



Pioneer Valley Council, Boy Scouts of America

Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Procedure

Introduction

The Requirement:

As stated in the *Boy Scout Handbook*, Eagle Scout Requirement 5: ***While a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to your religious institution, school, or your community.*** The project must benefit an organization other than the BSA. The project idea must be approved by the organization benefiting from the effort, your unit leader (Scoutmaster, Varsity Scout Coach, Venturing crew Advisor), unit committee, and by the council advancement committee before you start. You must use the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook, No. 18-927D, in meeting this requirement. (This is available at the scout service center or online in the *Leader Resources* section of the Pioneer Valley Council website, www.pvcbsa.com.)

There are three very important things to note in the first sentence of this requirement that apply to selecting a project:

1. The project is to be done while you are a Life Scout. You are considered a Life Scout the day you successfully complete your Board of Review. This means that if you are still a Star Scout, you should focus on your merit badges and other things, and don't put yourself in the position of having to explain why you worked on the project prematurely. It is all right to look ahead and identify opportunities that might become available after your Life Scout board of review. However, never begin planning or executing your project prior to achieving Life rank.
2. Note that the service project is to be "...helpful to any religious institution, any school, or your community...", which means you need to be discerning while selecting a project. You are looking for a project to do for an organization that is non-profit, meaning they provide services to the community at large for purposes other than making a profit. No projects are allowed for profit-making organizations. But keep in mind that planning and developing a project requires the Scout to inject his ideas on how the end result will be accomplished. If the entity the project serves knows exactly what it wants and how it must be done, and has its own personnel on site to execute the project, the Scout simply becomes a labor foreman. This is unacceptable. It is imperative that the entity being served understands this requirement and not recruit Eagle Projects merely as an available labor pool.
3. "Give Leadership"..... A couple of years ago, the title of the Eagle Scout Service Project was changed to the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project. As stated in the BSA Project Workbook, the real purpose of the Eagle Project is to give you an opportunity to "demonstrate leadership of others." This is not to say that service to the community is not important, just that leadership is equally important. The requirements of planning and

developing a project require the Scout to render more than a routine service. Leadership is a very rewarding activity. As the leader, you should feel a sense of pride for what your team accomplished under your guidance. A well-led activity is also rewarding for those who follow. In the end, the goal is reached and the team feels good about their collective accomplishment. The leadership skills you have learned in Scouting and demonstrated in completing your Eagle Project will serve you throughout your life.

Project Guidelines:

These guidelines are exactly that: guidelines. They are designed to help you assess projects in a variety of ways, on a variety of levels. Their basic theme is to determine whether there is sufficient leadership being exercised. Many portions of BSA (national) policy are written in such a way that there can be variances in the local interpretations and execution. But in general, your Board of Review will be looking at the following characteristics of the project:

- 1. Leadership:** How do you demonstrate leadership of others? A good question to ask is, “Could the project succeed without the Scout’s presence?” You need to establish yourself as the man in charge, the one who others look to for guidance. This means you must take the initiative to choose your project, coordinate it with the appropriate agency, and prepare the detail plan on how to accomplish the goal. The leader is the problem solver. No matter how well a project is planned, there will be things that don’t go according to plan. When problems arise, the project leader must consider all available information and make a decision on how to resolve that problem. If it is not safe or practical to force the project to follow the plan, he may need to revise the plan, or even redefine the final goals. It is ok if your project doesn’t reach all the original goals, but you need to be able to explain why and how you solved the problem. However, be careful that the well-meaning adults don’t lead your project. A good leader will consider advice and suggestions from others, but in the end, the leader must make the final decisions. A wise Scout would listen to his troop’s adult leaders and parents because they have many years of experience to share. Beware of a common problem that can easily hamper your chance to lead. During projects where an adult’s technical skill is required, the adults often tend to take over the leadership role. Both you and your adult technical advisor should be very aware that YOU must lead the project. Your advisor should only give you guidance and suggestions, but he should not give direct instructions to your work crew. That would deny you your leadership opportunity. **Originality: Does the leadership service project for Eagle have to be original, perhaps something you dream up that has never been done before? The answer: No, but it certainly could be. You may pick a project that has been done before, but you must accept responsibility for planning, directing, and following through to its successful completion.**
- 2. Limitations:** Routine labor (a job or service normally rendered) should not be considered. Work involving council property or other BSA activity is not permitted. The project also may not be performed for a business or an individual, be of a commercial nature, or be a fund-raiser. Fund-raising is permitted only for securing materials or supplies needed to carry out your project.
- 3. Size:** How big a project is required? 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.

