procedures. (See "Appealing a Decision," 8.0.4.0, or—if applicable—"Appealing a Quartermaster Board of Review Decision," 4.4.2.8, or "After the Venturing Board of Review," 8.0.5.5.) The council must keep a copy of the letter.

After any board of review, the unit leader is informed of the decision.

8.0.1.6 Boards of Review Through Videoconferencing

Boards of review for any rank are meant to be face-to-face, personal experiences. From time to time, however, due to communicable disease, or as Scouts go off to college or the military, or live in very remote locations, for example, it may be difficult to hold in-person boards of review. In those rare situations where it is unreasonable to expect a Scout to travel long distances or to wait several months, it is permissible to use videoconferencing. If such boards of review are held, however, they must be conducted according to the following requirements.

1. It is a local council decision to allow videoconference Eagle Scout boards of review. Videoconference boards of review may be held for other ranks without

local council approval, but they still must comply with the following requirements.

2. All equipment, including the cameras, lighting, microphones, software, and internet connection, should be tested ahead of time to provide the best audiovisual experience possible.
3. All members of the board of review must be visible to the Scout, and any observers with the Scout must be visible to the members of the board of review. No one within hearing range on either side is allowed to be off camera. It is important to consider your technical capabilities when planning how many board of review members to involve. Observers should be minimized for any board of review, and this applies especially to videoconference reviews. Their presence can change the discussion dynamics.
4. For Scouts under the age of 18, care must be taken to ensure compliance with the *Guide to Safe Scouting* (www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss01).
5. Videoconference boards of review must not be recorded.

Boards of review under disputed circumstances and appeal boards may be conducted via videoconference under the same rare circumstances and the requirements listed above.

8.0.2.0 Particulars for Tenderfoot Through Life Ranks

The preceding applies to boards of review for all Scouts BSA ranks (except Scout rank), but there are a few differences for the ranks other than Eagle:

1. The board is made up of three to six unit committee members—no more and no less. In units with fewer than three registered committee members available to serve, it is permissible to use knowledgeable parents (not those of the candidate) or other adults (registered or not) who are at least 21 years of age and who understand Scouting's aims. Using unregistered adults for boards of review must be the exception, not the rule. Registered committee members familiar with the unit program, who have had a background check, and who are Youth Protection trained are preferred. Scheduling boards of review when and where unit committee members can attend usually alleviates the problem of not having enough committee members for a board.
2. Composition for Scouts BSA rank boards of review held in Venturing crews or Sea Scout ships is the same as that for Scouts BSA troops.
3. One member serves as chair. The unit committee decides how he or she is chosen. The chair conducts review meetings according to established procedures and reports results to the unit advancement coordinator.
4. The location should be comfortable, such as the unit's meeting place or a camp setting.
5. The review should take approximately 15 minutes, but not longer than 30 minutes.
6. Ranks must not be presented until it is submitted to the local council through Scoutbook Plus or on the official Advancement Report form.
7. If a Scout is to be reviewed for more than one rank (Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class), each rank should have a separate board of review. While these boards may be conducted on the same date, it is preferred—if feasible—that different members be involved on the boards to give the Scout an enhanced experience and an opportunity to interact with a variety of adults.

8.0.3.0 Particulars for the Eagle Scout Rank

The particulars below pertain only to the Eagle Scout rank.

1. Council advancement committees must determine—and make known—method(s) for conducting Eagle Scout boards of review: whether unit committees or the council or district advancement committees administer them, and also how board chairpersons are selected.
2. If conducted at the unit level, at least one district or council representative, who is not affiliated with the unit, must serve as a member. If the unit requests it, more than one may do so.
3. There must be no fewer than three and no more than six members, all at least 21 years old. They need not be on an advancement committee nor be registered with Scouting America, but they must have an understanding of the rank and the purpose and importance of the review. This holds true for Eagle boards of review held in any unit, whether troop, crew, or ship.
4. A board of review must not occur until after the local council has verified the application. In the case of a board of review under disputed circumstances, the council must verify all the information that is not in dispute before the board of review is scheduled.
5. The chair works with all involved parties to schedule the date, time, and place. Boards of review should be scheduled promptly. Eagle boards are often held in more formal settings than a troop meeting location or camping site.
6. A board of review must not be denied or postponed due to unresponsive references. See "References Contacted," 9.0.1.7.
7. If a unit leader or unit committee chair fails to approve an application, the candidate is still granted a board of review, but the lack of approval may be considered

in the decision. See "Initiating Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances," 8.0.3.2.

8. To go over the application, references, and service project workbook, members should convene at least 30 minutes before the scheduled board of review.
9. Eagle boards generally last 30 minutes or somewhat longer. This is the highest rank a Scout may achieve; there should be a discussion of his or her successes, experiences, and future plans, but rarely should one last longer than 45 minutes.
10. An Eagle candidate may have only one board of review (though it may be adjourned and reconvened). Subsequent action falls under the appeals process. (See "Appealing a Decision," 8.0.4.0.)
11. The Eagle Scout medal or patch must not be sold or otherwise provided to any unit or to the Scout, nor should the court of honor be scheduled until after the Scout executive has signed the application, certifying proper procedures were followed, the rank has been entered into the system and filed locally, and the certificate is received at the council service center. A council-generated report from Registrar Tools in Scoutbook Plus may be used to purchase Eagle Scout items in lieu of the official certificate.
12. If the board of review does not recommend a candidate for advancement, a letter detailing the issues that caused the denial, advising any actions that could lead to advancement, and explaining appeal procedures should be sent to the Scout with a copy to the council's designated appeals coordinator within two weeks. In addition, the reference letters, Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook (if the project is at issue), the names of the board of review members and their notes (if any), and any other available documentation should be sent to the council advancement committee for use in case of an appeal to council or national. The documentation should be destroyed (or returned in the case of the workbook) after any appeals are finished or if the Scout and parents or guardians decide against filing an appeal.

An Eagle Scout board of review must not be denied or postponed due to unresponsive references.

8.0.3.1 Eagle Scout Board of Review Beyond the 18th Birthday

1. An Eagle Scout board of review may occur, without special approval, up to 24 months after a Scout's 18th birthday, but all other requirements must still have been completed before the Scout's 18th birthday. See "Boards of Review Must be Granted When Requirements are Met," 8.0.0.2. Even if there are some concerns that requirements have not been fulfilled, the Scout is entitled to a board of review.
2. To hold a board beyond 24 months after the 18th birthday, the candidate, the candidate's parent or guardian, the unit leader, or a unit committee member must submit a Belated Rank Application (11.3.0.0). See item #3 below.
3. It is possible for those who completed the requirements for the Eagle Scout rank in their youth, but never received it, to obtain credentials necessary for acquiring it. If a board of review was not held, and the individual met Scouting America membership eligibility rules and all Eagle Scout rank requirements in effect at the time, then a board of review may be requested. Using the Belated Rank Application (see 11.3.0.0), evidence of completion must be submitted to the National Program Committee or their designee through the local council where the individual resides. An Eagle Scout Rank Application signed at the time work was finished can serve as evidence of requirements such as active participation, Scout spirit, or positions of responsibility. Blue cards or other suitable proof of merit badge completion, advancement reports, or troop records may be used for merit badges. Because of their availability on the internet, actual merit badges or sashes are not normally accepted. Only when the application is well-documented and compelling will credentials be released or permission granted for a board of review. Requirements in effect at the time of membership are used.

8.0.3.2 Initiating Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances

A board of review under disputed circumstances is available only for the Eagle Scout rank. It is held at the district or council level. Volunteers from the candidate's unit are not involved. It is indicated when a unit leader or committee chair does not sign the application, if a unit leader (Scoutmaster) conference is denied, if it is thought a unit will not provide a fair hearing, or if the unit leader or project beneficiary refuses to sign final approval for what might be considered a satisfactorily completed service project. See "Evaluating the Project After Completion," 9.0.2.13. The process outlined below, for a board of review under disputed circumstances, also applies in councils where Eagle boards of review are already held at the council or district level.

If a unit leader or committee chair does not agree a Scout has met the requirements, then before a board of review is held, he or she should confer with the Scout and the

Scout's parent or guardian and come to an understanding of all viewpoints. Guidance should also be sought from the district or council advancement chair to assure expectations are not more than are actually required. If the leader or chair remains unconvinced, then they may deny approval of the Eagle Scout Rank Application. In this case, the application, along with a letter explaining the reasons for denial and the right to request a board of review under disputed circumstances, is returned to the Scout, or the Scout's parent or guardian who may then choose to request a board of review under disputed circumstances.

In any case, if a Scout or the Scout's parent or guardian has legitimate concern that a unit cannot deliver a fair hearing, one of them may write a letter explaining the reasons and request a board of review under disputed circumstances. The letter is attached to the completed Eagle Scout application and sent with the service project workbook to the council service center. The council advancement chair or staff advisor, or other designated volunteer or professional, should notify the unit leader or unit committee chair that the request has been received, and then guide the process through the council or district advancement committee according to local practices. After the board has met, the unit leader or unit committee chair should be informed of the decision.

It should be rare that a council or district would deny a request for a board of review under disputed circumstances. However, the request may be denied if it is deemed frivolous, or any concerns about the unit's inability to deliver a fair hearing are deemed invalid. In that case, the initial board of review must be held according to local council practices (not under disputed circumstances). If that board decides not to approve, the Scout may appeal the decision (see "Appealing a Decision," 8.0.4.0).

Procedures for a board of review under disputed circumstances, including the option for the Scout or the Scout's parent or guardian to appeal the decision, are the same as for any Eagle Scout board. The members should be well versed in related policies and organized in advance so they can research background and facts. Written statements or telephone interview summaries must be obtained from the unit leader, knowledgeable committee members, a representative of the service project beneficiary (if applicable), and others familiar with the case. Every effort should be made to have balanced representation. Only review-board members and administrators with a need to know may see the evidence.

The board of review is like any other for Eagle, but with extra attention to the concerns at issue. It is also permissible to hold the review via videoconference under the rare circumstances and the requirements found in "Boards of Review Through Videoconferencing," 8.0.1.6. Afterward, all statements, summaries, or notes are sent to the council and then destroyed once any appeal efforts are concluded. Note that in councils where Eagle boards of review are already held at the council or district level, the time and effort put into researching the background and facts may be the only real difference from a typical board of review.

If a board of review under disputed circumstances approves a candidate, the candidate's application goes through the process as outlined under "The Eagle Scout Rank Application Process," 9.0.1.0. The board must attach a letter to the application indicating it may be processed without the signature of the unit leader or unit committee chair, without the date of the Scoutmaster conference if it had been denied, or without the date of the final Eagle service project signature if that was at issue.

8.0.4.0 Appealing a Decision

If a board of review or a board of review under disputed circumstances does not recommend a candidate for rank advancement, only the Scout or the Scout's parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the local council.

8.0.4.1 Filing and Processing an Appeal

Adverse decisions for Star and Life ranks can be appealed to the local council. Should this occur, the National Program Committee or their designee is available for advice only. Adverse decisions for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class are not appealable. The National Council reviews appeals only for the Eagle Scout rank.

All interviews, deliberations, conversations, and related details in summaries and statements are kept confidential to appeals board members and those assigned oversight, such as the designated appeals coordinator or staff advisor. Others' knowledge should be limited to overview information as required for reports to advancement committees.

1. The Scout should have received communication from the board of review advising actions that could lead to advancement and explaining appeal procedures. If this was not received within two weeks of the denial, the Scout or the Scout's parent or guardian should contact the council advancement chair, staff advisor for advancement, or the Scout executive to request it. To initiate the appeal, the Scout or the Scout's parent or guardian prepares a letter notifying the local council of the appeal, which must be submitted within two months of receiving the letter documenting the denial. It should detail the reasons it is believed the

Scout met all the requirements and should not have been denied. The letter is sent to the council service center, to the attention of the council advancement committee. The communication from the board of review mentioned above should be attached.

2. To assure all appeal requests are handled consistently throughout the council, they are first routed to the council advancement committee.
3. The council advancement committee, through its chair or a designated member or its staff advisor, coordinates the appeals process. This designated appeals coordinator's primary role is to get the paperwork in the right place and orient and guide those who will hear the appeal.
4. The appeals coordinator designated in #3 above routes a copy of the request to the district or council advancement committee according to local practices. It is recommended that appeals of a unit decision go to the district, and those elevated from a district go to the council. This allows an additional step before the National Program Committee or their designee is involved.
5. For appeals heard by a district, the district advancement chair and district staff advisor (usually the district executive) must agree on appeal-board members. The council advancement chair and staff advisor have the authority to approve them (or to call for different members) should they believe this action will lead to more equitable appeals consideration.
6. If the appeal is to be heard by the council, then the council advancement chair and staff advisor must agree on appeal-board members.
7. There must be an odd number of appeal-board members—either three or five. A board chair may be one of these voting members, or serve additionally with no vote. All must be objective volunteers with thorough knowledge of advancement and appeals procedures. An individual who served on the original board of review or appeal board must not serve on a subsequent district or council appeal board for the same Scout. The council-designated appeals coordinator may be present and provide advice. No other guests, including the candidate's parents or guardians, are allowed. If the Scout is being interviewed, and the Scout's parents or guardians insist on attending with him, see "Conducting the Board of Review," 8.0.1.0.
8. The appeal-board meeting may be held via videoconference under the rare circumstances and the requirements found in "Boards of Review Through Videoconferencing," 8.0.1.6.
9. An appeal board is not another board of review. It focuses only on the issues that brought about rejection at the lower level(s). A majority is sufficient for a decision.
10. If an appeal is rejected at the district level, the Scout or the Scout's parent or guardian may appeal to the council advancement committee.
11. If a council-level Eagle Scout board of review or appeal board rejects a candidate, then the Scout or the Scout's parent or guardian may appeal through the local council to the National Program Committee or its designee.
12. A decision at any level that finds in favor of a Scout is final. Units, districts, and councils are not allowed to appeal them. Similarly, decisions for rejection delivered through the National Program Committee or its designee are final. For rulings in favor of a Scout, the date of the original board—not the appeal board—is the effective date of advancement.

