



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
HEART OF AMERICA COUNCIL

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Regarding the Eagle Scout Service Project
Heart of America Council BSA Advancement Committee

Eagle Scout Service Project ideas <http://www.scoutorama.com/project/>

Eagle Project Checklist http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Eagle_Scout_Leadership_Service_Project

Preface

The current HOAC Advancement Committee, comprised of the District Advancement Chairpersons and the Council Program executive, has endeavored to publish commonly asked questions about the preparation and completion of the Eagle Scout Service Project. This is meant to be a guide to Life Scouts, their Unit Leaders and other interested parties in the selection, planning and completion of the required Eagle Scout Service Project as defined in the official BSA publications. The suggested answers to some of the posed questions are not meant to interpret BSA policy statements or to encompass all situations. The decision to approve a project plan still lies within the judgment of the unit leadership and the individual District Advancement program committee.

Scope of the Project

Requirement 5. 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 should benefit an organization other than Boy Scouting.) The project plan must be approved by the organization benefiting from the effort, your Scoutmaster and troop committee, and the council or district before you start. You must use the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, BSA Publication No. 512-927, 2015 printing, in meeting this requirement. ”

Boy Scouts of America, Guide to Advancement 2015, Section 9.0.2.8, P. 71

Question: How big or significant does an Eagle service project need to be to qualify?

Answer: From the current the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, “There are no specific requirements, as long as the project is helpful to a religious institution, school, or community. The amount of time spent by you in planning your project and the actual working time spent in carrying out the project should be as much as is necessary for you to demonstrate your leadership of others.”

The workbook goes on to define certain limitations to the type of service work that is planned, for whom it cannot be done and the amount of time spent on the project. The ‘value’ of the project to the benefitting organization should be explained but the overall measure for approval is that it involves adequate opportunity for the Eagle Scout candidate to demonstrate leadership.

Question: If the project is too big for me to complete by myself, can my fellow Life Scouts do their project along with me?

Answer: There can only be one leader for the service project. The project is an individual matter; therefore, two Eagle Scout candidates may not receive credit for working on the same project. Depending on how the scope of the project is defined, there may be more than one project with distinct phases when done in sequence, but each phase should have a clear beginning and a clear ending. An example might be Life Scout 1 leading the preparation of an area for an upgrade and Life Scout 2 would lead the actual renovation at a later date.

Question: Do I need to finish all of my merit badges before I can begin on my Eagle Service project?

Answer: Any Scout who has earned the Life rank may begin on the Eagle Service project while working on the remaining Eagle-required merit badges and leadership position requirements. It may be helpful to consult with a Trail to Eagle Advisor in your unit, your Scoutmaster or his/her designee, obtain materials from your District Advancement committee. If you are still unclear, please call or email your District Advancement Committee Chairperson for assistance.

Question: What is considered “routine labor” that would not qualify as an Eagle Service project?

Answer: This is difficult to define but normally would be identified by your Scoutmaster or Troop Committee as an organized activity being done for service hour rank requirements or a personal Good Turn deed that you performed as part of following the Scout slogan, Oath and Law. Also, if you had little or no opportunity to demonstrate leadership to others in performing the work or deed.

Question: How detailed does my project plan need to be to receive approval?

Answer: While there is no easy definition that could fit your chosen project, the goal of the project plan should be that any other Scout could read the plan and carry it out without difficulty. The Project Details statements on “Proposal Page C” of your service project workbook provide the minimum items that should be addressed. If you are unable to address all of the details of your plan beyond the concept or scope of the project you should be able to explain what you would propose to do once those details became apparent. If there is lack of agreement on the part of your Sponsor (benefitting institution representative) as to what your project involves, approval will likely be deferred.

Question: What do I do if my project plan is deferred by the District Advancement Committee?

Answer: If your project plan was initially determined to be incomplete or lacking sufficient detail to show how you were going to demonstrate leadership, you will be given specific directions on what areas of your plan to improve upon. As well, you will be given a time when your project plan may be reviewed again. It will be your responsibility to follow up with the District Advancement Committee designee to arrange for the final signoff of your plan. Remember, the deferral of your project plan is not meant to be a punitive tactic or to purposefully delay your progress. The intent of the deferral is to ensure your project will likely be a success. It is another opportunity for you to demonstrate leadership by communicating details to others.

