

Guideline for Eagle Project Approvers, Unit Leaders and Boards of Review



This guide is for Scouters at the unit, district and council level who are involved with approving Eagle projects. It is important to know that adults who work with a Scout on the trail to Eagle are facilitators, not gate keepers. It is not our job to add additional requirements over and above what is written in the rank requirements and the project workbook. In fact, we are not allowed by BSA policy to do so. Our job is to understand what the BSA is saying and help the Scout obtain the rank.

All project approvers at the unit, district and council levels should be familiar with the following documents. If there is any question between what this guide says and what these two documents say, the two documents will rule.

The Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, *BSA publication No. 512-927*,
<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsourc/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/EagleWorkbookProcedures>

The Guide to Advancement: Section 9. The Eagle Scout Rank

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>

An Eagle Scout Candidate should read the instructions in the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* and the *Flight to Eagle Journey* document at the council website in the Eagle Scout section before they select a project. <https://91bsa.org/flight-to-eagle>

HOW TO HELP SCOUTS MAKE AN EAGLE SCOUT SERVICE PROJECT GREAT

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The Eagle Scout service project is revered as a significant and sometimes difficult requirement for Scouting's highest rank of Eagle Scout.

An Eagle Scout candidate is to research and select a meaningful project, develop the idea, meet with adults, secure approvals, develop a plan, engage people to help carry out the plan, provide leadership, be accountable for the overall success of the project and — above all — complete the task at hand. This undertaking is most likely the biggest effort of a young Scout's life.

Start with the right perspective.

The Eagle Scout service project is not about what Scouts are physically able to do, but about the leadership that the candidate develops and demonstrates. The Eagle candidate is the one holding the clipboard, not the hammer.

Through the process of completing the Eagle Scout service project, a Scout's efforts to be fully prepared and responsible for every aspect of their project will lead them to a successful conclusion. A Scout's perseverance will certainly be tested but encourage them to approach the tasks with these things in mind.

Make the project personal.

Eagle Scout candidates select a project beneficiary, meet with a representative of that organization, and then work together to devise a good project.

Here is where many Scouts fall short. When encouraging Scouts on the path to Eagle, ask them to do a little soul searching. Is there a particular cause that is of interest to the Scout or their family? By choosing an organization that benefits this cause, a Scout's service project takes on a much deeper meaning.

Personalization of a project will result in a Scout having a greater sense of pride in their achievement that will stay with them for years to come.

Meet with your coach often.

One of the best benefits of the service project process is the experience Scouts gain by interacting with adults. Encourage Scouts to meet with their project coach throughout the service project.

This person should be someone a Scout can work side by side with, who will help the Scout organize and plan the project details, and who will provide the Scout with appropriate advice on their project all along the way.

An Eagle Project Doesn't Just Supply Labor to Someone Else's Project

If the beneficiary already has the project plan and steps figured out and all they need is someone to do labor, that is not an Eagle project. The planning needs to be done by the Scout and the beneficiary. Something that the beneficiary normally has someone do but for budgetary reasons decides to have free Scout labor do, is to be avoided. That is why much routine labor is not allowed as an Eagle project.

Don't skip public fundraising, if needed.

Fundraising for an Eagle Scout service project is not required of Eagle Scout candidates. In fact, the Guide to Advancement (9.0.2.10) states, "the BSA prefers, in fact, that Scouts choose projects that can be done at little or no costs."

If fundraising is needed it should be used "only for securing materials and otherwise facilitating a project."

Scouts do have the option to tap the project beneficiary, parents, relatives, or members of a unit for contributions without the need to complete the Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application. If fundraising takes place, Eagle Scout candidates must also be allowed the choice to not be involved in it.

Scouts can learn vital real-world skills by turning to the public for fundraising support.

While not encouraged, Eagle candidates may use online crowdfunding websites or apps to raise money, such as [GoFundMe.com](https://www.gofundme.com). Whatever the preferred method (in person, direct mail, or online crowdfunding), raising funds to support a project's necessary materials is not beyond a Scout's abilities.

Share your project with the public.

An Eagle Scout service project should warrant some type of public mention, either in the community newspaper, a church bulletin or publication of the beneficiary. Your city council might even issue a public proclamation that commends an Eagle Scout project.

Remind Scouts there is no project too small to bring the community together for a public ceremony or ribbon cutting to celebrate its completion. This type of public exposure certainly helps raise the profile of Scouting in general, and it feels great for this Eagle Scout candidate to get some public recognition.

The project may foreshadow a Scout's future. Ask your troop's future Eagle Scouts: Why is the Eagle Scout service project required?

Scouts should understand that the service project — while sometimes overwhelming — has an end.

The Eagle Scout service project is only the first of many significant projects Scouts will encounter in their lives ahead. Great ideas, planning, research, organization, fundraising, recruiting, and hard work are all just steps in the process.