8.0.4.2 Appeal Board Must Research the Case

To allow time to research background and facts, appeal-board members must be organized in advance. Written statements or telephone interview summaries are obtained from those with pertinent knowledge of the case. These individuals might include the Eagle candidate, the unit leader and assistants, parent(s) or guardian(s), unit committee members, and, as applicable, a representative of the chartered organization or Eagle service project beneficiary. Every effort should be made to have balanced representation. Only appeal-board members and administrators with a need to know may see the evidence. If a face-to-face meeting with the Scout is impractical, extra care should be taken to collect information from the Scout's perspective. After the meeting, any notes are filed with the council and destroyed once the appeal is resolved. A written report setting out the details of the appeal and the reasons for the decision must be prepared and forwarded to the council Scout executive. A copy is sent to the Scout who brought the appeal.

Appeals forwarded to the National Program Committee or their designee are processed through the local council. A designated appeals coordinator combines, into a packet, the Eagle Scout application and service project workbook (if at issue); all letters, statements, and interview summaries; and any reports or minutes from the original board of review and appeal board(s) held; and a cover letter from the Scout executive (not designee) briefly summarizing the facts and stating the council's position.

8.0.5.0 Venturing Boards of Review

The topics below cover board of review procedures that apply to the Discovery, Pathfinder, and Summit ranks. They are followed by 8.0.6.0, "Particulars for the Discovery and Pathfinder Ranks," and 8.0.7.0, "Particulars for the Summit Rank."

8.0.5.1 Purpose and Timeliness of Venturing Boards of Review

After completing the requirements for Discovery, Pathfinder, and Summit ranks, Venturers appear before a board of review. They must not be denied this opportunity. The purpose is to review the quality of the candidate's experience, and through discussions and stories about the fun, adventure, and benefits of Venturing, to decide whether the Venturer has fulfilled the requirements.

8.0.5.2 Conducting the Venturing Board of Review

Upon completion of the Adventure, Leadership, Personal Growth, and Service requirements, a Discovery, Pathfinder, or Summit candidate participates in an Advisor conference. Then a board of review is scheduled.

The Venturing Advisor conference is conducted under the same general policies and procedures as the Scouts BSA Scoutmaster conference. See "Unit Leader (Scoutmaster) Conference," 4.2.3.5. For example, a conference required for a rank must not be denied, and the conference is neither a retest of requirements nor a pass or fail event. In Venturing, however, the conference takes place after all the other requirements for a rank have been fulfilled.

The board of review chair works with all involved parties to set the date, time, and place of the review. The place may be at the crew meeting site or another convenient and comfortable location.

The crew Advisor, associate Advisor, or a member of the crew committee should coach the Venturers ahead of time on boards of review to ensure the reviews are enjoyable experiences devoted to discussions and stories about activities and adventure. Each review should be an opportunity to take pride in accomplishments and to recount the events and activities in which the candidate has participated. This is the best way for the board members to hear what they need to hear about the quality of the experience and how the Venturer fulfilled the requirements. The stories may also inspire ideas for more fun and adventure in the future that will help crew officers improve the program.

Crew committee members, Advisors, associate Advisors, or other adults who may be present at a Discovery or Pathfinder board of review have a role different from what they do in Scouts BSA. The adults are not members of the Discovery and Pathfinder boards, and are not there to ask the questions. They are there to answer them, and to provide coaching, guidance, and perspective. It is up to the Venturers to guide the discussion and the subject matter of the discussions and stories. To assure their complete understanding, all adults present at Venturing boards of review should study the Venturing Board of Review Guide found at www.scouting.org/advancement, and complete the leader-specific training located at filestore.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/511-904_WB.pdf.

"Boards of Review Through Videoconferencing," 8.0.1.6, also applies to Venturing.

8.0.5.3 What Should Be Discussed at a Venturing Board of Review

A Venturing board of review must not become a retest or "examination" nor a challenge of a Venturer's knowledge. Instead, it uses an approach involving discussions and stories about the fun, adventure, and benefits of the program.

After their adventures, it is natural for young people to want to tell the world about what they have done. A board of review gives Venturers an opportunity to relive the thrills, their accomplishments, and lessons they have learned—and to get excited about them all over again! In listening to these stories, the board of review will uncover how the candidate achieved the rank requirements, gaining insight into not only the participant's progress and growth but also the unit's program.

The board should try to touch on each of the elements in the ALPS model (Adventure, Leadership, Personal Growth, and Service). The questions and guidance examples found in the Venturing Board of Review Guide will help the members bring out the desired stories and discussions, but they are free to come up with their own approach based on the case at hand.

8.0.5.4 Unanimous Vote Is Required for Approval of Venturing Advancement

After the board of review for the Discovery, Pathfinder, or Summit rank, the Venturer waits outside the room or out of hearing while the board deliberates. A unanimous vote is required for the approval of advancement. The chair is a voting member. Every effort should be made to deliberate with careful consideration of each board member's perspective, and in sufficient detail as to avoid factual misunderstanding. It is appropriate to call the candidate back if additional discussion may provide clarification. Still, if any member dissents, the decision cannot be for approval. In the case of such disagreement, the Venturer must not be informed about the specifics of the conversations or any arguments taking place. As indicated below ("After the Venturing Board of Review," 8.0.5.5), the Venturer is only told what improvements need to be made.

8.0.5.5 After the Venturing Board of Review

If board of review members vote to approve advancement, the candidate is called in and congratulated. The board of review date becomes the rank's effective date.

If the board decides that the candidate has not fulfilled all the requirements, he or she must be so informed and told what to do to pass the board. The candidate must not be told any specifics about the board's deliberations. If it is thought that a Venturer could properly complete the requirements before his or her 21st birthday, the board may adjourn and reconvene at a later date. If this is done, it is best, if possible, that the same members reassemble. In all cases when advancement is denied, a follow-up letter must be sent promptly to the Venturer who has been turned down. It must suggest actions that could help him or her successfully complete the requirements. In the case of the Summit rank, the letter must also explain the appeal procedures that may be followed.

Negative decisions of a Summit board of review may be appealed. The procedure is the same as described in "Appealing a Decision," 8.0.4.0, "Filing and Processing an Appeal," 8.0.4.1, and "Appeal Board Must Research the Case," 8.0.4.2. Simply replace the Scouts BSA references with those related to Venturing. Adverse decisions regarding the Discovery and Pathfinder ranks are not appealable.

8.0.6.0 Particulars for the Discovery and Pathfinder Ranks

The particulars below pertain only to the Discovery and Pathfinder ranks.

1. Discovery and Pathfinder boards of review consist of the candidate's peers in the crew, and the board is chaired by the crew president.* There is no required number of Venturers for the board, but a group of three—the chair and two members—is considered most appropriate. Fewer than that does not fully reflect the importance of the rank milestones. The chair selects the other board members from the crew.
2. Two adults—age 21 or older who are registered with the crew, preferably from the crew committee—must be present as advisors, though the crew Advisor or associate Advisors may also fulfill this responsibility.
3. At no time should there be more adults than Venturers present at a board of review.
4. The chair conducts review meetings according to Scouting America procedures and reports results to the crew Advisor and advancement coordinator.
5. The review should take approximately 30 minutes, and should give the candidate and review-board members a chance to explore the subjects being discussed.
6. The rank must not be presented until the signed advancement report is submitted to the local council.
7. The Venturer's parents, relatives, or guardian should not be in attendance in any capacity.

*If the crew president is the subject of the board of review, then a crew vice president becomes the chair.

8.0.7.0 Particulars for the Summit Rank

1. The Summit board of review must consist of at least five, but no more than six, members. At least one half of the members, excluding the chair, must be Venturers currently participating in the program. The composition of the board must be as follows:

   Chair: The chair must be an adult at least 21 years of age who is a Venturing-certified* member of the local council or district advancement committee or their designated Venturing-certified representative. He or she is selected according to local council practices.

   *Becoming Venturing-certified includes studying the Venturing Board of Review Guide, completing the Venturing Board of Review training (available on my.scouting.org), and developing a basic knowledge of Venturing.

   Venturer membership: The board of review must include at least two Venturers, at least one of whom must be from the candidate's crew. Other Venturing members of the board of review should be selected from the following list:

   - Current holders of the Summit rank
   - Venturers who are members of the council or national service territory Venturing Officers Association or equivalent

- Venturers who currently hold a Venturing elected office
- Eagle Scouts or Sea Scout Quartermasters

If the chair determines no Venturer is available who meets one of these qualifications, the crew president may nominate another Venturer(s) from the candidate's crew to serve on the board of review.

Adult representation: The board of review must include at least one adult, in addition to the chair, who is registered with Scouting America—preferably in the Summit candidate's crew—and who works regularly with the Venturing program at any level. The crew Advisor, associate Advisors, or parents, guardians, or relatives of the Venturer must not be members of the Summit board of review. The candidate or his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), or relative(s) must have no part in selecting any board of review members.

Community representative: It is recommended that the board of review also involve at least one well-respected adult representative of the community, who need not be affiliated with Scouting America.

The candidate's crew president and the board of review chair must agree upon the final membership of the board of review. If the candidate is the crew president, the crew's vice president of administration must be in agreement with the chair. If the chair and crew president (or vice president of administration) cannot agree, the candidate's crew Advisor will make the final determination, considering the potential members previously discussed by the crew president and chair.

2. A board of review must not occur until after the local council has verified the Summit Rank Application.
3. The members should convene at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled board of review to review the Summit application and service project workbook.
4. Summit boards generally last 45 minutes or somewhat longer. This is the highest rank a Venturer may achieve; there should be a discussion of the candidate's successes, experiences, and future plans. It is acceptable for the review to last somewhat longer if the discussions are positive and enjoyable. For additional information, see the Board of Review Summit Rank Fact Sheet, www.scouting.org/filestore/venturing/pdf/512-502_WEB.pdf.
5. The Summit candidate may have only one board of review (though it may be adjourned and reconvened). Subsequent action falls under the appeal process. (See "After the Venturing Board of Review," 8.0.5.5, "Appealing a Decision," 8.0.4.0, "Filing and Processing an Appeal," 8.0.4.1, and "Appeal Board Must Research the Case," 8.0.4.2. In those topics covering Scouts BSA board of review appeals, simply replace the Scouts BSA references with those related to Venturing.)
6. The Summit medal or patch must not be sold or otherwise provided to any crew or to the Venturer nor should the court of honor be scheduled until after the certificate is created at the National Service Center.

8.0.7.1 Initiating Summit Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances

A board of review under disputed circumstances is available for the Summit rank. Volunteers from the candidate's crew are not involved. It is indicated when a crew Advisor or committee chair does not sign the application, if a crew Advisor conference is denied, if it is thought a crew will not provide a fair hearing, or if the crew Advisor or project beneficiary refuses to sign final approval for what might be considered a satisfactorily completed service project. A board of review under disputed circumstances in Venturing is subject to the same policies and procedures as one for an Eagle Scout candidate. See "Initiating Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances," 8.0.3.2.

8.0.7.2 Summit Board of Review Beyond the 21st Birthday

For information about a Summit board of review after a Venturer's 21st birthday, see "Eagle Scout Board of Review Beyond the 18th Birthday," 8.0.3.1. The procedures are the same, with the following exceptions:

- References to the 18th birthday are replaced with the 21st birthday for Venturers.
- Procedures for awarding the Summit rank to someone who completed the requirements as a youth but never received the recognition are the same as outlined for those in the same circumstances who are seeking the Eagle Scout rank. The required documentation, however, would relate to proving Summit requirements were met.



The Eagle Scout Rank

9.0.1.0 The Eagle Scout Rank Application Process

Since 1912, the Eagle Scout rank has represented a milestone of accomplishment—perhaps without equal—that is recognized across the country and even the world. Those who have earned the Eagle Scout rank count it among their most treasured achievements. "Eagle Scout" is not just an award; it is a state of being. Those who earned it as youth continue to earn it every day as adults. That is why an Eagle Scout *IS* an Eagle Scout—never *WAS an Eagle Scout*.

Over the more than 100 years since the first Eagle, a formal application process has evolved that is important in maintaining the award's well-recognized prestige. The information in this section is intended to aid in reviewing and submitting the application and accompanying materials. It is hoped this will help Scouts, parents or guardians, or any adult leader or advancement administrator from the unit, district, or council to prevent delays in securing National Council approval and verification.

9.0.1.1 Complete All the Requirements

Confirm that the following requirements have been completed before the 18th birthday: active participation, Scout spirit, merit badges, position of responsibility, service project, and unit leader conference. Note that the unit leader (Scoutmaster) conference need not be the last item accomplished. The board of review may be conducted after the 18th birthday. For details, see "Boards of Review," 8.0.0.0. A candidate must be registered through the time the requirements are being completed but need not be registered thereafter or when the Eagle Scout board of review is conducted. However, it is to the Scout's advantage to resolve any potential issues as early as possible.

9.0.1.2 Prepare the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*

The most current workbook available at the time the Scout starts planning the project must be used. It can be found at www.scouting.org/advancement. The workbook shows the project proposal was approved ahead of time, and then properly accepted by all parties when finished. Ideally, it will be a proud reminder of a significant accomplishment. See "Use the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*," 9.0.2.8.

