Eagle Scout Service Project

Coach Guide

Introduction

A Coach for an Eagle Scout candidate working on his Service Project acts as an advisor or mentor for the scout during the stages of finding, proposing, planning and implementing his project. The new Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, introduced in 2011 and effective in 2012, divides the process into three distinct phases: Project Proposal, Final Project Plan, and Final Report. Only the **Project Proposal** gets approved by the Beneficiary, the Unit Leader, the Unit Committee, and the Council or District. Development of the Final Project Plan and implementation of the project is left to the scout, working with the beneficiary, and it is at this stage that the coach can be particularly helpful.   The final evaluation of the project occurs at the Eagle Board of Review based on the scout's Final Plan and Project Report.
Santa Clara County Council encourages *each unit* to have some process to mentor the scout through his project development and implementation to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome.   From the **BSA Guide to Advancement 2011**, 9.0.2.9, page 56:

> *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. He must not simply follow others' directions to the point where his own input becomes insignificant. On the other hand, adult leaders must bear in mind he is yet a youth. Expectations must be reasonable and fitting.*

This document is designed to help lay out the role and responsibilities of an Eagle Project Coach. Keep in mind that the use of a coach is recommended*, but not required*, and no unit or council may impose additional requirements other than those laid out by the BSA.

Resources for Coaches

It is highly recommended all coaches read and are familiar with the following information, all available on www.scouting.org:

- **Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook** at
  http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-927_fillable.pdf
- **Guide to Advancement 2013** at
  http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf, specifically Section 9: The Eagle Scout Rank
- **Guide to Safe Scouting** (look for the new release in 2012 which will implement new regulations for the use of power tools, machinery, and autos in projects.)
- **Sweet 16 of BSA Safety**
- **Advancement and Awards** (to stay current on requirement updates)
- Be familiar with regulations and process for filing a **Tour Plan** if needed.

Requirements to be a Coach

- Be registered with the BSA (in any position)
- Have current BSA Youth Protection training

Project Workbook

The Scout must use the official **Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook,** No. 512-927 for his project and submit it with his Eagle Application.   This document must be used as produced by the BSA. It can be copied and distributed or transferred across software platforms, but it must maintain the same appearance. The scout may download and print it out and neatly enter by hand or typewriter, or he may use the fillable PDF available on www.scouting.org.   (There is a link from the Council Website under Resources ->Advancement->Eagle Scout.)   Download the document and save it to a local computer, then open it to begin data entry. It may be helpful to download the newest version of Adobe Reader (available free from Adobe at http://get.adobe.com/reader).

No unit or district may require additional forms, or add to or change the requirements.

The project workbook has detailed instructions, a Contact Information page, and three sections: Project Proposal, Final Plan, and Project Report.

Project Selection

The project will be a milestone in the scout's life. Encourage the scout to choose a project that is meaningful to *him*. He will be much more likely to be enthusiastic and successful working with an organization with which he has an association and leading activities about which he is passionate. He should investigate opportunities with his school(s), religious institution, or community organizations. Organizations need not be limited to the local area. Instructions in the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook say, "It might be a construction, conservation, or remodeling project, or it could be the presentation of an event with a worthwhile purpose….In any case, be sure the project presents a challenge that requires leadership, but also something that you can do with unskilled helpers, and within a reasonable period of time."

Restrictions (from Eagle Service Project Workbook p4 and Guide to Advancement 2011 9.0.2.12, p56)

- *There are no required minimum hours for a project. No one may tell you how many hours must be spent on it.*

- *There is no requirement a project must have lasting value.*

- *Routine labor is not normally appropriate for a project. This might be defined as a job or service you may provide as part of your daily life, or a routine maintenance job normally done by the beneficiary (for example, pulling weeds on the football field at your school.)*

- *While projects may not be of a commercial nature or for a business, this is not meant to disallow work for community institutions, such as museums and service agencies (like*

homes for the elderly, for example), that would otherwise be acceptable. Some aspect of a business 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.

