

## **STARTING YOUR EAGLE SCOUT SERVICE PROJECT**

Dear Life Scout:

Congratulations on your interest in pursuing the Eagle Scout Award. It is Scouting's highest award and internationally recognized as a symbol of great accomplishment.

As a Life Scout seeking the Eagle rank, you have been asked to demonstrate Scout spirit, earn merit badges, and serve your unit in a leadership role. These are important requirements. But they are only part of your journey to Eagle.

### **The Eagle Scout Service Project Challenge**

In order to complete your journey to Eagle, you must complete a unique Eagle Scout Service Project. Your Service Project will require that you demonstrate focused leadership and spirit in service to your community. It will also require careful conception, planning, development, execution, and review.

Most of all, your Eagle Scout Service Project will require you to lead others in service. You'll lead both adults and youth. You'll select and assemble your team. You'll use the EDGE method you've learned on your Scouting trail: explaining, demonstrating, guiding, and enabling your team. You'll delegate tasks to others. You'll administer important paperwork. And you'll document your work... as well as the work of your team.

### **The Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook**

Start your preparation by carefully reading the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook. You can access it at:

<http://www.scouting.org/Home/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/EagleWorkbookProcedures.aspx>

### **Project Selection**

After you read the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, you should meet with your Scoutmaster and discuss selecting a "Project Coach." Your Project Coach will mentor you as you choose, plan, and develop your own Eagle Scout Service Project. Then find and focus on a project that clearly:

- (1) provides lasting value to a "beneficiary organization" in your community (i.e., benefits a sponsor organization, school, park, government site, or other community organization); and
- (2) demonstrates your leadership capabilities.

You need to meet early in this process with a representative of the organization that will benefit from your project (the “Beneficiary”). You must ensure they agree with your proposal. They also need to approve your project work plan and timeline.

Make sure to meet with your Scoutmaster, Unit Committee, and Beneficiary before finalizing the selection of your project. You’ll need approval and support from all three parties.

Once you choose your project, you can start the planning and development process. Then you can begin filling out pages B, C, D and E of the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook. The workbook comes in a “fillable” pdf format. You can fill the form out on your computer. You may print out the form and type in your information.

Once you’ve filled out your workbook, go back to your Scoutmaster, Unit Committee, and Beneficiary for their initial approval. Then send your completed workbook to the Monticello District Reviewer (currently me, Pete Fenlon) for an initial, or preliminary, review.

### **Initial Workbook Review**

Remember that, at this point, your workbook still describes a “proposed project.” As the District Reviewer, I may send back comments about your project and/or your workbook. I may suggest or ask that you make changes or corrections.

Once I give you my comments, read them with care. Make the necessary corrections/additions to your workbook. Then go back to your Scoutmaster, Unit Committee, and Beneficiary for their final approval. You’ll need their signatures on page E. You also need to sign on page E.

If you need to raise funds to complete your project, fill out the Fundraising Application on Page A.

### **Completing Your Eagle Scout Service Project Proposal**

Upon revising your workbook and getting all the required signatures, you have completed your Eagle Scout Service Project **Proposal**. Then you should email (or mail) me the completed document for District Approval. **DO NOT BEGIN** your Eagle Scout Service Project until you have District (i.e., my) approval.

Remember:

1. You may email or contact me with questions whenever you wish. I will try to answer your questions as quickly as I can.
2. I prefer that you take leadership in all communications. Do not rely on your parents, guardians, or Scoutmaster for communication.

3. Always copy at least one other adult when communicating with me or another adult about your Eagle Scout Service Project.
4. Your project must clearly demonstrate leadership—your leadership.
5. Your project must clearly benefit the community at a level of impact worthy of Eagle recognition.
6. If possible, fill out your workbook on the computer. Signatures can be certified electronic signatures. You can also scan and send handwritten signatures.
7. All signatures must be on the correct pages, together. Do not forget your own signature. It is the Candidate's Promise.
8. Your workbook must demonstrate reasonable effort. Prepare it with care. Use your spell checker. Use complete sentences. Check your grammar. I expect you to spend at least as much time carefully preparing this document as I will spend carefully reviewing it.
9. When discussing the need for volunteers, specifically estimate the number needed. Estimate the man hours required for completing your project. Estimate how many volunteers you will need to provide those man hours. Estimate the number of adults and the number of youth. Remember that only adults can operate certain tools and transportation.
10. You will need to fill out the Fundraising Application Page A if you are holding any general fundraising activities or requesting any donations of funds or materials from anyone other than the beneficiary, family or Troop.