9.0.1.3 Complete the Application



The Scout must complete the current and official Eagle Scout Rank Application. No other form or application method is permitted. The application can be found at www.scouting.org/advancement. It can also be printed and completed by hand. Careful review and thorough proofreading will help prevent delays. Remember, everything is verified by the local council; discrepancies and errors will lead to a form's return. Unnecessary delays can be avoided by working with the unit advancement coordinator and obtaining the Scout's personal history profile from the council office. Pay special attention to the following *red-flag* items.

1. **Dates:** All applicable date fields will be verified by the council. Missing or incorrect dates will lead to unwanted delays and the application being returned for correction. The best way to avoid these delays is to use the date information from the Scout's personal profile, which the unit advancement coordinator can obtain from the council office.
2. **Signatures:** Applicant, unit leader, and unit committee chair. (Remaining signatures come later.) Note that signatures need not be dated before the Scout's 18th birthday.
3. **References:** Must list names and contact information for four people who are willing to serve as references for the Eagle candidate. These may be Scout leaders, teachers, employers, coaches, other Scouts, etc. References do not need to be 21 or older. Parents and other relatives are strongly discouraged from serving as references. The current unit leader and committee chair are not eligible to serve as references; their signature on the application is their endorsement. See also Section 9.0.1.7.
4. **Merit badges:** Dates as mentioned above; check the unit number in which each badge was earned. Attach the Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges, if applicable. Scouts must not be required to attach blue cards or other proof of merit badge completion with their application. If a discrepancy is discovered, a blue card or other suitable proof may be requested to confirm the completion date.

5. **Position of responsibility:** Must be one of those listed in Eagle Scout rank requirement 4, and must relate to the unit where the Scout was registered and active at the time service was rendered. For example, "SPL" would not be used by a crew member unless he or she was, or is, also registered in a troop. For a Scout who has transferred from a troop to a Venturing crew or Sea Scout ship, any qualifying position(s) held after the Life rank board of review in the troop must count, and the six-month element of the requirement may be met through a combination of nonconcurrent positions served in the troop, crew, or ship. See also "Scouts BSA Advancement in Venturing," 4.3.1.4., and "Scouts BSA Advancement in Sea Scouts," 4.4.0.1.
6. **Attachments:** Service project workbook, statement of ambitions and life purpose, and listing of positions, honors, and awards. Other attachments, such as unit records or individual history reports, must not be required to process the application unless a discrepancy is discovered.

Any advancement errors discovered after a board of review must not to be held against a Scout in considering any future advancement, even if requirements were not properly completed. As an example, if after a Scout was advanced to Life rank it was discovered the Scout had not completed the required six months between Star and Life, that would not be cause to deny advancement to Eagle.

Scouts must submit the current official Eagle Scout Rank Application, found at www.scouting.org/advancement. No other form or application is permitted. Special worksheets or spreadsheets have been created in some councils that when filled out electronically produce a completed application. Because the official application changes from time to time, and because submitting out-of-date applications can cause confusion and delays, Scouts must not be required to use these tools. If they do use them, they still must complete and submit the official Eagle Scout Rank Application.

9.0.1.4 Obtain Required Signatures

The unit leader and committee chair signatures represent approval for the candidate to move on to a board of review. In providing them, the signers carefully check the application. It may be helpful to compare the application to the Scout's current advancement profile obtained through the Scouting America system or to a printout obtained from the local council service center. If there are "red-flag" issues (see 9.0.1.3), such as time spans between ranks that don't meet the requirements, then the dates should be confirmed. If they are correct but do not fit the requirement, then the Scout, parent or guardian, or unit leader should contact the district advancement chair for guidance. Usually, as with unavoidable discrepancies, a letter of explanation will be helpful in addressing the issue. Note there is no requirement that the signatures of the Scout, unit leader, and committee chair must be dated before the Scout's 18th birthday. If the unit leader or committee chair is also the Scout's parent, it is recommended they delegate signing the Eagle Scout Rank Application to an assistant unit leader or committee member for additional adult-interaction opportunities for the Scout. The person signing is verifying that all proper procedures have been followed, so it should be someone who has knowledge of the Scout's history, and has a discussion with the Scout about their advancement journey.

If either of the approvals from the unit leader or the committee chair is withheld, a board of review must still be granted if requested by the Scout. For details, see "Initiating Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances," 8.0.3.2.

9.0.1.5 Submit to Council Service Center

A copy should be made of the application; service project workbook; the Scout's statement of ambitions and life purpose; and listing of positions, honors, and awards. Once copies are in safekeeping, the originals should be delivered *promptly* to the council service center by the council's preferred method (hand-delivered, registered or certified mail, or electronically). The candidate should not be delayed. Timeliness is especially critical if the candidate is approaching, or has already turned, 18. Sending materials late can imply the work continued afterward, but there is no requirement that signatures must be obtained and the applications submitted before the 18th birthday. Councils do not have the authority to reject applications submitted on or after that date.

Councils may suggest service project workbooks (only) be sent or taken to a different person or location, such as a district advancement committee member. An Eagle Scout candidate, however, should confirm that any related instructions are correct and up to date. If there is any concern the workbook will go to the wrong place, it should accompany the Eagle application to the council service center.

9.0.1.6 Council Verifies Application and Board of Review Scheduled

Everything is checked against Scouting America records. If information in the Scouting America system or council files is incomplete or differs from the application, the Scout or the unit will be asked to provide certificates, blue cards, or other suitable proof that merit badges and ranks were earned and that dates are accurate. The regular use of Scoutbook Plus for reporting advancement as described in Section 6 will help expedite this process. If everything is correct, the council provides a verification signature, files a copy of the application, and sends the original with the service project workbook along with any attachments to the board of review chair or other designated volunteer. The board should be scheduled only after the council-verified application is received.

9.0.1.7 References Contacted

The Scout is responsible for requesting references from the four people listed on the application—this is a valuable life skill. Councils choose the method (letter, email, online form, etc.) and where submitted. Electronic submissions are allowed only if confidentiality at all stages is guaranteed. Requested references may be returned to the Scout in a sealed envelope, or sent to a designated unit, district, or council adult for safekeeping until the Eagle Board of Review. If after diligent effort four recommendations are not received, the board of review can go forward without them. If the Scout chooses to go forward, the board may ask about their efforts, but may not deny advancement based only on lack of references.

Completed reference responses of any kind are the property of the council and are confidential, and only review-board members and those officials with a specific need may see them after the board. The responses are not to be viewed by or returned to the Scout. Doing so could discourage the submission of negative information. Those providing references do not have the option of waiving confidentiality. Once a review has been held, or an appeal process conducted, responses must be returned to the council, where they will be destroyed after the Eagle Scout credentials are released or the appeal is concluded.

In Scouts BSA, advancement references are required only for Eagle Scout rank. The council determines methods of contact.

9.0.1.8 Application Returned to Council Service Center

If a board of review approves a candidate, the signed application, reference letters, and any information that might be considered confidential are returned to the local council. Unless otherwise directed, the service project workbook and statement of ambitions and life purpose can be returned to the Scout.

If advancement is denied, the procedure outlined in section 8.0.3.0 item 12 must be followed.

9.0.1.9 Council Processes the Application

At the council, the Scout executive signs the application, certifying proper procedures were followed. The application is then entered into the Scouting America system and filed locally. In special cases, such as Lone Scouts or Scouts who have an alternative Eagle merit badge, councils must submit applications via email to advancement.team@scouting.org. The application must have the Scout executive's signature.

9.0.1.10 National Advancement Program Team Returns Credentials

National validates all applications received. Then the National Distribution Center generates the credentials and prints, packages, and mails the certificate, pocket card, and congratulatory letter to the council. Applications sent for manual processing require several weeks to complete. Upon receipt of the Eagle credentials, council service center personnel should alert unit leadership immediately.

9.0.2.0 The Eagle Scout Service Project

While a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, any school, or your community. (The project must benefit an organization other than Scouting America.) A project proposal must be approved by the organization benefiting from the effort, your unit leader and unit committee, and the council or district before you start. You must use the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, *publication No. 512-927, in meeting this requirement.*

—Eagle Scout requirement 5

9.0.2.1 What an Eagle Scout Candidate Should Expect

While working toward completion of the Eagle Scout service project, especially during the proposal approval process, a candidate has the right to expect the following:

1. Questioning and probing for the candidate's understanding of the project, the proposal, and what must be done, which must be conducted in a *helpful*, *friendly*, *courteous*, and *kind*-hearted manner. We will respect the Scout's dignity. The Scout will be allowed, if desired, to have a unit leader or other adult present

as an observer at any time the proposal or project is being discussed with someone who is reviewing it.

2. Project expectations will match Eagle Scout requirement 5, and we will not require proposals to include more than described in the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*.
3. If requested by the Scout or the Scout's parent or guardian, an explanation of a proposal rejection will be provided in writing, with a copy sent to the council advancement chair and staff advisor. It will indicate reasons for rejection and suggestions concerning what can be done to achieve approval.
4. Guidance that maximizes the opportunity for completion of a worthwhile project will be readily available and strongly recommended. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for success belongs to the Scout, and final evaluation is left to the board of review.
5. A method of redress will be provided to a candidate who believes there has been mistreatment or that the proposal was wrongly rejected. This will include the opportunity for a second opinion and approval, either through another volunteer or professional advancement administrator, or the Scout executive, as determined by the council advancement committee or executive board.

An advancement administrator is a member or chair of a council or district advancement committee, or a volunteer or professional designated according to local practices, to assist in advancement administration.

9.0.2.2 "While a Life Scout ..."

Work on a project, including planning, begins after the Life Scout board of review. But this is not meant to preclude an enthusiastic Star Scout from talking with his or her Scoutmaster, religious leader, or principal about what a good project might be.

9.0.2.3 "Plan, Develop ..."

Planning and development require forethought, effort, and time—sometimes more than for execution. Thus, for the most part, they are considered part of the project and are detailed further once a proposal is approved. It is inappropriate to expect a Scout to invest the time required for *detailed* planning, only to face the prospect of rejection. See "Proposal Must Be Approved … Before You Start," 9.0.2.7.

It is important not to categorically reject projects that, on the surface, may not seem to require enough planning and development. Consider, for example, a blood drive. Often rejected out of hand, this project, if done properly, could be acceptable. Few would question the beneficiary. Blood banks save lives—thousands of them: maybe yours, maybe that of a loved one. If the candidate proposes to use a set of "canned" instructions from the bank, implemented with no further planning, the planning effort would not meet the test.

On the other hand, there are councils in which Scouts and advancement committees have met with blood bank officials and worked out approaches that *can* comply. Typically these involve developing marketing plans and considering logistics. People successful in business know how important these skills are. Some blood banks will also set a minimum for blood collected as a measure of a successful plan. To provide another valuable lesson, they may require the candidate to keep at it until the goal has been met.

A good test of any project is to evaluate its complexity. In the case of a blood drive, for example, elements of challenge and complexity can be added so there is a clear demonstration of planning, development, and leadership.

9.0.2.4 "Give Leadership to Others ..."

"Others" means at least two people besides the Scout. Helpers may be involved in Scouting or not, and of any age appropriate for the work. In cases where just three people are not able to conduct a project to the satisfaction of a beneficiary, then more would be advisable. It may be, however, that a well-chosen project conducted by only three provides an impact not achievable with those involving more.

One of the purposes for the project is to demonstrate leadership, but this could be considered a more important element, perhaps, for Scouts who have not yet established themselves as leaders. It is for reasons like these that every project must be evaluated, case-by-case, on its merits, and on lessons that will *advance* the candidate's growth. Councils, districts, and units must not establish requirements for the number of people led, or their makeup, or for time worked on a project. They must not expect Scouts from different backgrounds, with different experiences and different needs, all to work toward a particular standard. The Eagle Scout service project is an individualized experience.

Councils, districts, and units must not establish requirements for the number of people led, or their makeup, or for time worked on a project.

9.0.2.5 "Helpful to Any Religious Institution, Any School, or Your Community"

"Any religious institution" and "any school" are self-

explanatory. But what does "your community" mean? In today's world of instant communications and speedy travel, we are affected more and more by what goes on all over the world. Prices for goods and services, investment values, our very safety, and how we feel about those less fortunate in other countries, all are involved. Thus, if Scouts want to take their oath "to help other people" more expansively and put their projects to work for the "community of the world," they are allowed to do so. A council may emphasize more local efforts but should not deny worthy projects of a wider scope.

If Scouts want to take their oath "to help other people" more expansively and put their projects to work for the "community of the world," they are allowed to do so.

Normally "your community" would not refer to individuals, although a council or district advancement committee may consider scenarios where an individual in need can affect a community. An example might involve elderly persons able to live at home but *un*able to maintain their property, with the result being an "attractive nuisance" or related dangerous situations, or even an eyesore—something that raises concern to more than that of just an individual. If it can be determined the *community* benefits, then it is a matter of identifying who will provide approvals. They must come from a source representing the "community," such as a neighborhood association, watch group, homeowners association, or perhaps a division of a town or county.

The project beneficiary need not be a registered nonprofit. Projects may not be of a commercial nature or for a business, but this is not meant to disallow community institutions that would otherwise be acceptable to the council or district advancement committee. These might include museums and various service agencies, or some homes for the elderly, for example. Some aspect of a business's operation provided as a community service may also be considered; for example, a park open to the public that happens to be owned by a business. In cases such as these, the test is whether the project primarily benefits the community, as opposed to the profits of the business.

9.0.2.6 "Benefit an Organization Other Than Scouting America"

"To help other people at all times" is a basic tenet. The Eagle Scout service project is an important and meaningful opportunity to practice what we teach. Projects must not be performed for Scouting America or its councils, districts, units, camps, and so forth. The unit's chartered organization, however, is certainly a good candidate, as are other, international Scouting organizations or other youth organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

9.0.2.7 "Proposal Must Be Approved ... Before You Start"

To help project beneficiaries understand the Eagle Scout service project requirement along with the responsibilities and the rights that come with the benefit, see "Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project," which appears in the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook.