- *A project may not be a fundraiser. In other words, it may not be an effort that primarily collects 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 your council. See "Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application" on page 17.*

- *No more than one Eagle Scout candidate may receive credit for working on the same Eagle Scout service project.*

- *Projects may not be performed for the Boy Scouts of America, or its councils, districts, units, or properties.*

The selection of the project clearly belongs to the Eagle-candidate, but the coach, unit leaders, and experienced parents and adults can all be instrumental in pointing the scout to resources for ideas. If the coach is involved at this point, he can be a sounding board for weighing various options, determining feasibility, and scaling the project.

Project Proposal

Once the scout has selected a project to pursue, he develops the Project Proposal to present for approval by the Beneficiary, the Unit Leader, the Unit Committee and District Advancement Representative.   It is important that the scout work closely with the Beneficiary so he incorporates their needs, expectations and limitations into his proposal.

The workbook provides instructions and specific fields to fill in:

- Description and Benefit
- Giving Leadership
- Materials, Supplies, Tools
- Permits and Permissions
- Preliminary Cost Estimate
- Project Phases
- Logistics
- Safety Issues
- Further Planning
- Attach Photos/sketches or other materials as needed

The Proposal is an overview of the project and a "plan for a plan", not a fully developed plan. The amount of detail required will depend on the complexity of the project. The proposal must be approved *before* any work or fundraising can begin.

Approvals

The Project Proposal should be approved if it meets these tests:

1. The project provides sufficient opportunity to meet the requirement. It must show that planning, development, and leadership will take place; and how the three factors will benefit a religious institution, a school, or community.
2. The project appears to be feasible.
3. Safety issues *will be* addressed.
4. Action steps for further detailed planning are included.
5. The young man is on the right track with a reasonable chance for a positive experience.

If the Proposal meets the above criteria, it should be approved. The scout is responsible for presenting the proposal and obtaining the signatures. Each signer is committing to specific actions.

The Eagle Candidate's Promise:

On my honor as a Scout, I have read this entire workbook, including the "Message to Scouts and Parents or Guardians" on page 21. I promise to be the leader of this project, and to do my best to carry it out for the maximum benefit to the religious institution, school, or community I have chosen as beneficiary.

Unit Leader approval

I have reviewed this proposal and discussed it with the candidate. I believe it provides impact worthy of an Eagle Scout service project, and will involve planning, development, and leadership. I am comfortable the Scout understands what to do, and how to lead the effort. I will see that the project is monitored, and that adults or others present will not overshadow him.

Committee Approval

This Eagle Scout candidate is a Life Scout, and registered in our unit. I have reviewed this proposal, I am comfortable the project is feasible, and I will do everything I can to see that our unit measures up to the level of support we have agreed to provide (if any). I certify that I have been authorized by our unit committee to provide its approval for this proposal.

Note that the unit committee is responsible for approving the proposal and may designate representatives to act on its behalf. There are no restrictions on how many committee members are to be involved in the approval process, though the scout may benefit from presenting to a number of committee members and receiving their input.

Beneficiary

This service project will provide significant benefit, and we will do all we can to see it through. We realize funding on our part is not required, but we have informed the Scout of the financial support (if any) that we have agreed to. We understand any fundraising he conducts will be in our name and that funds left over will come to us. We will provide receipts to donors as required.

Council/District Approval

I have read sections 9.0.2.0 through 9.0.2.15, regarding the Eagle Scout Service Project, in the Guide to Advancement, No. 33088. I agree on my honor to apply the procedures as written, and in compliance with the policy on "Unauthorized Changes to Advancement." Accordingly, I approve this proposal. I will encourage the candidate to complete a final plan and further encourage him to share it with a project coach.

Typically the proposal is signed in the order listed above, but there is no required sequence other than the District or Council approval must be last.   Santa Clara County Council allows the District Advancement Representative to sign the proposal.