### **District Approval of Your Eagle Scout Service Project Proposal**

When you email me your proposal, you should get an email response. If not, email me again to confirm that I received the document. I generally review proposals once a week (usually on the weekend).

I will not approve a proposal that does not include all the necessary signatures to make it valid: Make sure that you, your Scoutmaster, your Unit Committee representative, and the project Beneficiary have all signed Page E. Again, if you need to raise funds to complete your project, fill out the Fundraising Application on Page A.

If I approve your proposal, I'll sign it and return it via email. You are then approved to actually begin work on your project. You should then start work according to your project timeline. Don't delay work unless nature or circumstance prevent you from following your plan.

If I do not approve your proposal, I will inform you by email and tell you what needs to occur. Once you make the necessary changes or corrections, resend your proposal. It may take another week (or a little more) before I will review the revised proposal.

Plan accordingly for these approximately one-week communication cycles. This is important to remember if you are approaching your 18th birthday.

### **Suggestions for Initiating Your Project and Completing the Eagle Workbook**

1. **Give Yourself Time!** Designing a project and getting it approved by all the necessary signers is a time consuming process. You will need to learn to work at the pace of those who are helping you. Remember that they may have many responsibilities and time commitments of which yours is just one.
2. **Use Clear Respectful Communication.** Consider this like a “business proposal” or writing for a “grant” or a “college application.” Be very clear. Use appropriate, formal, respectful communication methods. You are not communicating with your friends or peers. A Scout is Courteous. Be polite. Use appropriate introductions and salutations to open/start (e.g., “Dear Sir or Dear Mr./Mrs. etc.) Always end the written communication with a closing such as Respectfully, Sincerely, Yours in Scouting, etc. followed by your name.
3. **Own Your Communications.** This is your project, not your Scoutmaster’s or your parents’. We expect that YOU conduct all required communications. Of course, always copy your parents and/or Scoutmaster on any correspondence.
4. **Be Patient.** If you send an email and you do not get a reply in 1-2 days, send it again. Copy yourself and an adult to ensure it was sent. If you receive an email or voice message from me or another adult associated with the proposal/project, be sure to respond back so the sender KNOWS you received the message. This sort of interaction can save everyone a lot of time. Don’t wait around for a response when a message was never delivered or properly received.
5. **Expect Delays.** Remember, this is a process that involves a lot of different steps and people who are not necessarily ready or able to immediately respond to your needs. Plan ahead. Work carefully on the application. Ask questions. But expect the occasional delay.
6. **Follow Instructions.** As I said, this is a process with certain steps that must happen in a certain order. If you do not follow the correct order/procedure, it will take longer to get your workbook in the right, acceptable format. It will also delay any approval.

7. **Ask for Help.** A Scout is Helpful. So are Scouters. There are many adults and youth with experience in this process. If you are not sure about something, just ask. I am always available—perhaps with 1-7 days delay—to offer advice. And reach out sooner rather than later, so that you do not have to re-do a lot of work.
8. **Complete Your Workbook.** I prefer an electronic submission of your proposal. The fillable pdf workbook form format is easiest, fastest, and most reliable. Have everyone who signs your workbook use a digital signature. Otherwise, just print that page, have them sign, and then scan (digitize) the page. Then send it to me for review and signature. I WILL NOT sign if your workbook is not completely filled out (including fund raising if relevant). In the case of revised proposals, I will not sign unless you've made the requested changes or additions. New signature pages may be necessary in certain cases, so seek a pre-review of the workbook and project before submitting your formal proposal.
9. **Welcome to the Real World.** Consider this to be an early exposures to the “real” or “adult world.” Your Eagle Scout Service Project is a test of your ability to deal with the kinds of people and organizations you'll encounter as an adult. It is an important lesson in life skills. It is an important lesson in leadership skills. Treat the whole project as if you were a professional working with professionals.
10. **Own Your Project.** Again, this is YOUR project, not your Scoutmaster's or your parents. Own it. If you do, you are going to gain tremendous experience and a competitive edge in life. This is yet another of the lifelong benefits of becoming an Eagle Scout.

### **In Closing**

As an Eagle Scout, I wish you success with your Eagle Service Project. I will gladly assist you however I can.

Yours in Scouting,  
Pete Fenlon

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