The Five Tests of an Acceptable Eagle Scout Service Project. The proposal is an overview, but also the *beginnings* of planning. It shows the unit leader and any representatives of a unit committee, council, or district, that the following tests can be met.

1. The project provides sufficient opportunity to meet the requirement.
2. The project appears to be feasible.
3. Safety issues will be addressed.
4. Action steps for further detailed planning are included.
5. The Scout is on the right track with a reasonable chance for a positive experience.

The detail required for a proposal depends on project complexity. It must be enough to provide a level of confidence for a council or district reviewer that the above tests can be met, but not so much that—based on the possibility a proposal can be rejected—it does not respect the time it takes to prepare.

The unit committee is responsible for an approval of the proposal. It is acceptable for a troop, crew, or ship committee to designate representative(s) to act on its behalf. This is a unit decision. Neither the district nor the council may institute restrictions, such as how many committee members are to be involved.

The form for preparing a proposal appears in the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, No. 512-927. Completing it will represent a reasonable time investment and an introductory learning experience, and also provide the information needed for approval. The candidate must not be required to submit more than is described there, or more than is necessary to establish that a project can meet the above tests.

Space is provided in the workbook for the candidate to record comments made during discussions with the district or council volunteer going over the proposal. A thorough review should generate numerous suggestions, cautions, and perhaps concerns (see "What an Eagle Scout Candidate Should Expect," 9.0.2.1). The Scout should be encouraged to write these down and take them seriously. When the reviewer is satisfied the five tests above can be met, then approval is granted.

It is important to be as considerate of an Eagle Scout candidate's time as we expect him or her to be of ours. The Scout is probably just as busy. Every attempt should be made to complete the approval process in one meeting. Then the Scout should be challenged to work on planning action steps and to consider scheduling time with the assigned Eagle Scout service project coach for progress reports and further guidance (see "Eagle Scout Service Project Coach," 9.0.2.9). It is advisable that one of these meetings with the coach be held after the Scout has prepared the project plan and is ready to begin actual work on the project.

It is acceptable for the coach or the advancement administrator responsible for approval—if he or she becomes concerned the project will not meet the requirements or it will not be completed to the satisfaction of the benefiting organization—to contact the Scout and the Scout's parent or guardian, or unit leader. However, even though the project coach may provide guidance critical to success, final design issues are ultimately between the Scout and the beneficiary. For limitations on the coach's role, see "Eagle Scout Service Project Coach," 9.0.2.9.

From time to time Scouts will "jump the gun" and begin fundraising efforts—or even work on the project itself—before a proposal is approved. This is counter to the requirements and well covered in multiple documents, but still it happens. Normally then, a Scout should select a different project. If circumstances are compelling, however—indicating leniency can be extended and a lesson learned without significant detriment to fulfilling the project's purpose—the Scout may be allowed to carry on and have the proposal or project approved after the fact.

Because it is virtually impossible to forecast every contingency, candidates must be allowed a level of flexibility in carrying out proposals and planning action steps. But essential elements of a proposal should not be changed without good reason. If this must occur, the Scout should consult the project coach or unit leader for advice. It is appropriate to strongly suggest the Scout share substantive changes with the project beneficiary, and also with those involved in preapprovals.

If it appears changes will cause results to fall below what is required, then cautionary advice is in order. Except under extreme circumstances, it is not acceptable for unit, or council or district, approval to be withdrawn, for example, if the project has been changed substantially. If Scouts decides to strike out on their own, that is their prerogative. At some point, responsibility must take over. The board of review decides whether planning was sufficient and if the requirement was met.

The project beneficiary can stop work on an approved project at any time. If enough has been done—such that the requirement's intent has been met—then the project should still be given final approval. In extreme cases where changes could involve such issues as violations of law or Scouting America policy, or if they bring about unacceptable levels of risk, then district or council advancement administrators may bring this to the attention of the Scout, the Scout's parent or guardian, the unit leader, and call for work to be suspended until compliance is achieved.

9.0.2.8 "Use the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*"

Using the workbook, No. 512-927, helps candidates avoid pitfalls. If properly used, it very nearly assures success. It shows approvals have been secured, lists important limitations, suggests questions for those approving the project, and includes outlines for the proposal and the more detailed project plan that should come next.

The workbook should not, however, become a basis for rejecting candidates based on "technicalities" that have nothing to do with requirement intent. While the use of the workbook is required, this does not mean that every line or even every form must be completed. In most cases Scouts should fully complete the proposal and project report, and be strongly encouraged to complete the project plan. However, at times it may not be feasible or just not necessary for establishing that the requirement was met.

If it is clear the project was completed and approved, and meets Eagle Scout requirement 5 as it is written, then the project should be considered. If it will be a hardship, or a poor use of time to fill in missing information or obtain a signature of a party who is unavailable but by some other means known to have approved it, then it is appropriate to accept it. There is something to be said for "object lessons," but keep in mind that write-ups and signatures, though important, are simply supportive. Note that project report signatures need not be dated before the Scout's 18th birthday. It is a *project* that we require. Boards of review should use common sense: Did the project meet the

requirements or not? Was there planning and development? Was there leadership of others?

The workbook should not become a basis for rejecting candidates based on "technicalities" that have nothing to do with the intent of the requirement.

The requirement that Scouts use the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook *means they must use the current, official document as produced by Scouting America. Although it is acceptable to copy and distribute it, and even to transfer it to a different software platform or operating system, it must maintain the same appearance. No council, district, unit, or individual has the authority to require additional forms, or to add or change requirements, or to make any additions, deletions, or changes in the text, outlines, graphics, or other layout or informational elements of the workbook.*

9.0.2.9 Eagle Scout Service Project Coach

The Eagle Scout service project coach is the subject matter expert on the processes and standards of the service project. They are the key to success in council or district efforts to provide guidance as Scouts work to fulfill requirement 5. The following are important examples of ways in which the coach can influence a Scout's project:

- Meet with a Scout after the proposal has been approved but before work begins on the project plan.
- Ask how the Scout will plan the project, then offer advice accordingly.
- Emphasize those elements of a plan that, if ignored, could stop work or create health and safety issues.
- Remind the Scout to share the project plan with the project beneficiary; the beneficiary should be fully aware of what will be done. Note that project plans for an Eagle Scout service project are between the Scout and the beneficiary. *Coaches do not approve project plans.*
- Be available to the Scout as a consultant to answer any questions about the planning process.
- Meet with the Scout to review the project plan; discuss its strengths, weaknesses, and risks; and suggest critical improvements.
- Discuss the project report with the Scout and offer advice on how to make a strong presentation at the Scout's board of review.

Remember that all contact with the Scout must be conducted according to Youth Protection procedures.

Experience has taught us the most effective approach to providing coaches is for the *council or district* to organize a pool of volunteers willing to serve in that capacity, and then designate them to individual Eagle Scout candidates. Many units have used service project "mentors" or "advisors" through the decades since the Eagle Scout service project came to be. This practice has provided consistent positive contributions and should continue.

Their efforts, however, should serve to provide ongoing support throughout project planning and execution and to prepare a Scout to work with the council or district *designated* project coach.

The role of the designated project coach is not intended to require so close an association with a Scout that it becomes impossible for a council or district to recruit enough of them to work with candidates whose proposals have been approved. The more ongoing and close association should come from unit volunteers or parents assisting in support roles. It is recognized, however, that some councils or districts may not have the volunteer capacity to provide *designated* coaches. For this reason, the council advancement committee may decide to designate the project coach from among unit volunteers. But they should do so with the understanding that a coach who is designated within a unit should represent the perspective of the council or district.

Regardless the source of project coaches, they must adhere to the Eagle Scout service project process as described in this section of the *Guide to Advancement*. Coaches do not have approval authority. Instead they serve to *encourage*—not direct—the Scouts to make the kinds of decisions that will lead to successful outcomes.

It is true a Scout need not accept the assistance of the service project coach. Regardless, it is considered best for the council or district to designate one for every Scout who submits a project proposal for approval. The coach should then contact the Scout and suggest a first meeting, or telephone or video conference. Scouts have already promised when they submit a proposal that they have read the service project workbook, and thus they should already understand a coach is optional. Scouts who suggest they don't need one should be counseled on the value a coach can add. Ultimately, however, working with a designated Eagle Scout service project coach is the Scout's decision.

It is important to note that Eagle service project coaches do not have the authority to dictate changes; withdraw approval that was previously granted, such as by the

council or district; or take any other such directive action. Instead, coaches must use the Scouting America method of positive adult association, logic, and common sense to help the candidate make wise decisions.

It is up to the council to determine who may serve as project coaches and how they might be assigned or otherwise provided to candidates. Coaches must be registered with Scouting America (in any adult position) and be current in Youth Protection training.

In many cases, candidates will not have undertaken something like an Eagle service project. Thus, we want them to obtain guidance from others, share ideas, seek plan reviews, and go through other processes professional project planners might use. But like a professional, *the Scout* makes the decisions. They must not simply follow others' directions to the point where their own input becomes insignificant. On the other hand, adult leaders must bear in mind these are youth. Expectations must be reasonable and fitting.

9.0.2.10 Fundraising Issues

Projects may not be fundraisers. In other words, the candidate must not stage an effort that primarily collects money, even if it is for a worthy charity. Fundraising is permitted only for securing materials and otherwise facilitating a project. Fundraising must be approved by the local council except for contributions from the beneficiary, the candidate, the chartered organization, and the candidate's parents, guardians, or relatives, as well as the unit or individuals in the unit.

Fundraising for an Eagle Scout service project must *not be required* of any candidate. Whether or not fundraising takes place is the Scout's decision based on project needs and sources of income, including the benefitting organization and self-funding. Scouting America prefers, in fact, that Scouts choose projects that can be done at little or no cost. Fundraising—especially on a larger scale—has tax, accounting, and other legal implications, in which minors should not be involved. Thus, if fundraising is to take place, it is best that it be kept simple. Typical unit fundraisers with which unit leadership is familiar, such as car washes, are the best options. Another alternative, contingent on local council approval, is the use of "crowdfunding" via the internet. If this method is used, however, then all concerned, including the Scout, the Scout's parent or guardian, the unit leader and those approving fundraising at the local council, should be aware that fees may be involved and that fundraising for something like an Eagle project may or may not comply with the website's terms of service. There can be other issues as well, such as what to do if more—or less—than what is needed is raised. It is important that someone in a position of responsibility reads and understands the website's "fine print."

If fundraising takes place, Eagle candidates must also be allowed the choice not to be involved in it. If Scouts *do* give leadership to fundraising efforts, then this can be considered in fulfilling that part of requirement 5 to "give leadership to others." If Scouts are not involved, or if all of the contributions come from relatives, for example, the Scout must not be penalized. The Scout's leadership in the project itself should be the primary basis for determining whether requirement 5 has been met.

The Scout must make it clear to all donors or event participants that the money is being raised on behalf of the project beneficiary, which will retain leftover funds. Should any donors want documentation of a gift, this must be provided through the project beneficiary, not Scouting America. Once collected, money raised must be turned over to the beneficiary or the candidate's unit until needed for the project. If the unit receives the funds, it must release any excess to the beneficiary once expenses have been paid.

If the beneficiary is not allowed, for whatever reason, to retain any excess funds, supplies, or materials, the beneficiary should be asked to designate a suitable charity to receive them or allow the unit to retain the funds. The unit must not influence this decision.

For additional detail see "Procedures and Limitations on Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising," found in the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook,* No. 512-927, on the reverse of the Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application.

The Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application, found in the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, is used to obtain approval when required. Note that local councils may add further definition to the standards established here or on the application form. For example, they could state that fundraisers such as bake sales and car washes do not require a fundraising application and are, in essence, preapproved. They could also establish dollar thresholds; for example, "Any effort expected to raise less than $500 does not require an application." Completed forms are sent to the local council service center where they are routed to those responsible for approval. This may be a district executive or another staff member, the council or district advancement committee, a finance committee, etc., as determined appropriate by the local council.

The Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application must not be required to accompany the project proposal. At that point in the process, the Scout may not have enough information to complete the application.

9.0.2.11 Routine Labor

Routine labor is not normally considered appropriate for a project. This might be defined as a job or service that a Scout may provide as part of his or her daily life, or a routine maintenance job normally done by the beneficiary (for example, picking the weeds on the football field at a school). But the real test has to do with scale and impact. If "routine labor" is conducted on so large a scale it requires planning, development, and leadership, it may have sufficient impact.

9.0.2.12 Addressing Common Misconceptions

1. No unit, district, council, or individual is allowed to place any requirement or other standard on the number of hours spent on a project. Scouting America collects data about time worked on Eagle Scout service projects only because it points to a level of excellence in achieving the Scouting America aim related to citizenship.
2. Eagle Scout service projects are individual matters. No more than one candidate may receive credit for working on the same project.
3. There is no requirement a project must have lasting value.
4. Any plans completed after the project proposal has been approved by the council or district are between the Scout and the beneficiary. The role of beneficiaries in reviewing plans is explained in the service project beneficiary information sheet, "Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project," that is posted on the Advancement Resources page at www.scouting.org/advancement, and is included in the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*.

9.0.2.13 Evaluating the Project After Completion

Eagle Scout service projects must be evaluated primarily on impact—the extent of benefit to the religious institution, school, or community, and on the leadership provided by the candidate. There must also be evidence of planning and development. This is not only part of the requirement, but relates to practicing our motto to "Be Prepared." *However,* in determining if a project meets requirement 5, reviewers must not require more planning and development than necessary to execute the project. These elements must not overshadow the project itself, as long as the effort was well led, and resulted in an otherwise worthy outcome acceptable to the beneficiary.

