

Soar With The Eagles

Guidelines for earning your Eagle Scout rank.

Discusses requirements for submitting your proposal, doing your project, writing your report, the Board of Review and the Appeal process.

This is a general guide for getting started toward on your Eagle project that is suitable for use by any council. The material represents my observations over many years of working with Eagle candidates, and may differ from current expectations in your council. Ask your unit Eagle advisor about any specific requirements or guidelines that your council may have.

When to begin

After you receive your Life Scout rank, you should receive the **Life to Eagle** packet and the **Eagle Rank Application** form. Some units provide these, other units may expect you to get these from your Council Service Center. You will not need the Eagle Rank Application until after you complete your service project.

To be eligible for the Eagle rank, you must earn 21 merit badges, perform a service project of significant value to the community, and complete some other requirements listed in the Scout Handbook. You may begin working on your service project anytime after you earn Life, regardless of the number of merit badges that you have earned. You **must** complete all requirements and submit the necessary paperwork to Council before you reach your 18th birthday. You may have your Board of Review up to 90 days after your eighteenth birthday (this can be extended for certain situations).

Follow the instructions in the Life to Eagle packet carefully. All the necessary steps are outlined in the packet and most of the material can be used in the writing of the final report. Make several **copies** of the packet and of the Eagle Rank Application before writing anything. Make all your entries in the copies and when you are satisfied with your work, then fill out the original forms. Usually, it takes about three tries before you get the Eagle Rank Application filled in correctly.

What you must do

- **Eagle Service Project**

Plan, organize, and direct a project of significant value to the community. Your project proposal **must** be approved by your unit leader, unit committee, and council or district advancement committee before you actually begin working on the project.

- **Eagle Service Project Report**

After completing the project, prepare a report that discusses your project. You may start your report whenever you feel ready.

Complete the additional requirements listed in the Scout Handbook. Then, complete and submit the Eagle Rank Application to your unit advancement person or Eagle advisor. You **must** complete all requirements before your 18th birthday and have your Eagle Rank Application signed by the appropriate person at your Council Service Center.

- **Eagle Board of Review**

After your Eagle Rank Application is signed, arrange to have a Board of Review. The Board should include a representative from the District Advancement Committee. If the Board does not accept your application, then the Board must explain why the application was refused and what can be done (if possible) to correct any problems. You have the right to appeal the Board's decision.

- **Review by BSA National**

After the Board of Review and after the application has been appropriately signed, return all your paperwork and a properly completed Advancement Report to the Council Service Center. Council will send this material to National Headquarters for a final review, which normally takes about four to six weeks. If National accepts your application, you are now an Eagle Scout and your unit can begin planning your Eagle Court of Honor to award you with your new rank.

The Eagle Service Project

When to begin

You may begin working toward your Eagle service project anytime after you earn Life, regardless of the number of merit badges that you have earned. Your project idea must be approved by your unit leader, unit committee, and council or district advancement committee before you actually begin working on the project.

Follow the instructions in the Life to Eagle packet carefully. All the necessary steps are outlined in the packet and most of the material can be used in the writing of the final report. Make several copies of the packet before writing anything. Make all your entries in the copies and when you are satisfied with your work, then fill out the original forms.

What are the steps to follow

1. You must plan, organize, and direct a project of significant value. This is your opportunity to demonstrate leadership qualities. You are expected to be in charge of this project and the project should be a reflection of you, your goals and your abilities.
2. The project may benefit community, school, church, civic group, or similar, but may not benefit a Scouting group. Contact and seek suggestions from local groups, such as the Mayor's office, First Aid Squad, Church, Fire Department, Schools and Nurseries, Parks and Environmental groups, etc. Arrange to have a contact person from the sponsor to monitor the progress of the project. Also, locate a technically knowledgeable person to guide and instruct you as you work on your project. Usually, it takes several months to locate a project. Many scouts spend three or four months (or more) trying to find the right project.
3. After locating a project and discussing your ideas with your Scout leaders, prepare a project proposal. You must specify the project objectives, how you plan to accomplish the project, what resources you have or will need. This should fully disclose how you intend to carry out the project and should be supported with lists of tools, expenses, hours required. Provide a milestone chart that shows each of the steps to be completed, when the steps will be accomplished, how many volunteer hours each step will require.