A Word about Blood drives..... The problem with blood drives is, as one Scouter has said, "my secretary can organize a blood drive in 5 minutes - call the blood bank, arrange a date, and they'll provide posters and show up with a crew. How does that show leadership?" Good question, and not one you want to try to justify in front of your board of review. Blood drives can be worthy service projects, but you have to be careful to plan them to meet the expectations for an Eagle Scout Leadership Service project. You will want to do a project that requires a number of volunteers who will carry out the project under your leadership. One way to make this work is to scale up the project. Set an ambitious goal, above and beyond the typical drive. For example, organize more than one drive at different locations. Plan a series of informational meetings at different institutions to ensure larger turnouts. You'll need volunteers to help promoting the project, processing the crowds, etc. You may have to coordinate more than one blood collecting crew. You get the idea - if you do an ordinary, easy collecting drive of some sort, you are certainly providing a service, but can you explain to your board of review how you demonstrated Eagle-quality leadership? Scale up the project so that they can see what kind of leader you are.) (Note: This applies to all kinds of drives.... Clothing drives, donation drives, etc.)

What *not* to do:

- Don't wait until the last minute! The Eagle Boards of Review and deadlines for paperwork submittal are scheduled once a month and are posted on the Council's calendar.
- Begin projects prior to achieving Life Rank or ending after your Eagle Board of Review
- Work on your project prior to getting all approvals, including the Council's Eagle Board of Review Committee.
- Any projects for the benefit of the Boy Scouts of America, including troop or council property
- Any project that another Scout is using for his Eagle project. The Eagle Scout service project is an individual matter; therefore, two Eagle Scout candidates may not receive credit for working on the same project.
- Projects involving only routine labor normally done by paid staff.
- Any project for profit-making organizations. For example, painting the clubhouse for a homeowners association, installing curb reflectors in a store's parking lot, doing landscaping for a local business, etc.

What to do:

- Submit your project for approval no later than 6 months before your 18th birthday.
- Consult with local Scouting leadership, starting with your unit, when selecting a project
- Choose a project you will be proud of for the rest of your life

- Do a project that really stretches you
- Start documenting from day one (you will use this info for your final report)
- Keep a log of the hours you put into your search for a project

Procedure

Project Development and Approval:

1. Plan the Project

The Scout should take the initiative to come up with a project plan. A good way to do this is to contact the charitable or community entity the Scout wishes to serve: they will always have a better idea of what they need than will the Scout. A “plan” presupposes some complexity: one need not do much planning for a simple maintenance task or a routine activity, such as painting a hallway or trimming shrubs. In this regard, the question to be asked is, Does the entity plan to conduct the proposed maintenance even if the Scout doesn’t do it as a project? If the Scout finds that the answer to this question is “yes,” then it would not qualify as an Eagle project.

You may use an electronic version of the workbook. Either the PDF (Acrobat Reader) or RTF (Rich Text Format) versions of the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook are available for downloading from either the National BSA or the local Pioneer Valley Council website. The RTF version may be opened using various word processing software, including Microsoft Word. The PDF version may only be printed, but not directly edited on your computer.

The project plan may be typed on computer or it may be hand written, but it must be very neat. The plan should tell someone else everything they would need to know to carryout your project without you present. If the project involves building something, then you should include detail plans or drawings and a list of materials required. Photographs may also be of value here for some projects.

Note: as of September of 2005, it will no longer be necessary to fill out the PVC project approval sheet. Only the National Workbook is required.

2. Obtain Project Approval

Prior to beginning the project, the candidate shall completely fill in the applicable portions of the Leadership Service Project Workbook and obtain project plan approvals (signature and date) from the representative of the organization benefiting from the project, his Scoutmaster / Coach / Advisor, and Unit Committee Member.

Note: The Scout and his leaders should not assume that the unit’s and entity’s endorsement guarantees project approval. It is very important that you do not proceed with any of the project until the PVC Council Committee has signed it.

The project is now ready to turn in to the PVC Council Registrar for approval to proceed. You should keep a Xerox copy of the project, exactly as turned in to the Registrar, in case it

is lost during the approval cycle. The Registrar will co-ordinate with the Council Eagle Board of Review Committee and notify the Scout of the time and place where he will meet with the Board to present his project in person. Typically this will be at the next scheduled meeting of the Eagle Review Board which is held on the second Tuesday of the month at the City Hall in Springfield. The dates are listed in the Council calendar.

Note: Projects need to be turned into the Registrar no later than the 1st Tuesday of each month in order to be reviewed that month.

At the meeting, the Scout appears before the Committee in full uniform and be prepared to answer any questions the members of the board may have. If the Committee finds the project acceptable, the scout's Service Project Workbook will be signed and returned to the scout and work on it may begin immediately. In some circumstances, the Committee may ask the scout to revise the project or provide additional information before final approval is given. In those cases, the scout will be invited to appear before the board again at the following month's meeting.

Note: Because there may be up to a month's delay in the granting of final approval, and to allow sufficient time to properly carry out the work, it is imperative that unit leaders encourage scouts to submit their Eagle projects for consideration no later than 6 months prior to their 18th birthday.