The coach may, or may not, be involved in the approval process, depending on unit customs. If the coach or unit committee member responsible for approval is concerned that the project will not meet the requirements or will not be completed to the satisfaction of the beneficiary, it is appropriate to contact the scout and his parents or guardian, and possibly the beneficiary representative. The coach may provide guidance critical to success, but the final design decisions are between the scout and the beneficiary.

Once the Project Proposal is approved, the scout should be encouraged to schedule regular meetings with his coach for progress reports and guidance in developing the plan.

Final Plan

After the Proposal is approved, the Scout fully develops the Final Plan. It is at this stage that the coach is a most important resource for the Scout.   The Final Plan is not required to be approved or signed, but it is critical to the success of the project. The Final Plan is reviewed in the Eagle Board of Review to determine if the scout has done the required leadership and development. Use of a coach is not required, but it is recommended. As the Workbook explains to the candidates, "[The coach's] involvement and review …can help you avoid many problems or mistakes…and can improve your chances of passing the Eagle Board of Review."

Supporting the Scout during the Plan Development and Implementation

The role of the Coach is to help guide the scout through the development of his final plan so that he has the best chance of being successful, both in implementation of the plan and in his Eagle Board of Review.   Like any professional project planner, the scout is expected to go through a review process and to take input and suggestions from knowledgeable sources.   The coach is in a tricky position because whether or not he or she was involved in the process of approving the project proposal, the coach has no veto power over the Final Plan. Final design issues are between the Scout and beneficiary. From the **Guide to Advancement 2011** 9.0.2.9, p55:

Assistance can come through evaluating a plan and discussing its strengths, weaknesses, and risks, but coaches shall not have the authority to dictate changes, withdraw approval, or take any other such directive action.

Instead, coaches must use the BSA method of positive adult association, logic, and common sense to help the candidate make the right decisions.

The unit should develop a review process for the Final Plan that makes sense for its organization.   Remember that the unit leader's signature promised that the project would be monitored but led by the scout and not overshadowed by adults, and the committee signature promised that the unit will deliver the support committed.

The coach is not expected to be an expert in the content of the project.   Consulting experts in the project area, such as wood working or construction, is recommended. Instead, it is helpful if the coach is experienced in project management and can help the scout examine each step of the process.   The Workbook specifies the areas to be covered, and the scout can always add detail in attachments where it is required.

Final Plan Sections:

- **Comments from Proposal Review**
  Encourage the scout to follow up on all the suggestions received in review.

- **Description and Benefit – Changes from the Proposal**
  Notes on changes from the proposal from the **Guide to Advancement 2011** 9.0.2.7, P55:

  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 his project coach or unit leader for advice. It is appropriate to strongly suggest he 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. If the young man decides to strike out on his own, this is his prerogative.… 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. 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 BSA 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, his parent or guardian, and his unit leader, and call for work to be suspended until compliance is achieved.

- **Present Condition or Situation**

  Encourage use of photos to show the "before" condition.

- **Project Phases**

What are the phases of the project and how long will each take? Which are contingent on others being completed, and which can be done in parallel?

- **Work Processes**

Discuss the project with the scout until you are convinced he has identified and thoroughly understands each step. If you do not understand it from the written plan, it is likely the scout does not either. Suggest that pictures or diagrams and measurements be provided for each phase. How many people and what skills are required at each phase? How long with each phase take? Which phases are contingent on others being completed, and which can be done in parallel?

- **Permits and Permissions**

Will a BSA Tour Plan (aka Tour Permit) be needed? What about permits required by local ordinances?   Does he need to check local utility companies for possible buried pipes or cables or property manager for irrigation pipes?

- **Materials, Supplies, Tools**

Be sure he lists everything he needs, whether it is purchased or borrowed. Has he done comparison shopping to be sure he is getting the best price?

- **Expenses and Revenue**

Has he accounted for everything he needs to purchase? Food and drinks planned for volunteers should be included even if his family is donating them. Has he identified the sources for his funding? Any sources other than the scout or his family or relatives, the beneficiary, the unit or parents and members of the unit, or the unit's chartering organization will need approval by the Council (Jake Carlson) on the form provided in the workbook.