There may be instances where, upon its completion, the unit leader or project beneficiary chooses not to approve a project. One or the other may determine, for example, that modifications were so significant that the extent of service or the impact of the project were insufficient to warrant approval. The candidate may be requested to do more work or even start over with another project. The candidate may or may not choose to meet these requests. If the candidate believes the project, as completed, meets the intent of requirement 5, then it is appropriate to complete and submit the Eagle Scout Rank Application along with the project workbook without final approval. If requested, the Scout must be granted a board of review.

If it is thought a unit board may not provide a fair hearing, a board of review under disputed circumstances may be initiated. (See "Initiating Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances," 8.0.3.2.) The risk in this approach—that the board may decide negatively—should be discussed with the Scout. But at the same time, the fact the Scout is so convinced may point to a need to reevaluate what was done. Perhaps, despite the lack of final approval, the project did indeed meet the requirement.

From time to time, beneficiaries unfamiliar with the Eagle Scout service project process may decline to approve a completed project even though it was helpful and had a positive impact. For example, there have been situations in which beneficiaries sought to require last-minute additions before signing off, and others where new management had different ideas about what should have been done. In these cases it is appropriate for the Scout to move forward without the final approval, and for the board of review to understand that the requirement has been met, regardless.

At the board of review, if an approved proposal and any subsequent effort represents planning and development that was adequate to the project, and the project was well led and carried out to the satisfaction of the unit leader and project beneficiary, only in a very rare case would rejection result. It would have to be clearly established that Eagle Scout requirement 5—*as written*—was not completed. Under no circumstances will project approval be withheld for reasons that have nothing to do with the project.

9.0.2.14 Risk Management and Eagle Scout Service Projects

All Eagle Scout service projects constitute official Scouting activity and thus are subject to Scouting America policies and procedures. Projects are considered part of a unit's program and are treated as such with regard to policies, procedures, and requirements regarding Youth Protection, two-deep leadership, etc.

Unit leadership should be aware of project plans and schedules. The health and safety of those working on Eagle projects must be integrated into project execution. Since an Eagle Scout service project is a unit activity, unit adult leadership has the same responsibility to assure safety in conducting a project as with any other unit activity. The unit leader or unit committee should reject proposals for inherently unsafe projects. The candidate should plan for safe execution, but it must be understood that minors cannot and must not be held responsible for

safety concerns. As with any Scouting activity, the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and all current Scouting America safety policies apply. See www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies for current resources.

See "Service Projects," 4.2.3.3, for general guidelines on service project safety requirements and for information about related documents from the national Safe Scouting Support Committee.

9.0.2.15 Insurance and Eagle Scout Service Projects

Scouting America's General Liability Policy provides general liability insurance coverage for official Scouting activities. Registered adult leaders are provided primary coverage. Unregistered adults participating in a Scouting activity are provided coverage in excess of their personal insurance.

Every council has the opportunity to participate in the Scouting America Accident and Sickness insurance program. It provides some insurance for medical and dental bills arising from Scouting activities. If councils do not purchase this, units may contract for it. In some cases chartered organizations might provide insurance, but this must not be assumed. Most of these programs provide only secondary coverage and are limited to registered youth and adults and those interested in becoming members.

9.0.2.16 Eagle Scout Service Projects and Messengers of Peace

Any Scout or Scouter who participates in a service project—Eagle Scout, Summit, and Quartermaster service projects included—that has a significant impact on the community in any one of the following three dimensions may qualify as a "Messengers of Peace" and wear the Messengers of Peace ring patch available from Scout shops.

1. The personal dimension: harmony, justice, and equality
2. The community dimension: peace as opposed to hostility or violent conflict
3. Relationships between humankind and its environment: security, social and economic welfare, and relationship with the environment

Since Eagle Scout service projects are conducted for religious institutions, schools, or the community—and would thus directly or indirectly impact one of the three dimensions—almost all Eagle projects would certainly qualify as Messengers of Peace projects.

For more information about Messengers of Peace, please visit www.scouting.org/messengersofpeace.

9.0.3.0 About Eagle Palms

Scouts or qualified Venturers and Sea Scouts may earn Palms after they have achieved the Eagle Scout rank. The requirements can be found at www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/. All of the requirements, other than the Eagle Board of Review, must be completed before age 18 unless a Scout has been granted an extension to work on Eagle Scout rank. See topics 9.0.4.0, 9.0.4.1 and 9.0.4.2. Merit badges earned at any time since becoming a registered Scouts BSA member, or qualified Venturer, or Sea Scout, may be used. Palms are not considered ranks, but rather degrees of the Eagle Scout rank.

9.0.4.0 Time Extensions

If a Scout foresees that due to no fault or choice of his or her own, it will be impossible to complete the Eagle Scout rank requirements before age 18, they may apply for a limited time extension. See "Process for Requesting and Reviewing a Time Extension," 9.0.4.1. The application must be sufficiently detailed that it can be reviewed without any other information. These should be granted very rarely and are reserved only for Life Scouts working on Eagle. Under no circumstances are time extensions available to Scouts who have not earned the rank of Life Scout, thus only Life Scouts are eligible to apply. All time extensions expire on the date of the Scout's Eagle board of review or the approved extension expiration date, whichever comes first. No further youth advancement or awards may be earned thereafter. **When a time extension is requested, the Scout should continue working on the requirements until a final decision is delivered.** In most cases, unless the National Council has issued other direction, a request must meet the three tests listed below to be approved.

Sea Scouts or Venturers who foresee that due to no fault or choice of their own, it will be impossible to complete the Quartermaster or Summit requirements before age 21, must use the same tests, process, and form described in topics 9.0.4.0, 9.0.4.1, and 9.0.4.2 to request a limited time extension. In these topics, for Quartermaster or Summit extensions, age 21 or 21st birthday are used in place of age 18 or 18th birthday, and references to Eagle are to be substituted with Quartermaster or Summit.

Test 1 The member joined or rejoined (or became active again after a period of inactivity or became refocused on advancement after a period of inattention) in time to complete all requirements before turning 18.

Test 2 Through no fault or choice of the Scout, an unforeseen circumstance or life-changing event with severe consequences has come to exist that now precludes completion of the requirements before the deadline. Examples might include, but are not limited to, a hospital stay, disabling injury, significant personal or family incident or issue, natural disaster, severe unseasonable weather, or the actions of others (see below, "Misinformation from adults in positions of authority"). If the circumstance is health-related, it should have been unforeseen and of recent onset, or a complication or intensification of an ongoing issue.

One consideration is whether the situation or condition prevented the Scout from attending school for a substantial amount of time. For example, an accumulation of hospital stays or quarantine periods for cancer treatment could qualify, even though any one short-term stay would not.

Test 3 The circumstance is beyond the control of the Scout, could not have been anticipated or planned for, and was not or cannot be resolved in time to complete the requirements.

A time extension is rarely the best remedy for a Scout with a special need or disability. Nearly all barriers to advancement can be overcome by applying routine accommodations, or obtaining permission for modifications of rank requirements and alternative merit badges as explained in Section 10. For disabilities that significantly slow progress in general, registration beyond the age of eligibility (RBAE) is the better solution, as it allows work to continue on any rank and not just Eagle Scout rank.

Misinformation from adults in positions of authority. Since we teach obedience as one of the Scout Laws, it follows that guidance and direction from an adult leader carries significant weight. Adults who are misinformed about advancement requirements and timing have, at times, created circumstances that necessitated extensions. Councils must consider the circumstances of each case. If it can be established that a Scout followed incorrect guidance and direction in good faith, then Test 2—as it relates to the actions of others—may be considered fulfilled, even though the Scout has a handbook and should have read it.

Applying the three tests. Whether a request for extension meets the three tests above requires the exercise of carefully considered and debated judgement. If the council advancement committee is unsure, the National Council encourages local councils to find in favor of the Scout, or reach out to the National Program Committee or its designee at Advancement.Team@scouting.org for advice.

Scouts with disabilities—extension or registration beyond the age of eligibility. In most cases, Scouts are expected to overcome life's ordinary trials. To justify an extension, an extraordinary and unexpected circumstance is required. Known special needs or disabilities that the Scout has coped with for many years should not suddenly become an issue shortly before the Scout's 18th birthday. However, if the Scout's disabilities are not severe enough or permanent enough to qualify for registration beyond the age of eligibility (described in Section 10, "Advancement for Members With Special Needs"), council advancement committees might grant extensions to Scouts with significant disabilities that essentially preclude advancement within the time frame allowed. There is no restriction on the type, nature, or combination of disabilities that the council advancement committee may consider. Scouts registered beyond the age of eligibility do not need to request an extension.

9.0.4.1 Process for Requesting and Reviewing a Time Extension

Local councils have the authority to grant limited extensions of time to complete Eagle requirements. These are available only to youth who qualify according to the three tests listed in "Time Extensions," 9.0.4.0. A Scout, his or her parent or guardian, unit leader, or members of the unit committee may file such requests. The council advancement committee must research and evaluate requests and recommend decisions to the Scout executive.

Councils have the authority to grant Scouts only enough time to complete the requirements, but not more than a total of six months after the 18th birthday. Under most circumstances, however, three to four months has proven sufficient. If a council denies a request or the Scout needs more than six months, an appeal process is discussed in "Appealing a Time Extension Denial," 9.0.4.2.

1. **Requesting an extension.** Requests for time extensions must be submitted to a council's service center in person, electronically, or by mail to the attention of the staff advisor for advancement or other council designated advancement administrator. The form, "Request for Extension of Time" (see Appendix, 11.2.0.0) may be used for this purpose. Since

Definition of a month: *As stated on page 2 of the* Guide to Advancement*, a month is a month regardless how many days it has. It is not defined as 30 days or four weeks. For example, the maximum extension of six months means the time period beginning on the Scout's 18th birthday up to the corresponding day six months later, for example, February 2 up to and including August 1, or August 31 up to and including February 28 (or 29 if leap year) are examples of six-month periods. In essence, the extension expiration date acts like a pseudo 18th birthday, prior to which all requirements must be fulfilled. Six months does not mean 180 days.*

council-granted extensions expire no more than six months after the Scout's 18th birthday, it is wise to submit requests before a Scout turns 18. For the same reason, Scouts should be encouraged to continue work on advancement throughout the extension request process.

Requests must (a) explain why or how the circumstances necessitate an extension, (b) indicate the number of months believed to be necessary to complete the requirements, (c) explain how that period of time was determined, and (d) include documentation of the circumstances. (See "Time Extensions," 9.0.4.0.) If a cause is health related, a statement from a health professional must be provided. All documentation and supporting evidence submitted must be dated and include the name of the author.

2. **The council's role in evaluating extension requests.** Time is of the essence. Members of the council advancement committee are expected to thoroughly review and discuss the case, vote on it, and provide a recommendation to the Scout executive as quickly as possible. Since Scouts should not be required to wait more than four weeks for a decision, it may be necessary to give extension requests special attention outside a council's regular meeting schedule.

   A request for extension must be investigated by selected adults who are registered and familiar with the advancement program. These investigators should interview as many people with knowledge of the case as possible and obtain detailed written statements from them or prepare written summaries of what was said. A thorough review would suggest the Scout must be included in this process. This effort must also include any adults who committed errors or provided misinformation and who are reasonably available. The results of the investigation are then reported to the council advancement committee to deliberate and vote on a recommendation to the Scout executive. All documentation, statements, notes, and any other information collected should be retained in the event of a denial and subsequent appeal. See item #5 below, "In the event of denial."

3. **The Scout executive's role.** If after receiving the recommendation of the council advancement committee, the Scout executive approves an extension, a letter is sent to the Scout, his or her parent or guardian, the unit leader, and the petitioner who initially submitted the request. A copy of the letter is placed in the council's unit file.

   The letter must include the following: (a) the date the extension expires—no later than six months after the 18th birthday (see above, "Definition of a month"), (b) a statement that the expiration date becomes the Scout's pseudo 18th birthday where the time constraints regarding boards of review apply, (c) a statement explaining that the time extension expires on the date of the Scout's Eagle board of review or the approved expiration date, whichever comes first, (d) a statement that the Scout must complete the requirements prior to that expiration date, and (e) a requirement that a copy of this letter must be attached to the Eagle Scout application when it is submitted to the council.

   The board of review and submission of the Eagle Scout application and other paperwork may take place after the expiration date. The rank application is entered into the Scouting America system according to the registrar's manual.

   In the event the Scout executive disagrees with the council advancement committee's recommendation—whether about approval, the length of an extension, or denial—the Scout executive is encouraged to consult with the committee chair or designee. It may be that the disagreement stems from a misunderstanding of advancement policies and procedures or that the recommendation requires more supporting evidence. If agreement is not reached, the Scout executive's decision stands.

4. **Extensions of more than six months.** A six-month extension allows for completion of time-oriented requirements such as position of responsibility, active participation, and those found in some required merit badges. Historically, less than five percent of Scouts have needed more than six months. In the unlikely event a Scout requires more than six months, the council is not permitted to approve the request. The Scout can then appeal to the National Council, as described in Section 9.0.4.2.

5. **In the event of denial.** If a Scout is denied an extension, a letter is prepared and sent to the Scout,

his or her parent or guardian, the unit leader, and the petitioner who initially submitted the request. The letter must explain the reason for the decision and how to appeal it to the National Council. See "Appealing a Time Extension Denial," 9.0.4.2. A copy of the letter is placed in the council's unit file. Only the Scout or their parent or guardian may initiate extension denial appeals. Appeals are only available to Life Scouts working on Eagle requirements. **Scouts who do not earn the rank of Life prior to their 18th birthday are not eligible for time extensions. There are no exceptions to this policy.**

The three tests a council is to apply in evaluating a request for an extension are covered in the Guide to Advancement, 9.0.4.0. The process for investigating and approving or denying them are discussed in 9.0.4.1.