Get inspired by the Eagle Scout service projects featured at eagleprojects.boyslife.org

EVALUATING A PROJECT PROPOSAL

Have the Scout explain their project before you read their proposal and acknowledge they have read the entire workbook since they have signed it saying they have. You should be reviewing what is in the written proposal that is in the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook. That is what the Scout must use to document their project. No one has the authority to require anything additional. For more information see section 9.0.2.7 of the [Guide to Advancement](#).

NOTE: The Contact Information page in the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook is for the Scout's personal use and is optional. It cannot be required for project approval.

Also note that the Project Plan section of the workbook is also for the Scout's use and is not part of project approval. The project plan section is not approved by anyone. However, the Council highly encourages the Scout to complete this portion of the Eagle Workbook.

A proposal needs to pass the following five tests:

Test 1: The project provides sufficient opportunity to meet the requirement. This is a complex requirement, so let's break it down by looking at what the requirement says:

Eagle 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 must benefit an organization other than Boy Scouting.) 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, BSA publication No. 512-927, in meeting this requirement.

While a Life Scout, plan... Remind the Scout that planning is part of the requirement and essential to a successful project. Simply providing labor for a project someone else has planned is not enough. There is a detailed planning section to the workbook that will need to be filled in after the proposal is approved. Verify that they have a coach that will assist them going

IMPORTANT: The Eagle Scout Candidate must personally oversee and plan, develop and give leadership on the project to satisfy this requirement. Scouts who let their parents or someone else do a major part of the planning, developing and leadership do not meet this requirement.

forward. Remind the Scout that the Final Plan should be reviewed by the coach and beneficiary prior to any work starting. The final plan is between the Scout and the beneficiary, and it does not need to be approved by the district.

Develop... The Scout, with the help of the beneficiary, identifies the need to be addressed and with the help of the project coach lays out the steps of how their project will be implemented to satisfy the need. They then organize and lead others in executing the project. It is not enough to implement someone else's developed project.

There is no requirement that the project be original, however, every Scout is unique; and so is every project. Even projects that may be similar are most likely somehow unique in the planning, development, or implementation stages.

We do not want, nor do we expect Scouts with differing needs, backgrounds, or experiences, to work toward arbitrary and unapproved standards to earn the Eagle Scout rank. Consequently, each project proposal must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with every Scout's individual journey in mind, and without added requirements established locally.

It is important not to categorically reject projects that, on the surface, may not seem to require enough planning and development. A good test of any project is to evaluate its complexity; does it show elements of challenge, and is there a clear demonstration of planning, development, and leadership.

And give leadership to others... After the project is planned, the plan is implemented by a team led and managed by the Eagle Candidate. When reviewing a project ask yourself: is there sufficient leadership in this project so that the Eagle Candidate will have the opportunity to give leadership? Projects where the beneficiary provides all the tools, supplies, planning, etc. would not pass this requirement. Note that giving leadership will be different for each individual Scout, some will have more leadership experience than others and the age and personality of some Scouts will be a factor. Keep in mind that for most Scouts this will be the first project they have managed.

A Scout is shortchanging themselves if the project is an easy one for them to accomplish. Again, this tends to be particular to the individual. What is easy for one Scout to accomplish may be very difficult for another.

In a service project helpful to any religious institution, any school, or your community... The beneficiary must be a religious institution, school, or "your community." "Your community" includes "community of the world" so the scope is quite broad. Individuals are not beneficiaries although there may be scenarios in which an individual in need can impact a community; in such a case, identify a source representing the community who will provide approvals. Projects may not be performed for the Boy Scouts of America, or its councils, districts, units, or properties.

Projects may not be of a commercial nature or for a business although it could be for community institutions, like museums and service agencies (e.g., homes for the elderly.) A business may provide a community service which could be considered, (e.g., a park that is open to the public and is owned by a business.)

The project is to give the Scout the opportunity to develop further confidence in their abilities while performing a service. Ask yourself, will this project satisfy this part of the requirement? How helpful will this project be to the beneficiary? The test has to do with scale and impact.

Routine labor (e.g., picking weeds in a football field, painting fire hydrants) is not normally considered to be significantly helpful to be considered for an Eagle project. However, if "routine labor" is conducted on so large a scale it requires planning, development, and leadership, it could be considered.

There are no required minimum hours for a project. No one may tell the Scout how many hours must be spent on it. Do not refer to an "average number of hours" for an Eagle project. That will lead a Scout to assume that they need to do a project of at least an average number of hours to meet expectations. In effect you have set a minimum standard.

Avoid discussing minimum standards which can stifle creativity and inhibit the planning and development phases of the Eagle Scout service project. Scouts may be forced to think in terms of limits, instead of possibilities. A much better approach is to encourage the Scout's growth and development by helping him work with their adult leaders and the project beneficiary, to consider projects that will meet Eagle Scout requirement 5 through impact on our American society. It is not important that every project produce the same kind of final product or result. Rather the most important aspects are those of growth and personal development that the Scout experiences as they go through the process of planning, developing, and giving leadership to others while executing their service project.

