Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project

Information for Project Beneficiaries

Thank You and Congratulations

Congratulations on your selection as an Eagle Scout service project beneficiary, and thank you for the opportunity you are making available to an Eagle Scout candidate. Support from community organizations is important to Scouting—just as important as Scouting's contributions are to the community. Scouts provide important services, and benefiting organizations such as yours provides a vehicle for personal growth.

The Eagle Scout Rank and the Service Project

Service to others is an important part of the Scout Oath: "... to help other people at all times." Each year tens of thousands of young men strive to achieve the coveted Eagle Scout rank by applying character, citizenship, and Scouting values in their daily lives. One of the rank requirements is to *plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, school, or community.* Through this requirement, Scouts practice what they have learned and gain valuable project management and leadership experience.

Typical Projects

There are thousands of possible Eagle Scout projects. Some involve building things, and others do not. There have been all kinds: making birdhouses for an arboretum, conducting bicycle safety rodeos, constructing park picnic tables or benches, upgrading hiking trails, planting trees, conducting well-planned blood drives, and on and on. Other than the general limitations noted below, there are no specific requirements for project scope or for how many hours are worked, and there is no requirement that a project have lasting value. What is most important is the *impact or benefit* the project will provide to your organization. In choosing a project, remember it must be something a group with perhaps limited skills can accomplish under the leadership of your Eagle Scout candidate. If your Scout is to fulfill the requirement, *he* must be the one to lead the project. It is important you work with him and not with his parents or leaders.

Project Restrictions and Limitations

- Fundraising is permitted only for facilitating a project. Efforts that primarily collect money, even for worthy charities, are not permitted.
- Routine labor, like a service a Scout may provide as part of his daily life such as mowing or weeding a church lawn, is not normally appropriate. However, if project scale and impact are sufficient to require planning and leadership, then it may be considered.
- Projects are not to be of a commercial nature or for a business, though some aspects of a business operation provided as a service, such as a community park, may qualify.
- The Scout is not responsible for any maintenance of a project once it is completed.

Approving the Project Proposal and Project Scheduling

Once a potential project is identified, you must approve your Scout's proposal. Regular communications can make this quick and easy, but be sure you have discussed and considered all aspects of the project with him and that he has a clear understanding of your expectations and limitations. Keep in mind his proposal is merely an overview—not a final, comprehensive plan.

Some projects may take only a few weeks or months to plan and carry out, while others may take longer. Scouts working toward the Eagle rank are typically busy, so scheduling flexibility may be important. The proposal must also have several approvals, besides yours, before final planning occurs and work begins. Therefore, if a proposed project must be completed by a certain rapidly approaching date, it may be a good idea to consider something different. Remember, too, that all work must be completed before the Scout's 18th birthday.

Approving Final Plans
After his proposal is approved by the BSA local council, your Scout must develop a plan for implementing the project. Before work begins, you should ask to see the plan. It may come in any format you desire or are willing to accept. It could even be a detailed verbal description. That said, the BSA includes a "Final Plan" form in your *Scout's Eagle Scout Service* Project Workbook, and we recommend that you ask your Scout to use it. If in your plan review you have any concerns the project may run into trouble or not produce the results you want, do not hesitate to require improvements before work begins.

Permits, Permissions, and Authorizations
- If the project requires building permits, etc., your Scout needs to know about them for his planning. However, your organization must be responsible for all permitting. This is not a duty for the Scout.
- Your organization must sign any contracts.
- If digging is involved, it is your responsibility to locate, mark, and protect underground utilities as necessary.
- If you need approval from a committee, your organization's management, or a parent organization, etc., be sure to allow additional time and let the Scout know if he is to assist with this.

Funding the Project
Eagle service projects often require fundraising. Donations of any money, materials, or services must be preapproved by the BSA unless provided by your organization; by the Scout, his parents, or relatives; or by his troop or its chartered organization. The Scout must make it clear to donors or fundraising event participants that the money is being raised on the project beneficiary's behalf, and that the beneficiary will retain any leftover funds. If receipts are needed, your organization must provide them. If your organization is not allowed to retain leftover funds, you should designate a charity to receive them or turn them over to your Scout's unit.

Supervision
To meet the requirement to "give leadership to others," your Scout must be given every opportunity to succeed independently without direct supervision. The Scout's troop must provide adults to assist or keep an eye on things, and your organization should also have someone available. The Scout, however, must provide the leadership necessary for project completion without adult interference.

Safety
Through the proposal and planning process, the Scout will identify potential hazards and risks and outline strategies to prevent and handle injuries or emergencies. Scouts as minors, however, cannot be held responsible for safety. Adults must accept this responsibility. Property owners, for example, are responsible for issues and hazards related to their property or employees and any other individuals or circumstances they would normally be responsible for controlling. If during project execution you have any concerns about health and safety, please share them with the Scout and his leaders so action may be taken. If necessary, you may stop work on the project until concerns are resolved.

Project Completion and Approval
After the project has been completed, your Scout will ask for your approval on his project report. The report will be used in the final review of his qualifications for the Eagle Scout rank. If the Scout has met your reasonable expectations, you should approve the project; if he has not, you should ask for corrections. This is not the time, however, to request changes or additions beyond what was originally agreed.

The Eagle Scout service project is an accomplishment a Scout will always remember. Your reward will be a helpful project and, more important, the knowledge you have contributed to a young man's growth.