9.0.4.2 Appealing a Time Extension Denial

Only the Scout or his or her parent or guardian may appeal the denial of a request for an extension of time to earn the Eagle, Quartermaster, or Summit rank. An appeal may be initiated by notifying the local council staff advisor for advancement or other council designated advancement administrator via letter or email. The council advancement committee is then obligated to assist and coordinate the appeal effort.

There are two reasons for a council to deny an extension request: (1) if it cannot be established that an extension is warranted according to the three tests covered in 9.0.4.0, or (2) if a Scout who meets the three tests requires more than six months. Note that council authority is limited to six months because it has been established that only rarely do circumstances warrant a longer extension.

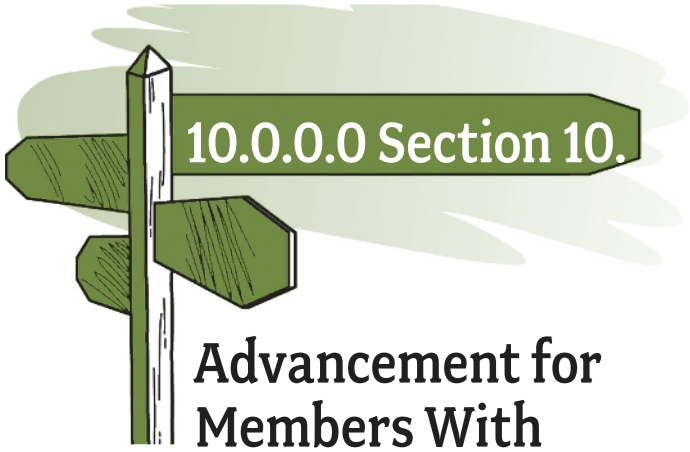
The council's role. Members of the council advancement committee, in conjunction with the Scout executive, complete the form, "Appeal of Extension Request Denial" (see Appendix, 11.2.1.0). The form calls for the following:

- ❑ A statement from the Scout or their parent or guardian explaining why the council's decision should be reversed and the extension granted.
- ❑ Copy of fully completed form "Request for Extension of Time." See *Guide to Advancement*, Appendix, 11.2.0.0 (the nationally recommended form for initiating an extension request). A council's own extension request form may be submitted instead, as long as it includes the same information.
- ❑ An update on any requirements yet to be completed if additional work on advancement is not reflected on the above form.
- ❑ Copies of all statements, interview notes, and any other information collected throughout the extension request and review process, either from the Scout or from others who have knowledge of the case.
- ❑ Statement explaining the council's reason for denial.
- ❑ Copy of denial letter sent to Scout.
- ❑ Printout of the current Scouting America Person Listing for the Scout.

Timing. Timing is critical. Councils should submit appeals to the National Council within two weeks of receiving notification of the appeal. Scouts should not be expected to wait for long periods of time while council advancement administrators support the appeal effort.

Signing, formatting and submitting appeal to the National Council. The Scout executive or designee must review the Scout's case along with the form, "Appeal of Extension Request Denial," and any accompanying documentation. The Scout executive then signs the form, either on paper or digitally, certifying it is complete and correct according to what is known about the case. This certification may be provided electronically as long as it can be verified that it is the Scout executive who is sending it.

The entire appeal packet must be combined into one PDF document and emailed to advancement.team@scouting.org.



Advancement for Members With Special Needs

Youth and adults with special needs or disabilities are welcome in Scouting America. As outlined in this section, there are various ways to facilitate advancement for them. These youth, and the adults that participate like youth, are usually members of mainstream units and participate alongside all the other youth. While there are special-purpose units that serve members with special needs or disabilities and these can be beneficial in some situations, no one is required to join one.

When knowledgeable parents, guardians, or volunteers are able to provide assistance and oversight, almost anyone can be a member. While leaders should be enthusiastic about helping those with special needs, they should also recognize demands will be placed on their patience, understanding, and skill in working on advancement.

10.1.0.0 Advancement Flexibility Allowed

Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturers, or Sea Scouts who have disabilities may qualify for *limited flexibility* in advancement. Accommodations possible in each program are outlined below. It does not necessarily matter if a youth is approved to be registered beyond the age of eligibility. Experience tells us those members whose parents or guardians are involved, or at least regularly consulted, progress the farthest. Some units have also followed the example set by Individualized Education Plans, and have established "individual Scout advancement plans" with the same benefits.

A sample ISAP, Individual Scout Advancement Plan, No. 512-936, found in the appendix and at www.scouting.org/advancement, may prove helpful. The council advancement committee should be consulted if there are concerns about accommodations, but the table below may be helpful.

	ACCOMMODATION	MODIFICATION (rare)
Definition	Change HOW Scouts are learning	Change WHAT Scouts are learning
Example	Offer extra time; take swim test at quieter time of day; allow assistive devices (glasses, hearing aids, augmentative and alternative communication devices, etc.)	Earn Pioneering merit badge instead of Camping merit badge
Who Can Approve	Unit-level decision, by Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, merit badge counselor	Council Advancement Committee
Documentation Required	None	Individual Scout Advancement Plan (rank) and/or Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges Application

10.1.1.0 Advancement for Cub Scouts With Special Needs

Advancement is so flexible that, with guidance, most Cub Scouts with disabilities can complete requirements as is. The standard is, "Has the Cub Scout done his or her best?" It may take Cub Scouts with disabilities longer to attempt requirements and demonstrate their best, but the accomplishments will be rewarding to all involved.

There could be times, however, when a Cub Scout's "best" isn't enough even to get a start. For example, a youth in a wheelchair cannot pass requirements calling for walking or running. In these cases, Cubmasters and pack committees may jointly determine appropriate substitutions that are consistent with the Cub Scout doing his or her best. For example, elective requirements could take the place of those required. Or in consultation with a parent or guardian, other minor adjustments representing similar challenges could be made. Decision-making authority rests at the pack (unit) level, as they are the ones most familiar with the situation.

10.1.2.0 Advancement in Scouts BSA for Scouts With Special Needs

Members must meet current advancement requirements as written for merit badges, all ranks, and Eagle Palms—no more and no less—and they are to do exactly what is stated. If it says, "Show or demonstrate," that is what they must do; just "telling" isn't enough. The same holds for words and phrases such as "make," "list," "in the field," "collect," "identify," and "label," and so on. However, words and phrases such as "list," "report," and "make a presentation" do not specify that the product has to be in a particular format—for example handwritten, typed, a verbal address, memorized, or through the use of photographs. Requirements have been carefully constructed so as not to unnecessarily restrict the format or method for completing a requirement. The convenience, preferences, or traditions of the person assessing the work must not add to the requirement. For example, a task that is usually done outdoors or on a campout does not necessarily have to be, unless specified in the requirement.

It is important to remember that the advancement program is meant to challenge our members. Even Scouts with special needs and disabilities need to learn from striving for something. However, not all of them will achieve everything they might want to—whether or not they have a disability.

For boards of review for Scouts with special needs, the board members should be informed ahead of time about the special circumstances and needs. It may be helpful to have the unit leader and or parent or guardian present at or before the review, to answer questions and provide background on challenges and how the Scout copes with them. Parents or guardians may be present at the meeting—especially if they are able to help interpret and communicate what the Scout is saying. Families and unit leaders are allowed to attend a board of review, but not required, and their attendance will change the experience for the Scout. The advantage of their attendance must outweigh the disadvantages for the Scout.

10.1.2.1 Open-Minded Flexibility

Allowances for Scouts BSA members are made in three ways. The simplest is an open-minded reading of the requirement, after learning about the Scout and how the special need or disability affects that Scout. If the requirement can be met as written, but in an unconventional or creative way, that is sufficient.

10.1.2.2 Accommodations

The next level of allowance for special needs and disabilities is an "accommodation." An accommodation changes how the requirement is completed without changing the requirement itself. An accommodation is authorized at the unit level and does not require supplemental documentation.

For example, if a Scout uses a piece of equipment in regular life to accomplish tasks, the Scout is allowed to use the same equipment while performing the requirement. Not only does this include physical devices like glasses, braces, crutches, and wheelchairs, it also includes text-to-voice readers for low vision/dyslexia/nonverbal, voice-to-text apps for hard of hearing/dysgraphia, hearing aids, and many other support devices. How a Scout "walks." "talks" and performs other tasks in their life should be the way that a Scout completes a merit badge.

Equipment designed for organized adaptive sports competitions should be permitted for Scouts that meet the competitive criteria for the adaptive sport. An example of this would be a mouth-operated release device for archery, an audio/laser sighting device for blind shooting, or a special prosthetic for running.

Accommodations can also be changes in when, where, or how the task takes place. An activity can be moved from outdoors to indoors or vice versa. Better lighting or a quieter workspace can be allowed. Simply allowing work at a slower pace or a task to be completed in multiple sessions could make the difference, and is allowed unless expressly prohibited in the requirement.

10.1.2.3 Modifications

A "modification" is a change in the requirement itself or the substitution of one requirement task for another.

A modification is appropriate when a disability makes it impossible or nearly impossible to complete a requirement. Modifications are not permitted at the unit level and require additional approvals in advance.

Modifications require the approval of the council advancement committee. The primary interest should be the best interests of the Scout, understanding that a Scout needs a challenge, but the challenge must be reasonable under the unique circumstances of that Scout. The committee does not need to be a gatekeeper, and should keep in mind that these situations are unique, so no precedent will be set with these decisions.

Ideally, the council advancement committee will include members with knowledge or experience working with people with special needs or disabilities , or will work with a council Special Needs committee that does.

The application process for modifications requires a health professional with qualifications related to that disability to explain in writing what disability exists and that a Scout requires a modification. A council advancement committee without appropriate expertise should not supersede the assessment of that professional. It is reasonable to ask for clarification when a supporting document is not clear. (See chart in Section 10.1.1.0.)

10.1.2.4 Using Alternative Requirements

Requests for alternative requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks can be made using the information outlined below.

Alternatives requirements are not available for the Star, Life, and Eagle ranks. Scouts may request approval for alternative merit badges, but the other requirements for those three ranks must be fulfilled as written.

Some members may be unable to complete all the rank requirements for the Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks as a result of a disability that is permanent or is expected to last for longer than two years. Scouts who are unable to complete all the requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class rank may, with their parent or guardian, and also the unit leader or a member of the troop committee, submit a request to the council advancement committee to complete alternative requirements. Unless a Scout has been approved to register beyond the age of eligibility, alternative requirements must be completed by the Scout's 18th birthday. This avenue is also available to youth with longer-term medical conditions (such as those related to a severe injury) who want to continue advancing during treatment and recovery.

An alternative requirement can take two forms. It can be a modified version of the original requirement, such as reducing the distance of a hike or swim, allowing a flotation aide, or allowing the Scout to receive prompts for a task that requires memorization. Or, it can be a complete substitution of a task that it is possible for the Scout to do in place of one that is impossible.

No Scout can be asked to do the impossible. But an alternative requirement needs to provide a similar learning experience to the original and a similar level of challenge to what any non-disabled Scout would experience.

The outcomes of the Scouting experience should be fun and educational, and not just relate to completing rank requirements that might place unrealistic expectations on a member who has special needs.

10.1.2.5 How to Apply for Alternative Rank Requirements

The unit leader or a troop committee member submits to the council advancement committee a written request for alternative requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class ranks. Requests can be made at more than one point in the Scout's career to allow for the Scout to make progress, while still allowing for future growth or changes in the disability to come to light.

The request must identify the requirement(s) that the Scout cannot do and suggest alternatives for those requirement(s). The request needs to explain how they know the Scout cannot do the requirement. In some cases that will be obvious, but often it is not obvious until the Scout has attempted the requirement. If an attempt was made, to the best of the Scout's ability, the request should provide a description of what transpired. The request should explain why growth in size, strength, intellectual or social ability as the Scout gets older will not enable the Scout to complete the requirement within two years.

Scouts regularly surprise their adult leaders and parents be being able to do more than adults expected. That is why we prefer to see a good faith attempt made at a requirement before approving an alternative requirement.

The request must be accompanied by supporting letters from the unit leader, a parent or guardian, and the Scout (if possible), as well as a written statement from a health professional with qualifications related to the disability.

This may be, for example, a physician, neurologist, psychiatrist, psychologist, etc., or when appropriate, an

SWIM TEST. *It is permissible to modify the conditions of the beginner and swimmer level swim tests for advancement purposes only. Passing a modified version of the test does NOT qualify the Scout to use a higher level swim area.*

educational administrator in special education. Statements must describe the disability; cover the Scout's capabilities, limitations, and prognosis; and outline what requirements cannot be completed. Additional information such as Individualized Education Plans provided to parents by schools, and various treatment summaries and reports, may help the council advancement committee make an informed decision.

Normally, it is expected that youth with only moderate learning disabilities, or such disorders as ADD or ADHD can—albeit more slowly—complete standard requirements.

The council advancement committee reviews the request. To make the best determination, the committee may want to interview the Scout, the Scout's parent(s) or guardian(s), and the unit leader. The committee's decision is then recorded and delivered to the Scout and the unit leader. The committee is not restricted to approving or disapproving the application as presented. It may be in the best interest of the Scout to approve in part, approve with some changes, or to set a future date to reconsider the decision so the Scout has time to grow and mature before making a final decision. It is in everyone's best interest to process and decide on applications promptly. If a family is asked to wait, they need to be told how long it will be before the application can be reconsidered.

After the committee's decision has been recorded and delivered, any supporting private information should be returned to its source—the parent or guardian, or institution that provided it. Should there be questions about its disposition, then the supporting private information should be destroyed.