A project should be something the Scout would be proud of years from now. Here's one test they can use: "Close your eyes and imagine that your project is totally completed. It's done and you're an Eagle Scout. Now take 30 seconds and tell someone that you want to make a good impression on about your project. That might be a college admissions officer, a potential employer, a scholarship group, a military recruiter, your date's parents, or someone similar. What would you say?"

Test 2: The project appears to be feasible. Ask, is this project feasible, or is it bound to fail?

Test 3: Safety issues will be addressed. Make sure the Scout has identified and addressed any safety issues.

Test 4: Action steps for further detailed planning are included. The proposal section of the workbook has sections where the Scout should have indicated how they will go about planning their project. Review these with the Scout. Advise them that planning should take substantial effort. Planning requires forethought, effort, and time—sometimes more than for execution. Completing the planning phase after the execution phase is of no value.

Test 5: The young Scout is on the right track with a reasonable chance for a positive experience.

FUNDRAISING APPROVAL

Projects may not be fundraisers. In other words, the candidate may 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. Unless it involves contributions from the beneficiary, from the candidate, the Scout's parents, relatives, unit, its chartered organization, or from parents or members in the Scout's unit; it must be approved.

Fundraising for an Eagle Scout service project shall not be required of any candidate. Whether or not fundraising takes place is the Scout's decision based on the needs of their project. The BSA 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 is the use of "crowdfunding" via the Internet. If this method

is used, however, then all concerned, from the Scout and their parent(s) or guardian(s) to 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 the contributions come from relatives, for example, the Scout shall not be penalized. Their 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 the Boy Scouts of 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.

There is a form in the workbook that the Scout must fill out and that the beneficiary and district project approver signs that must be kept with the project paperwork. If all the donated money and materials for the project come from the project beneficiary, the Scout, their family, their unit, or the families involved in their unit, or is less than \$500, no fund-raising application is required. Car washes and garage sales for an Eagle Scout Service Project do not require a fundraising application. For additional details see "Procedures and Limitations on Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising," found in the workbook on the reverse side of the Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising application and review the Guide to Advancement section 9.0.2.10.

REMIND THE SCOUT AT THE PROJECT REVIEW

- Remind the Scout to keep accurate count of their time and the times of everyone else working with them on the project. The Scout should be keeping a record when you meet. Categories of time to record are research, planning, obtaining materials/supplies/tools/workers, documenting, and getting approvals, the project, and travel time to and from project sites and labor.
- Remind the Scout that any significant scope change to their approved proposal must be brought to the attention of the original signers of their proposal to ensure that their project will still qualify as an Eagle Project.
- Remind the Scout that the first item in their Final Plan is the discussion with the district reviewer and that you would expect to see some of your conversation in their write up.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS FOR YOU TO REMEMBER WHEN REVIEWING THE PROJECT

- Questioning and probing for their understanding of the project, the proposal, and what must be done, shall be conducted in a helpful, friendly, courteous, and kind-hearted manner. We will respect the Scout's dignity. The Scout will be allowed, if they choose, to have a unit leader present as an observer at any time they are discussing their proposal or project with someone who is reviewing it.
- Reviewers at all levels should strive to approve proposals in one meeting if possible. If there is something truly important the Scout has considered but failed to write down, let

them add the information right then and there. In the event there is a valid reason the proposal cannot be approved in one meeting, and it is necessary for the Scout to go back and put more effort into it, then the reviewer should provide a clear explanation, preferably in writing, of what needs to be done to gain approval.

- No more than one Eagle Scout candidate may receive credit for working on the same Eagle Scout service project.
- There is no requirement that a project must have lasting value.
- There is no restriction on collection and blood drives if the Eagle Scout candidate satisfies the above tests.
- There is not a requirement that the proposal be so detailed that another Scout can pick it up and successfully execute the project; instead, project expectations are to satisfy Eagle Scout requirement 5, and we do not require proposals to include more than what is described in the Proposal Section of the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*.

EVALUATING THE PROJECT AFTER COMPLETION

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 are three parts to the Service Project Workbook, after the project is completed and when evaluating the project for the board of review, the only part of the workbook to be considered is the final project report.

The Scout needs to show enough planning and development necessary to execute the project as described in the proposal. If project work 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, it should in most cases be approved.

The unit leader or beneficiary may determine changes to what was proposed were so significant that the work completed does not warrant approval. The candidate may follow their guidance, or they may choose to submit their project workbook without approval. In either case, they must be granted a board of review.

SOME ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

The August/September 2013 issue of Advancement News had a couple of articles that dealt with Eagle Scout service projects and the proposal approval process. Both articles provide good guidance for project approvers. These articles can be found

here: http://www.scouting.org/filestore/advancement_news/2013_Aug_Sept.pdf

Another useful article, entitled "The Evolution of Eagle Scout Service Project Approval" appeared in the May 2012 issue of Advancement News and it explains some of the rationale behind the current proposal approval process:

http://www.scouting.org/filestore/advancement_news/512-075_May.pdf

There is a good article on what it means to show leadership here:

<https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2019/06/12/lets-analyze-these-five-important-words-in-eagle-scout-rank-requirement-5/>