Make sure the scout keeps receipts and good records of everything he used. Often excess items can be returned for refund, and all borrowed materials need to be returned to their owners. He will need to present a final accounting in his Project Report.

- **Giving Leadership**

Demonstrating Leadership is one of the requirements for the Eagle Service Project that will be evaluated in the Eagle Board of Review, so the scout needs a good plan for how he will manage his volunteers. Does the scout have a good feeling for the number of people he requires and the kind of skills they need? Is there a plan to give an overview and training at each shift?   Does he have a plan for recruiting and scheduling volunteers, most likely in shifts?   Scouts who do not confirm workers by shift often find they have too many volunteers at some hours and not enough at others. Has he planned for 2-deep adult supervision, including at least one who has Youth Protection Training? What will he do if he has more volunteers than expected? Can the next phase be started, or is there additional

work that can be done? Remind the scout to keep good records of volunteers and hours since he will need to record them in his Final Report.

- **Logistics**

    Are there other issues that need to be addressed besides those listed in the workbook (Transportation of volunteers and materials, food, restrooms)?

- **Safety**

    Safety for all involved in the project is a huge concern. Help the scout imagine every likely hazard and list ways to prevent or treat them. Include environmental hazards such as sunburn, dehydration, and poison oak as well as accidents directly related to the project. Simple instructions like wearing gloves and closed-toe shoes or boots help a lot.

    Having a first aid kit on hand is required. Directions to the hospitals (Kaiser and other) nearest the work area are important, especially when the work site is not close to their familiar neighborhood.

    Scouts often try to restrict certain jobs or tools to the older scouts but with proper training and supervision younger scouts appreciate the opportunity to try new skills. Maturity and size can be more important than age, so help the scout use good judgment in assigning jobs.

    Eagle Projects are considered part of a unit's program and, therefore, subject to BSA policies and procedures. (Guide to Advancement 2011 9.0.2.14, Page 57) Anyone under 18 using power tools must be supervised by an adult experienced in the use of the tool. Two adults, at least one with current Youth Protection Training, are required on site. Be aware of current regulations in the Guide to Safe Scouting, and be sure to watch for the 2012 edition which will introduce new restrictions on use of power tools, ladders, and autos.

- **Contingency Plans**

    This is an excellent place to discuss what could go wrong and have the scout think about how to handle those cases. For example, what if it rains, or what if materials ordered do not arrive on time?

- **Comments from your Coach**

    Hopefully the scout is taking good notes on the coach's input. Space is also included in the Workbook for comments received in the review process, and the scout is expected to take those into account.

Encourage the scout to hold a Final Plan review with the coach and/or other committee members before he starts work on his project.

Finishing the Project

Remind the Scout to keep good records as he implements his project, including a journal, photographs, and budget, since he must complete a **Final Report** as the last stage of his project.   He will need to account for any changes, provide a reckoning of final expenses and fundraising, and discuss how he showed leadership and how he dealt with challenges that occurred.   At the end of the report three more signatures are required. The Eagle Candidate signs promising that he was the leader of the project and completed it as reported. Both the Beneficiary and the Unit Leader sign the **Completion Approvals** certifying that they believe the project meets the requirement: *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 workbooks asks if funding donors were thanked for their contributions, but the scout should be encouraged to also acknowledge assistance from those who volunteer time or assistance or supplied materials or tools.

The Final Report is a key component for the Eagle Board of Review to determine whether the scout has met the requirements for developing and leading the project. The coach can provide guidance to ensure the Final Report is adequately completed.

Completing the Eagle Rank Application

The Eagle Coach's responsibilities may carry on beyond the project to consulting with the scout on preparing his paperwork to submit his Eagle Rank Application.   Detailed instructions   are   available   on   the   Council   Website   at http://www.scccbsa.org/sccc/resources/advancement/eagle-scout/   See **Related Links,** Download Eagle Packet Instructions. A link to the Eagle Rank Application can also be found on this page.   Your District Advancement Representative is always a resource at any point in the process.