3. Work the Project

Now that the hard part is over, you can begin the fun part -- working the project! It is important that you keep very good notes about everything that is done. Keep lists of all work done, who does the work, and how much time they each spent. For your final report, you will need to discuss how well the plan worked and all areas where you were not able to follow the plan, so keep good track of this information as you go along. Take pictures of each stage of the work. These will be included in the final report and will be a nice souvenir of an important milestone in your life. Keep track of all materials, supplies, tools, etc. used, paying particular attention to any differences from your original plan. Save all receipts.

If there are any last-minute changes to the original project, those changes must be noted along with the reason for the modification. If, for some reason, you are not able to carry out the project that you planned originally, you may have to start the process over again. This means that a new project plan, approvals, etc., may have to be obtained. Discuss the situation with your unit leader, Council Advancement Chairman or Council Eagle Board Chairman.

Your project must be completed before your 18th birthday; in fact, it should be completed in time for you to hold your Eagle Scoutmaster's Conference before your 18th birthday. Make sure that the representative of the organization benefiting from your project and your unit leader verifies completion of your project by signing page eight of the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook along with your signature. Record the date on which you completed your project on your Eagle Scout Rank Application.

Remember: Although the project concept was approved before work began, the Eagle Board of Review process will determine the manner in which the project was carried out. It should not be assumed that the pre-approval of the project means that the Board will approve the

way the project was carried out and could in fact be reason to deny the awarding of the Eagle rank.

4. Final Write-up

Once you have completed the project, you must prepare a final written report describing all phases (from planning to completion) of your project. Any pictures, letters of approval or commendations, newspaper clippings, etc., should be included in your report.

This information is entered in the last section of the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook.

In the 'Carrying Out the Project' workbook section, briefly describe what was done and how you deviated from the plan. Go through each section of the plan and write a summary of the results versus the plan. For example, discuss if you had all of the materials you needed or if you had a lot left over. Summarize the actual costs, tools used (and tools needed that you did not have), or anything else of interest. Provide a record of all the time worked by you and your volunteers. This can be done in a list or table showing names, dates, hours worked, and tasks performed by each volunteer. Since the objective of the project is to demonstrate leadership of others, you should discuss your leadership roll.

Hopefully, you took many photographs during each phase of the project. Include a section in your report for representative photographs. A photo of you presenting the finished product to the organization for which you did the work helps show off the value of the project.

Be prepared to discuss questions such as how you demonstrated leadership, how the work was performed, how the project benefited the organization or community, and how the plan was followed. Your report is submitted concurrently with your Eagle Application.

Eagle Board of Review:

1. Unit Review

When all the requirements except the board of review for the rank of Eagle, including the service project, have been completed, an Eagle Scout Rank Application must be filled out and sent to the council service center promptly. The *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, properly filled out, must be submitted with the application. It is imperative that all requirements for the Eagle Scout rank including Scoutmaster's Conference, the project and the final write-up, be completed prior to the candidate's 18th birthday.

The application should be signed by the unit leader at the proper place. The unit committee reviews and approves the record the record of the Eagle candidate before the application is submitted to the local council. If a unit leader or unit committee chooses not to sign or otherwise approve an application, the Eagle candidate may still be granted a board of review. The failure of the unit leader or unit committee to sign an application may be considered by the board of review in determining the qualifications of the Eagle candidate.

2. Council Verification of Factual Material

The council office shall verify the candidate's registration and the accuracy of dates provided on the application. In the event of errors or discrepancies, the council office shall contact the candidate and/or his unit to verify the information or make appropriate corrections. The council may contact the references provided by the candidate. Only after verification of the information on the application and a thorough review of the Eagle Project Report will the candidate be contacted by the Chair of his Board of Review and a date and time established for the board.

After the contents of an application have been verified and appropriately signed, the application, and Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, will be forwarded from the council service center to the chairman of the Eagle board of review Committee so that a board of review may be scheduled.

Note: Like the project submittals, Eagle applications need to be turned into the scout service center no later than the 1st Tuesday of each month in order to allow sufficient time for the registrar to verify the material and allow the Committee Chairman to schedule the necessary boards.

3. Board of Review

The candidate scout will be notified by the registrar of the time and place for his Eagle Board of review. All boards are conducted in accordance with the standards and procedures required by the National BSA:

3.1. All boards shall be conducted in accordance with standards and procedures required by the National Council, BSA. "The 12 Steps from Life to Eagle" summarize the procedures and can be found on back page of the Project Workbook.

3.2. Pioneer Valley Councils hold regularly schedule Eagle Boards of Review on the second Tuesday of each month at the Springfield City Hall starting at 7:00 PM. The actual dates can be found in the Council Calendar.

3.3 Scouts must appear before the board in full Scout Uniform. Venturers appear before the board in the uniform adopted by their crew, or dressed neatly as if interviewing for a job or college admission.