Planning usually requires several months to complete. Ask your Eagle advisor whether your council has established guidelines for number of hours for planning and completing the project.

4. Obtain approval from the sponsoring organization, your unit leader, the unit committee and the District Advancement Committee. This usually requires about two or more weeks. You may be asked to revise or change parts of the plan and to resubmit for approval, which could add several more weeks.

5. Finally you and your friends and other volunteers can actually do the project. This is usually the fun part. You and your family do not actually do the project, though you may work on the project -- this is your opportunity to demonstrate leadership by motivating other people and by directing the project. Usually, this takes from a few days to several weeks.
6. After completing the project, summarize the project with a final report. Discuss how the project was accomplished, any problems that you encountered, any changes or deviations from your project approval form. Discuss budget, funding, volunteer hours involved, tools and equipment. The report should indicate how the sponsor, the people involved, and you benefit from the project. Completing the report can take from a few weeks to many, many, many months. Ask your Eagle advisor whether your council has established guidelines for writing your project report.

The Eagle Service Project Report

How to begin

Before you start your project, even before you begin planning your project, get a notebook. Record events in your notebook when they happen and keep as accurate a set of notes as possible. When you call or visit some one to discuss your project, write that in your notebook. Make a separate section to record what you buy, what is donated, any money that you receive. In a separate section, record when you do the various parts of your project, who helped, how much time each of the volunteers spent on the project. Make a section to list tools and equipment.

If you keep good records, the report will almost write itself. You may start your report whenever you feel ready.

Suggested Project Report Outline

As you write your report, emphasize your **Leadership** your **Planning**, your **Organization** of project details, your project **Direction** (instruction and direction of project volunteers). Try to include strong statements, such as "I said... ," "I decided... ," "I think..." Ask your Eagle advisor whether your council has established guidelines for writing your project report

1. Introduction

Tell what your project is, what you intended to accomplish, why you selected this particular project. Tell who your sponsor is and how your project benefits the sponsor. Mention the sponsor representative, and if you had some one guiding and instructing you technically, mention that person.

2. Project implementation

Describe the planning stages of your project, who you met with, any special problems in planning that you had to resolve, any special concerns such as safety. Discuss what you did to prepare for your project, such as presentations to sponsoring organizations, raising funds, getting donations of material and equipment, preparing posters and handouts, what you did to get people to volunteer.

Discuss the actual work required to accomplish your project. Was the project completed according to your original plans, or did you have to revise and change some of the steps? Were you able to keep everyone busy, were there any special problems keeping everything under control and running smoothly? Were the volunteers friendly, or did they complain and fool around? Generally, the best way to write this section is to simply say, "This is what we did on the first day," "This is what we did on the second day," etc.

3. Conclusions, Thoughts, Ideas

This section summarizes your efforts and how the project affected you and the people you worked with. Tell whether the project was successful, did it meet the goals outlined in your project approval form? Tell about any unexpected problems and what you might do differently if you were to do this project again. What did you learn from doing the project? How has the project helped you and your sponsor?

Finally, take some time to acknowledge and thank anyone special, the people that gave you that extra bit of support. Acknowledge your sponsor, the person who guided you as a mentor, the people and organizations that donated money and material, your friends who volunteered their time.

4. Tables, Charts, Diagrams

Provide an appendix with the following documents and any other documents that would help the Board of Review evaluate your efforts.

- Time Log -- list the people that worked on your project, when and how long they worked
- Tools and Equipment
- Expenses, Money Received, Goods and Services
- Diagrams and drawings
- Photographs

Eagle Board of Review

After the contents of your application have been verified and appropriately signed, a board of review may be scheduled. Under no circumstances should a board of review be scheduled until the application has been signed at council. Letters of reference are confidential, and their contents are not to be disclosed to any person who is not a member of the board of review.