Note that topics 10.1.2.4 and 10.1.2.5 do not apply to merit badge requirements. See topic 10.1.2.6 to learn about earning alternative merit badges to those required for Eagle.

10.1.2.6 Alternative Merit Badges for Eagle Scout Rank

Individual requirements within a merit badges may not be modified or substituted. Open-minded flexibility (topic 10.1.2.1) and accommodations (topic 10.1.2.2) are allowed for individual requirements. When a youth with special needs cannot complete an Eagle-required merit badge, the youth may request approval for an alternative badge that they can complete. This is allowable on the basis of substituting one merit badge with a similar learning experience and level of challenge for another.

Scouts with special needs must complete all merit badge requirements as written. No substitutions for individual requirements are allowed.

A Scout must do as much as possible on an Eagle-required merit badge before an alternative is requested. This is because Eagle-required merit badges teach crucial life skills, and all Scouts should achieve as much as they can in each of these areas – and may surprise their leaders by being able to accomplish more than expected.

Merit badges are substituted "whole cloth"—one (or more) for one, but individual requirements cannot be modified. The substitute must offer a similar learning experience, challenge, and level of difficulty, taking into consideration how much was achieved on the Eagle-required merit badge. The alternate merit badge can be one they have started, but not one that they have completed.

An Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges (www.scouting.org/advancement), can be submitted after a Scout has earned First Class. The application must identify the merit badge(s) that the Scout cannot do and suggest an alternative merit badge(s) for those the Scout cannot do.

Requests can be made at multiple points in the Scout's career to allow the Scout to make progress, while allowing for future growth or changes in the disability to come to light. The member does not need to be registered beyond the age of eligibility.

Alternative merit badges must be completed by the 18th birthday, unless the member is registered beyond the age of eligibility (see "Registering Qualified Members Beyond Age of Eligibility," 10.2.0.0). A member that is registered beyond the age of eligibility may apply for alternative merit badges like any other member.

The completed application form is sent first to the district advancement committee and is then routed to the council advancement committee. It must be accompanied by supporting letters from the unit leader, a parent or guardian, and the Scout (if possible), as well as a written statement from a health professional with qualifications related to the nature of the disability. This may be, for example, a physician, neurologist, psychiatrist, psychologist, etc., or when appropriate, an educational administrator in special education. Statements must describe the disability and cover the Scout's capabilities, limitations, and prognosis. The statements need to explain how it is known that the Scout cannot complete the merit badge requirements. In some cases that will be obvious, but in many instances it is not obvious until the Scout has attempted the requirement. If an attempt was made, the statements should provide a description of what transpired, and how much the Scout was able to accomplish. The statements should explain why growth

in size, strength, intellectual or social ability as the Scout gets older will not enable the Scout to complete the requirement within two years. Additional information such as Individualized Education Plans provided to parents by schools, and various treatment summaries and reports, may help an advancement committee make an informed decision.

The council advancement committee reviews the application, using the expertise of professionals involved with youth who have disabilities. To make a fair determination, the committee may want to interview the Scout, the Scout's parent(s) or guardian(s), and the unit leader. The committee's decision should be recorded and delivered to the Scout and the unit leader. Once this is done, the Scout may work or continue with a merit badge counselor on the approved alternative merit badges. These must not be merit badges previously earned.

After the committee's decision has been recorded and delivered, any supporting private information should be returned to its source—the parent or guardian, or institution that provided it. Should there be questions about its disposition, then the supporting private information should be destroyed.

When applying for the Eagle Scout rank, a candidate with disabilities must attach the approved Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges to the Eagle Scout Rank Application. The form can be found at www.scouting.org/forms. It is important to remember that requirements for merit badges cannot be changed in any way, and all requirements must be completed as written.

10.1.2.7 Approval for Special Needs Eagle Candidates Over Age 18

Individuals age 18 and older, properly approved by the council executive board or designated committee to register beyond the age of eligibility, may apply for the Eagle Scout rank. Since they are considered youth members for as long as they are so registered, they do not need a time extension; nor is special permission needed for an Eagle Scout board of review that is held more than 24 months after the 18th birthday. A letter from the council advancement committee or Scout executive, indicating the member is 18 or older and registered beyond the age of eligibility, must accompany the Eagle Scout Rank Application. If the candidate is not so registered, but should be, then the procedures under "Registering Qualified Members Beyond Age of Eligibility," 10.2.0.0, must be followed. Work completed during any gap in registration may be credited, with council approval.

Eagle Scout candidates who have disabilities but who do not qualify for registration beyond the age of eligibility must complete all requirements before the 18th birthday. In rare cases, however, they may qualify for an extension of time. See "Time Extensions," 9.0.4.0.

10.1.3.0 Advancement for Venturers and Sea Scouts With Special Needs

With a parent or guardian, Venturer-age or Sea Scout–age youth with disabilities must consider the programs presented by individual crews or ships. The activities involved must fit within the capabilities of the prospective member. Discussions with crew Advisors or ship Skippers can reveal what is possible and what is not. Generally, crews may be more able to offer flexibility for members with disabilities than ships. For example, safety concerns onboard a vessel may present barriers difficult or impossible to overcome.

10.1.3.1 Working Toward Scouts BSA Advancement

Qualified Venturers and Sea Scouts with disabilities, who are working on Star, Life, or Eagle ranks or Eagle Palms, must meet the same requirements and follow the same procedures as outlined for Scouts BSA. See especially "Alternative Merit Badges for Eagle Scout Rank," 10.1.2.6.

10.1.3.2 Working Toward Venturing Ranks

The candidate must meet all current rank requirements. There are no substitutions or alternatives permitted except those specifically stated in current requirements, or as outlined below or set forth in official literature, or where crew Advisors have been provided flexibility with certain ranks. The Venturer is expected to meet requirements as stated—no more and no less. If it says, "Show or demonstrate," for example, that is what he or she must do; just telling about it isn't enough. The same holds true for such words or phrases as "make," "list," "in the field," "collect, identify, and label," and so on. However, words and phrases such as "list," "report," and "make a presentation," do not specify that the product has to be handwritten, typed, a verbal address, memorized, or through the use of photographs. Requirements have been carefully constructed so as not to unnecessarily restrict the format or method for completing a requirement. The convenience, preferences, or traditions of the person assessing the work must not add to the requirement. For example, a task that is usually done outdoors or on a campout does not necessarily have to be, unless specified in the requirement.

Requests for alternative requirements for Venturing, Discovery, Pathfinder, and Summit ranks, and the various Venturing awards may be made, however, using the same qualifications and process outlined under "How to Apply for Alternative Requirements," 10.1.2.5. As with alternative requirements for Scout through First Class ranks, we must be dealing with disabilities expected to last more than two years or beyond age 21. Council advancement committee approval for alternative requirements is required in the same way, but to approve those for Venturing, the committee must involve an adult with thorough knowledge

of Venturing advancement and awards. Unless a Venturer has been approved to register beyond the age of eligibility, alternative requirements must be completed by the 21st birthday.

10.1.3.3 Working Toward Sea Scout Ranks

All current Sea Scout rank requirements must actually be met by the candidate. There are no substitutions or alternatives permitted except those specifically stated in current requirements, or as outlined below or otherwise set forth in official literature. The Sea Scout is expected to meet the requirements as stated—no more and no less. If it says, "Show or demonstrate," for example, that is what he or she must do; just telling about it isn't enough. The same holds true for such words or phrases as "teach," "lead," "take command," and so on.

With the full cooperation of a ship committee and Skipper, it may be possible for some youth with disabilities to participate in Sea Scout advancement. The requirements are specific, not based on interchangeable merit badges, and they build from rank to rank. The prospective member, with parent or guardian, should review the requirements to determine whether advancement is feasible with reasonable flexibility. If ship leaders agree, then the same qualifications and process apply, as outlined under "How to Apply for Alternative Requirements," 10.1.2.5. As with alternative requirements for Scout through First Class, we must be dealing with disabilities expected to last more than two years or beyond age 21. Council advancement committee approval for alternative requirements is required in the same way, but to approve those for Sea Scouts the committee must involve an adult with thorough knowledge of Sea Scout advancement and rank requirements. Unless a Sea Scout has been approved to register beyond the age of eligibility, alternative requirements must be completed by the 21st birthday.

10.2.0.0 Registering Qualified Members Beyond Age of Eligibility (RBAE)

Youth members and adults who are disabled in a way that makes it very hard for them to learn or perform like most people their age may be considered for registration beyond the ages of eligibility: age 11 or older for a Cub Scout, 18 or older for a Scouts BSA member, or 21 or older as a Venturer or Sea Scout. Requests to extend registration beyond the age of eligibility for youth members and adults on the basis of developmental disability or cognitive impairment may be submitted at any time. Requests for youth members on the basis of severe physical challenges must be received before they reach the end of age eligibility for the program. For example, a request for a youth member to extend participation in the Scouts BSA program must be received before the youth reaches the 18th birthday.

Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility (RBAE) is intended to serve two distinct kinds of participants.

One group is adults with significant intellectual disabilities who can enjoy and benefit from a Scout experience. They can join Scouting at any age, even if they were never Scouts when they were young.

The other group is people that joined Scouting while they were age eligible, but for whom it has become apparent to their leaders and families that they would function better with people that are younger than themselves. They have delayed intellectual or social development that is profound enough that they can only advance at a much slower rate than most Scouts.

> *RBAE is not appropriate for most types of disabilities or for moderate levels of learning, developmental, or intellectual disability. Even with a disability, a young adult should go on to living like a young adult, rather than remaining a Scout indefinitely. An adult that is appropriate for RBAE usually has a guardian or conservator to help to manage finances, living arrangements, and medical care.*

RBAE is intended to allow a chronological adult to participate in the Scouting program as a youth member. It allows for continuing advancement, including the Eagle rank, but its benefits go beyond advancement.

Note that RBAE is intended as a permanent arrangement to allow ongoing participation as a youth member. This is NOT a "time extension," which is available in the rare case of an extreme unforeseen circumstance or life-changing event. Extensions of time are available only for the Eagle Scout, Summit, and Quartermaster ranks. Extensions have specific end dates and may or may not involve disabilities. See "Time Extensions," 9.0.4.0.

Adults with intellectual disabilities often see themselves as adults. Even when the person qualifies in every other respect for RBAE, before enrolling them as a youth participant through RBAE, consider whether the person would benefit more and fit better in Scouting as an adult volunteer who is supported by the other unit leaders. This arrangement often fits the social development of the person better.

Once a member is granted RBAE, that Scout participates in all the aspects of their level of Scouting program. An RBAE member is eligible for accommodations for advancement previously discussed.

More information and resources on working with Scouts who have special needs:
www.scouting.org/resources/disabilitiesawareness

10.2.0.1 Possible Criteria for Registering Beyond Age of Eligibility

Every case must be considered individually. If members are able to take advantage of the flexibility already built into Scouting advancement, and participate in essentially the same way as typical youth, then they must not be registered beyond the age of eligibility.

In general, a candidate eligible for RBAE functions socially and intellectually at a level that is clearly lower than their age level. There are any number of conditions that can result in a lower functional level and there are combinations of conditions that have a cumulative effect of a lower functional level. The necessary medications for a condition may also impact functioning. For these reasons, there is not a list of conditions that will or will not qualify someone for RBAE. It is the combined effect that matters.

An application for RBAE for an adult requires a letter from a health professional that confirms the person's intellectual abilities are less than the regular upper age limit of the applicable Scout program.

10.2.0.2 How to Register a Member Beyond Age of Eligibility

To register an individual who will participate as a youth member beyond the age of eligibility, the following documents must be assembled and submitted to the local council. The Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility, No. 512-935, found in the appendix and at www.scouting.org/advancement, should be submitted in addition to:

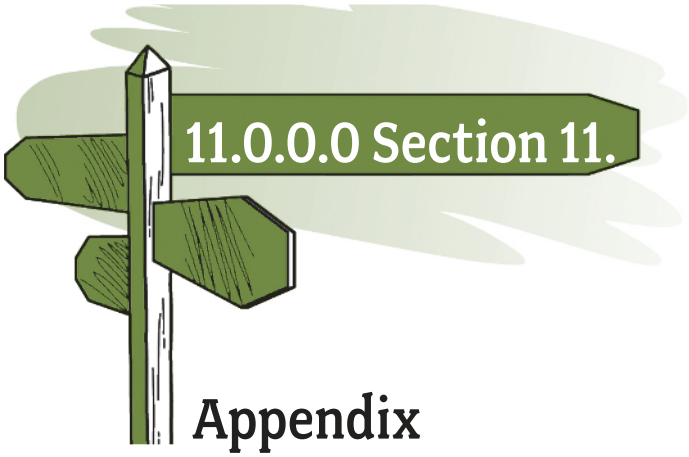
1. A letter from a parent or guardian describing the disability and its severity and permanence, and petitioning the council for approval of registration beyond the age of eligibility.
2. A completed youth application or proof of current membership for individuals under the age of 18, or a completed adult application for individuals 18 years of age and older.
3. A completed and signed Scouting America Annual Health and Medical Record form (parts A, B, and C), which is available online at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr.
4. A signed statement from a qualified health professional attesting to the nature of the disability, its severity, and permanent limitations connected with it. The health professional should have a specialty related to the disability.
5. A letter from the unit leader advocating and supporting the registration.
6. Other supporting documentation, such as pertinent parts of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), treatment summaries, etc., which are optional, but can make a difference in the decision.

If done well, and available from the parents, an Individualized Education Plan can give valuable information on how to work with an individual Scout and help the Scout achieve at the best of their abilities.