Question: What happens if the scope and concept of my originally approved project has changed before I can begin the work?

Answer: Since your initial approval involved your Sponsor, your unit leaders and the District committee, your responsibility is to keep your project going forward and describe the changes to your plan and why you made these decisions in the “Project Description and Benefit – Changes From the Proposal” portion of your workbook. If your project changed because you were unable to meet agreed upon timelines or the funding for donated materials was unavailable then you should have consulted with your leaders to see what could be done. If your Sponsor or benefitting organization has changed, it may be best to seek District approval again before continuing. Remember, these type of changes happen to all of us and it is usually not your fault unless there was lack of communication or events within your control.

Question: Can I lead a fundraiser to do my project?

Answer: Your Eagle Service project cannot be a fundraiser itself. However, your unit may have identified one or more fundraiser events to support the purchase of donated materials necessary to complete your project. It should be made clear to those people donating to the fundraiser where and for whom the funds are being distributed and that your project is not benefitting BSA. An example might be that a fundraiser conducted by your Troop provided enough money to purchase landscaping materials for a women’s shelter home in which the benefit of these funds was transferred to the community. Your final write-up should show an accounting of how these funds were used and that any excess funds were returned to the beneficiary.

Question: Is it really necessary that I write a narrative description of how I carried out my project?

Answer: As a suggestion, the District Advancement Committees recommend that you describe how you demonstrated leadership by writing additional statements that can be inserted or attached to your workbook format. The intent of this suggestion is it provides your Eagle Board of Review with a clear understanding of how you demonstrated leadership. Another benefit of writing a narrative is that it becomes a record or story of what you accomplished and how you are proud of the accomplishment. Suggested wording might be simple sentences with action verbs such as “On Day 1, I organized my helpers into groups...I instructed them in the steps of my plan...I showed them how to prepare the materials...I asked an adult leader to demonstrate the safe use of a tool...I directed the first team on how to help the second team...”etc. You will probably be pleasantly surprised how much you accomplished and how easy this makes recording and listing time donated and materials and tools used in your project.

Question: Why do I need to include before and after photographs?

Answer: Depending on the type of your project, the ‘before’ photographs might show the condition of the space or area you intend to improve. The ‘after’ photographs are an opportunity to showcase what your team of helpers were able to do for you and the project. A suggestion might be to print your pictures with a descriptive caption below them to be inserted into your workbook. This is just another opportunity to make your project something to be proud to display at your Eagle Court of Honor.

Question: The requirement 6 on my Eagle Scout Rank application form says I need to attach "...a statement of your ambitions and life purpose..." What does this mean and who needs to read it?

Answer: Quite simply, this is an opportunity for you to address what you have done outside of Scouting and what your short and long term life goals might be. Your short term goals might be to finish high school, get a part-time job, and continue to participate in your Troop activities. Your long term ambitions might be to attend college, get a job in some chosen profession, raise a family, be an explorer of the world or whatever your dreams are. You most certainly have done many things in school, sports activities, in your church and other organizations for which these honors and accomplishments can be listed in a simple resume format following your Ambitions and Life Purpose statements. This information should be attached to your Eagle Scout Rank Application (as noted in requirement 6) and your Eagle Board of Review will use this, along with your confidential letters of recommendation, to discuss your progress as an individual. It also may be used by your Eagle Court of Honor coordinator to describe what a wonderful person you have become.

Question: Is it necessary to write thank you letters as part of my Eagle Service project write-up?

Answer: The fifth point of the Scout Law is Courteous. While it is not a requirement, it can certainly go a long way to write simple thank you notes to those businesses which donated materials or to other groups that facilitated the completion of your project. You might be surprised how such a simple act can cement your position in the community.

Question: Do I need to use the Letter of Recommendation forms that are on the Council website?

Answer: Yes, these forms have been designed to ask specific questions about your character and values as a person. Those individuals to whom you choose to complete them for you should know you well enough to provide a recommendation. Remember, you are asking these individuals to write an honest appraisal of you in confidence that it will only be read by members of your Board of Review. These forms are destroyed following a successful Eagle Board of Review.