

The Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project - & - You

A Successful Project Idea

Usually, one of the first questions asked by an Eagle Candidate is about "the project." Some have an idea they have been thinking about while others don't have a clue as to what they could or should do or where they can find a project. Those with ideas want to find some form of pre-approval – after all, they don't want to spend a lot of time on something they won't be allowed to do. The answer for those Scouts is the same as the answer to Scouts looking for ideas:

Any concept could be the basis for a successful project.

However, every so often a project suggestion will come with fringe benefits. You may come across a project concept that is all but ready to go. The research and planning is pretty well complete. All or most of the materials are identified, plans and drawing might be provided with directions and sometimes a timeline is included. This is a "canned" project, one where someone else has done all the research and planning.

"Canned" projects with no further planning will not be approved. Project approval comes through your leadership in the form of your planning and development of a concept that would be "helpful to any religious institution, any school, or your community."

Project Coach – A Little Help Can Go A Long Way

After the "what project" question is answered, the remaining questions from an Eagle Candidate are about needs; the need for more information, the need for understanding, seeking answers to "what about?", "how come?", "what if?", and "how do I handle?". Inquiring minds need to know. So unless you're experienced doing Eagle Projects under the 2011 process, rules, and regulations, you are probably going to need some help getting it right. What you need is a mentor, someone knowledgeable and experienced with projects and the approval process. Someone who can help you evaluate your plan, point out the strengths to build on, offer an idea where the ice might be a little thin and point out potential hiding places where mayhem, disaster and really ugly ogres might be hiding.

An Eagle Scout Service Project Coach is interested in your success and is willing to offer advice and counsel based on a lifetime of experiences. A Coach will not do your project for you, nor is it a Coach's job to dictate specific changes, updates, additions or deletions from your proposal. A Coach's job is to promote success, your success. Working with a Coach is not required, but it is highly recommended.

For more information, see the Eagle Scout Service Project Coach presentation.

Special Needs

Special Needs Scouts have special considerations. If you believe you might be a Special Needs Scout, please see the Guide to Advancement, 2011 section on Special Needs - 10.1.0.0.

Two Extremely important Time/Date Considerations

One of the primary planning considerations of your project will be determining how to fund it. If you think you will need to go beyond friends and family to secure donations and discounts, an Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application must be submitted to Baltimore Area Council - two weeks before any fundraising can begin. See the Fundraising Presentation for more information.

The second Time/Date Consideration should not be a surprise to you but you may not fully understand the practical implication of your birthday.

At 12:01AM on the 18th anniversary of your birth, you are identified as an adult by federal, state, and local governments and the Boy Scouts of America. All requirements for Eagle must be completed prior to your 18th birthday. The only exception is your Board of Review which can be scheduled after you turn 18.

If you find you will be unable to complete all the requirements for Eagle before your 18th birthday due to no fault of your own and might need a Time Extension, review the following general considerations:

- BSA will welcome Scouts back after a period of inactivity
 - but all time requirements must still be met.
- Scouts reactivating too late to complete time-oriented requirements will not be granted extensions.
- Scouts who remain active but simply did not focus on advancement will not be granted extensions.
- Examples of circumstances that might be considered
 - health-related incident requiring a hospital stay
 - a disabling injury
 - a significant employment conflict
 - a family emergency
 - a natural disaster
 - severe unseasonable weather that could not have been anticipated
 - unforeseen actions of others affecting the youth's ability to complete the requirements (Planned & anticipated issues are not "unforeseen")

You probably noticed that lack of proper, prior planning is not listed as a good reason for an extension.

Your Promise

Your signature is required on your workbook when you turn it in for review and approval. With your signature you offer the following 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.

To do less than your best effort, does not satisfy this promise or Requirement 5.

Realities of the Requirement

- Your project may not include activities that, by law, your helpers would not be allowed to do in a workplace.
- Your project must provide sufficient opportunity to fulfill Requirement 5.
- Your Eagle Scout Service Project belongs to you.
 - The effort can be shared by many
 - The responsibility for a successful project belongs to you
 - The credit for a job well done belongs only to you

- To be approved, your proposal must show planning, development, and leadership.
- To be approved, safety issues must be addressed.
- There is no minimum number of hours that must be worked.
- Routine labor is not normally considered appropriate for a project.
- To begin your project prior to approval is counter to the requirements.
 - This is well covered in various documents.
 - This may require you complete a different project.
- All Eagle Scout service projects constitute official Scouting activity.
 - All Eagle Scout service projects are subject to BSA policies and procedures.
- Your Project is part of your unit's program and will be treated as such with regard to policies, procedures, and requirements regarding Youth Protection, two-deep leadership, etc.
- Your Unit leaders need to be aware of your project plans and schedules.
- As with any Scouting activity, the Guide to Safe Scouting applies.
 - You need to understand how this could affect your project.
- The "Sweet 16 of BSA Safety" must also be consulted as an appropriate planning tool.
 - You need to understand how this could affect your project.
- Anyone under 18 who uses any power tool of any size must be supervised by a mature adult experienced in the use of the (specific) tool.
- BSA insurance covers Official Scouting activities.
 - Registered Scouts are provided primary coverage while working on your Project.
 - Unregistered participants are provided coverage in excess of their personal insurance.
 - In some cases chartered organizations might provide insurance.
 - This should be verified; it must not be assumed.

What You Really Need to Understand

- A project is reviewed to gain an understanding of the project, the proposal, and how that will be successful. If all important facets are covered, the review will be very short
- If you wish, a parent, unit leader, or other adult may be present as an observer at any time you are discussing your proposal or project with someone who is reviewing it.
- The project beneficiary can stop work on an approved project.
 - If enough has been done, the project may still be given final approval.
- There may be instances where, upon its completion, the Unit Leader or Project Beneficiary may choose not to approve a project.
 - Perhaps modifications were so material that the extent of service or the impact of the project was insufficient to warrant approval.
 - You could be requested to do more work or even start over with another project.
 - You may choose to meet these requests –or – you may decide your project is worthy and in compliance – and then submit his workbook without final approval.
 - You will be granted a board of review, should you request it.

- If you believe you have been mistreated or your proposal wrongly rejected, you have options.
 - You will have the opportunity for a second opinion and approval, either through another volunteer or professional advancement administrator, or Scout Executive, as determined by the council advancement committee or executive board

Ultimately... the responsibility for success belongs to you!

The final evaluation of your project is left to your board of review.