The review is not an examination; the board does not test the candidate. Rather, the board should attempt to determine the Scout's attitude acceptance of Scouting ideals. The board should make sure that good standards of performance have been met in all phases of the Scout's life. A discussion of the Scout Oath and Scout Law is in keeping with the questioning, to make sure that the candidate recognizes and understands the value of Scouting in his home, unit, school, and community. The decision of all boards of review is arrived at through discussion and must be unanimous.

The board of review for an Eagle candidate is composed of at least three but not more than six members. The board of review members should convene at least 30 minutes before the candidate appears in order to review the application, reference checks, and service project report. At least one district or council advancement representative must be a member of the Eagle board of review if the board of review is conducted on a unit level. A council or district may designate more than one person to serve as a member of Eagle boards of review when requested to do so by the unit. It is not required that these persons be members of the advancement committee; however, they must have an understanding of the importance of the Eagle board of review.

The candidate's unit leader introduces the scout to the members of the board of review. The unit leader may remain in the room, but does not participate in the board of review. The unit leader may be called on to clarify a point in question. In no case should a relative or guardian of the candidate attend the review, even as a unit leader. There is no set of questions that an Eagle candidate should be asked. However, the board should be assured of the candidate's participation in and understanding of the program. This is the highest award that a scout may achieve and, consequently, a thorough discussion of his successes and experiences in Scouting should be considered. After the review, the candidate and his unit leader leave the room while the board members discuss the acceptability of the candidate as an Eagle Scout. The decision must be unanimous. If the candidate meets the requirements, he is asked to return and is informed that he will receive the board's recommendation for the Eagle Award. If the candidate is found unacceptable, he is asked to return and told the reasons for his failure to qualify. A discussion should be held with him as to how he may meet the requirements within a given period. Should the applicant disagree with the decision, the **Appeal** procedures should be explained to him.

Immediately after the board of review and after the application has been appropriately signed, the application, the service project report, reference checks, and a properly completed Advancement Report are forwarded to the council service center.

Review by National Council

After the application has been accepted by the board of review, and appropriately signed by the members of the board, the application, the service project report, reference checks, and a properly completed Advancement Report are forwarded to the council service center.

When the application arrives at the council service center, the Scout executive signs it to certify that the proper procedure has been followed and that the board of review has recommended the candidate for the Eagle Award. The Eagle Scout service project and reference checks are retained by the council. These may be returned to the Scout after his court of honor. Only the Eagle Scout application is forwarded to the national Eagle Scout Service.

The Eagle Scout Service screens the application to ascertain information such as proper signature, positions of responsibility, tenure between ranks, and age of the candidate. Any item not meeting national standards will cause the application to be returned for more information. If the application is in order, the Scout is certified as an Eagle Scout by the Eagle Scout Service on behalf of the National Council. Notice of approval is given by sending the Eagle Scout certificate to the local council. The date used on the certificate will be the date of the board of review. The Eagle Award must not be sold or given to any unit until after the certificate is received by the council service center. The Eagle Scout court of honor should not be scheduled until the local council receives the Eagle rank credentials.

Appealing the Decision

Two sets of circumstances may lead to the appeal of a decision.

1. If the unit leader or unit committee does not sign the application, the Scout or other interested party may appeal the decision.
2. If the appropriate board of review does not recommend the applicant for the rank advancement, the decision may be appealed to the next higher level. With all appeal applications, the final decision rests with the National Boy Scout Committee.

On receipt of the appeal, the district or council committee responsible for advancement will provide for a prompt review to determine the facts. All parties must be interviewed either individually or as a group, but a confrontation should be avoided. A written report with all details must be prepared for the committee responsible for a decision or for forwarding to the National Boy Scout Committee, if necessary.



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