The council executive board must approve requests directly, or delegate action to a council operating committee or other group of responsible volunteers at the council level. This may or may not be the council advancement committee. Individual cases must be carefully deliberated. Consideration of registration beyond the age of eligibility must not be delegated to any district or to any single individual, either professional or volunteer. If granted, the Scout executive prepares an approval letter and sends it to the Scout's parent or guardian and unit leader or committee chair. A copy of the letter is retained in the unit's registration file for as long as the member remains registered. When entering the member's data, the council registrar follows procedures outlined in the most current edition of the National Council's *Registration Guidebook*.

Once the Scout executive's letter is prepared and filed, and the member is entered as registered beyond the age of eligibility, any supporting private information should be returned to its source—the parent or guardian, or the institution that provided it. Should there be questions about its disposition, then the supporting private information should be destroyed.

Members approved for registration beyond the age of eligibility may continue working on advancement, including the Eagle Scout rank and Eagle Palms, for as long as they continue to be so registered. The local council or the National Council, upon uncovering evidence that a youth was improperly registered beyond the age of eligibility or for whatever reason no longer meets the required level of severity, may make the decision to expire the registration. Registration of an adult as a youth member beyond the age of eligibility may also be expired if it is determined the registrant has progressed sufficiently to become registered as an adult.



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11.1.0.0 Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns

Use this form to report to your council advancement committee questionable processes or procedures discovered in merit badge counseling at group instruction events such as fairs, clinics, workshops, in camp settings, or by individual counselors. Note that reports are primarily for the information of the advancement committee as methods to improve the merit badge program are considered; however, committees may elect to follow up on specific cases.

Prior to submitting to your council advancement committee:

a. Consult the *Guide to Advancement*, section 7, with special attention to topics 7.0.4.6 through 7.0.4.12.
b. Gather information that may help the council advancement committee to understand what has happened. This could include items such as advertisements or brochures, schedules, any required workbooks or worksheets, or other documentation of the questionable processes or procedures.

Merit badge(s)_____ Instructor_____ Date(s) of instruction _____

Event title (if applicable) _____ Sponsor _____

Location_____ City _____ State_____

Method of merit badge instruction:

❑ Individual counselor instruction ❑ Summer camp ❑ Merit badge fair/clinic ❑ Outside organization ❑ Other: _____

Nature of concern (check all that apply):

❑ The merit badge counselor is not registered with the BSA.
❑ The merit badge counselor is not approved by the council advancement committee.
❑ The merit badge counselor did not ensure that each Scout actually and personally completed requirements.
❑ Requirements that could not have been completed were signed off.
❑ Requirements as written were changed or not used.
❑ The Scout was at the event but did not attend class.
❑ The Scout was signed off for a merit badge but did not attend the event.
❑ An outside organization, business, or individual generated a profit from presenting merit badges.
❑ An outside organization, business, or unaffiliated individual presented merit badge opportunities without permission from the BSA.
❑ An outside organization, business, or unaffiliated individual used the BSA brand, trade names, protected images, or logos without permission.
❑ Other:_____

Statement of facts and concerns. *Use additional sheets, if required. Include any comments on steps taken to resolve the issue.*

***Guide to Advancement* topic number related to questionable process or procedure (required):** (For example, 7.0.4.6, 7.0.4.7, etc.)

Contact person (should the council advancement committee need more information):

❑ Event coordinator ❑ Camp director ❑ Merit badge counselor ❑ Other: _____

Name _____

Phone_____ Email _____

Have you previously reported this event or counselor? ❑ No ❑ Yes; approximate date of previous report:_____

Submitted by: *(*Required)*

Name*_____ District_____ Unit _____ Phone*_____

Scouting position _____ Email* _____

The information presented is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature _____ Date _____

Council advancement committee notes **Received by** _____ **Date** _____

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The complete form is available for downloading at www.scouting.org/advancement.

11.2.0.0 Request for Extension of Time

Check if this application is for the ☐ Eagle Scout rank *OR* ☐ Summit rank *OR* ☐ Quartermaster rank

A Scout, parent or guardian, unit leader, or unit committee member may use this form to petition for an extension of time to earn the rank checked above. Before completion, please refer to the *Guide to Advancement,* "Time Extensions," 9.0.4.0, and "Process for Requesting and Reviewing a Time Extension," 9.0.4.1, and additional instructions on the reverse side. **Only Life Scouts are eligible to apply.**

Date: ***Please print legibly***

Candidate's full name _____ PID No. _____

18th birthday _____ Life board of review date _____

Current unit membership — choose one: TROOP ☐ CREW ☐ SHIP ☐ Unit No.

Petitioner _____ *[Scout, parent or guardian, unit leader, or unit committee member]*

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Preferred phone _____ Email _____

Name of unit leader _____ Preferred phone _____

Email

Requirements remaining to be completed and projected completion dates

☐ Position of responsibility — Date requirement will be completed _____

☐ Scoutmaster conference — Date conference will be held _____

☐ Service project — Projected completion date _____

Brief description* _____

**Attach description if additional space needed.*

☐ Merit badges — Attach list of merit badges yet to be completed with projected completion dates.

Provide brief summary of circumstances causing delay in advancement

Length of extension requested — *[the number of months beyond the 18th birthday]*

Length of extension: _____ months

How was the number of months determined? _____

Documentation to attach — *[Be sure to include names and dates in all attached documentation]*

- ○ Required: Letter that provides details on how each of the three tests listed in the *Guide to Advancement*, "Time Extensions," 9.0.4.0, have been fulfilled. [Include key dates and names of people involved.]
- ○ Statements from people who have knowledge of what caused the delay in advancement.
- ○ If cause is health related, a statement from a health professional.

Submit this form to your council service center in person, electronically, or by mail to the attention of the staff advisor for advancement or other council-designated advancement administrator.

Office Use Only

Council advancement committee recommendation: ☐ Approve ☐ Deny Signed _____ Date _____

Scout executive action: ☐ Approve ☐ Deny Signed _____ Date _____

The complete form is available for downloading at www.scouting.org/advancement.

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11.2.1.0 Appeal of Extension Request Denial

Date:_____ ***Please print legibly***

Should a Scout or his or her parent or guardian decide to appeal the denial of a request for an extension of time to earn the Eagle, Quartermaster, or Summit rank, the council is responsible for assisting and coordinating the effort. Members of the council advancement committee, in conjunction with the Scout executive, complete this form and then scan it with all the documentation described below into one PDF. This single PDF must be emailed to advancement.team@scouting.org.

Scout's full name_____ PID#_____

Council name_____ Council No._____

Familiarity with the *Guide to Advancement* topics on extensions is essential:
9.0.4.0 "Time Extensions"
9.0.4.1 "Process for Requesting and Reviewing a Time Extension" *[Pay special attention to items #4 and #5.]*
9.0.4.2 "Appealing a Time Extension Denial"

Attach the following documentation:

- A statement from the Scout or their parent or guardian explaining why the council's decision should be reversed and the extension granted.
- Copy of fully completed form "Request for Extension of Time." See *Guide to Advancement*, Appendix, 11.2.0.0. This is the nationally recommended form for initiating an extension request. A council's own extension request form may be submitted instead as long as it includes the same information.
- An update on any requirements yet to be completed if additional work on advancement is not reflected on the extension request form referenced in the previous checkbox.
- Copies of all statements, interview notes, and any other information collected throughout the extension request and review process, either from the Scout or from others who have knowledge of the case.
- Detailed statement explaining the council's reason for denial.
- Copy of denial letter sent to Scout.
- Printout of the current BSA Person Listing for the Scout.

Please provide names and contact information for the following:

Position or Relationship	Name	Preferred Phone	Email Address
CAC* chair			
CAC staff advisor			
Unit leader			
Parent or guardian			

**Council advancement committee*

Scout executive certification
I have reviewed this Scout's case for an appeal, along with this form and accompanying documentation. I certify that it is complete and correct according to what is known about the case.

Scout executive name: Signed: Date:

The complete form is available for downloading at www.scouting.org/advancement.

11.3.0.0 Belated Rank Application

Check if this application is for the ❑ Eagle Scout rank *OR* ❑ Summit rank *OR* ❑ Quartermaster rank

To avoid lengthy processing delays, please refer to the *Guide to Advancement*, "Eagle Scout Board of Review Beyond the 18th Birthday," topic 8.0.3.1, No. 3, before completing this form. It outlines required documentation and the process that must be followed.

Scout's name _____ Date of birth _____

Council name or headquarter city (current residence) _____ Council No. _____

Phone Nos. _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Unit type at the time Eagle requirements were completed (check one): ◯ TROOP ◯ CREW ◯ SHIP Unit No.: _____

Council name or headquarter city where requirements were completed _____ Year completed _____

Evidence of completion must be submitted to the National Scouts BSA Committee through the local council where the petitioner currently resides.

Please check any of the following items included with this application:

- ☐ Original rank application signed at the time work was completed
- ☐ Merit badge certificates or "blue cards"
- ☐ Photo of merit badge sash (because of availability on the internet, sashes are not accepted as *sole* proof of merit badges earned)
- ☐ Rank certificates or cards
- ☐ Membership card
- ☐ Signed and dated handbook or Progress Toward Ranks cards
- ☐ Unit or council records (unit rosters, advancement reports, etc.)
- ☐ Newspaper articles
- ☐ Program or photos from the court of honor
- ☐ Letters from former leaders or individuals substantiating the claim
- ☐ A statement from the petitioner and corroborating witness(es)
- ☐ A statement from the candidate explaining why the rank was not awarded
- ☐ Other evidence (describe): _____

All statements and letters must include the date and author's signature. Usually several pieces of evidence are necessary to make a compelling case.

Please provide an explanation for the rank having been earned but not awarded.

(Use this space or attach a summary. Please limit the summary to 150 words or less.)

The statements provided are true and correct.

Scout's signature _____ Date _____

I support and endorse this application but understand a well-documented and compelling case must be made in order for credentials to be granted.

Scout executive's signature _____ Date request submitted _____

Send this signed form and all required documents and evidence noted above to the *National Scouts BSA Committee*

Scan all documents into one PDF document and email to advancement.team@scouting.org

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The complete form is available for downloading at www.scouting.org/advancement.

11.4.0.0 Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility

Criteria

A disability, to qualify an individual for registration beyond the age of eligibility, must be permanent and so severe that it precludes advancement even at a rate significantly slower than considered typical. If ranks can be achieved through accommodations or modifications stated in official BSA literature, then the individual's disability probably does not rise to the level required to apply for this request. Additional information can be found in section 10 of the *Guide to Advancement.*

Parent or guardian: Fill in this page where appropriate and provide documentation as requested.

REQUEST for:

Member's name _____ Date of birth _____

Unit No. _____ District _____ Council _____

Objective: The request for registration beyond the age of eligibility, once approved, gives the individual unlimited time to participate in the Scouting program, if so desired.

Required process: All pertinent documents listed below must be attached to this form and labeled in the appropriate order. Submit the completed request form and attachments to your Scout executive or a designee.

Required Documents	Date Sent	Date Received	Date Reviewed
1. A letter from a parent or guardian describing the disability and its severity and permanence, and petitioning the council for approval of registration beyond the age of eligibility. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 1.)			
2. A completed youth application or proof of current membership for individuals under the age of 18, or a completed adult application for individuals 18 years of age and older. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 2.)			
3. A completed and signed BSA Annual Health and Medical Record form (parts A and C), online at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 3.)			
4. A signed statement from a qualified health professional attesting to the nature of the disability, its severity, and *permanent* limitations connected with it. For physical disabilities, this must be a licensed physician; for developmental or cognitive issues, a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, or as appropriate, a neurologist or other medical professional in a specialty related to the disability. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 4.)			
5. A letter from the unit leader advocating and supporting the registration. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 5.)			
6. Other supporting documentation, such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), treatment summaries, etc., which are optional but can make a difference in the decision. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 6.)			

The complete form is available for downloading at www.scouting.org/advancement.

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Individual Scout Advancement Plan

The approval of alternative requirements or merit badges should be discussed with the Scout, parent or guardian, and unit leader. An agreement is reached and forwarded to the council advancement committee for approval before starting to work on the specific task. The ISAP is the basic plan that can be used for all Scouts to document proposed and approved alternative advancement requirements. The ISAP is modified by addendum. Additional information can be found in the *Guide to Advancement*, section 10.

Individual Scout Advancement Plan for:

Member's name _____ Date of birth _____

Unit No. _____ District _____ Council _____

Statement of belief: Though it is true every Scout must have the overall ability to fulfill advancement requirements as written, members with a documented disability deserve the opportunity to utilize their remaining abilities to fulfill alternative requirements that represent the same challenge and essential outcome as those written. The only limitations for members with sufficient abilities to achieve approved alternative requirements should be their individual desire, focus, and perseverance.

Objective: Scouting literature provides the requirements, policies and procedures, and related supporting content. It cannot address each individual Scout's abilities, but it can help those involved to reach an understanding as to how certain goals can be met. The ISAP is a road map that Scouts, their parents or guardians, mentors, and other leaders can reference and update as necessary.

Methodology: Within reasonable guidelines, the ISAP will provide Scouts with the opportunity to achieve their personal goals and, through creative thinking and action, remove unnecessary barriers that may impede their advancement. This is done so as not to lessen the relative challenges of the Scouting experience and the primary goal of personal growth.

Expectations of performance: Scouts are expected to do their best to the limits of their abilities and resources.

I,_____ (Scout's name), promise that on my honor, I will do my best in working toward my personal advancement goals.

I am a (check one): ❑ Cub Scout ❑ Scouts BSA ❑ Venturer ❑ Sea Scout

Signed _____ Date _____

I,_____ (leader's name), _____ (title), promise to do my best to deliver upon the statement of belief, objective, and methodology expressed above.

Signed _____ Date _____

Scouting America

The complete form is available for downloading at www.scouting.org/advancement.

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