



OCCONEECHEE COUNCIL Boy Scouts of America

Information provided to prospective merit badge counselors

Citizenship In Society



Key Information and Messages

- November 1, 2021, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is launching the Citizenship in Society merit badge, its newest merit badge for youth in the Scouts BSA program (ages 11-17).
- BSA merit badges give Scouts opportunities to learn more about the world we live in and are earned through completing a series of guided activities and tasks. The new Citizenship in Society merit badge encourages Scouts to explore information on diversity, equity, inclusion, and ethical leadership, and learn why these qualities are important in society and in Scouting.
- **Scouts will conduct research, explore resources on their own, have conversations with merit badge counselors, peers, parents and community members and identify actions they can take to ensure inclusivity and to act as upstanders.**
- The Citizenship in Society merit badge aligns with the Scout Oath and Scout Law, which collectively encourages Scouts to respect the beliefs of others, to be kind, courteous, and to help other people at all times.
- The Citizenship in Society merit badge builds upon existing merit badges, including the American Cultures, Citizenship in the Community, Disability Awareness and American Heritage merit badges, which require Scouts to learn and grow their understanding of diverse perspectives and spur positive action.
- The merit badge was developed carefully and thoughtfully by BSA's Office of Diversity and Youth Development Office, with input from a dedicated group of Scouting volunteers, BSA youth and professional staff, and pairs Scouts with a merit badge counselor who will help facilitate discussion with the Scout as they seek to further understand the diverse world we live in.
- Starting July 1, 2022, the merit badge will be required (mandatory) for any youth seeking to achieve the prestigious Eagle Scout rank.
- This new merit badge is designed to help Scouts learn about the diverse, unique identities and characteristics we each possess, understand different perspectives and experiences, and learn how to encourage an inclusive and welcoming culture in Scouting and in society.
- The new Citizenship in Society merit badge is an important initiative within the Boy Scouts of America's larger commitment to develop a culture where every youth, volunteer, and employee feels a sense of belonging and to build communities where every person feels respected and valued.
- For more information on the Citizenship in Society merit badge and BSA's commitment to diversity and inclusion, you can visit www.scouting.org/dei.

FAQ

RATIONALE / CONTEXT

1. What is the Citizenship in Society merit badge?

The new Citizenship in Society merit badge encourages Scouts to explore information on diversity, equity, inclusion, and ethical leadership, and learn why these qualities are important in society and in Scouting. The new merit badge is designed to help Scouts learn about the different identities and characteristics we each possess, understand different perspectives and experiences, and promote good citizenship in society.

Scouts will conduct research, explore resources on their own, host conversations with adults, peers, parents and community members and identify actions they can take to ensure inclusivity and to act as upstanders.

This merit badge aligns with the Scout Oath and Scout Law, which collectively encourage Scouts to respect the beliefs of others, be kind and courteous, and help other people at all times.

2. Why did BSA create the Citizenship in Society merit badge? Scouting has always promoted “doing a good turn daily,” and as our world evolves, we want to ensure our Scouts evolve with it in understanding, appreciating, and respecting the differences that make us each unique. The Citizenship in Society merit badge is an important initiative designed to help Scouts learn about the unique identities and perspectives we each possess and the importance of encouraging a culture – in Scouting and society – where every person feels respected and valued.

3. What age group is the merit badge intended for? Anyone who is a part of the Scouts BSA program (11 – 17 years old) can pursue the Citizenship in Society merit badge. This merit badge includes some advanced and complex topics, so we recommend Scoutmasters, Counselors and parents weigh-in on a Scout’s readiness for participation.

4. Why is it required for the rank of Eagle Scout? The Eagle Scout Rank represents the highest achievement in Scouting and embodies a commitment to leadership and service, and we believe learning to respect and understand people with different identities and perspectives is foundational to becoming a good leader. The Citizenship in Society merit badge builds upon existing merit badges, including the American Cultures, Citizenship in the Community, Disability Awareness and American Heritage merit badges, which require Scouts to grow their understanding of diverse perspectives and spur positive action in their communities.

5. How does this fit into the merit badge and broader Scouting programs? This merit badge aligns with the Scout Oath and Scout Law, which collectively encourage Scouts to respect the beliefs of others, be kind and courteous, and help other people at all times. The new merit badge complements existing merit badges, such as the American Cultures, Citizenship in the Community, Disability Awareness and American Heritage merit badges, which require Scouts to grow their understanding of diverse perspectives and spur positive action in their communities.

6. How does this merit badge relate to BSA’s previous commitment to better promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within Scouting? BSA is committed to encouraging a culture – in Scouting and society – where every person feels respected and valued. The Citizenship in Society merit badge is the latest initiative as part of our ongoing commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. It encourages Scouts to grow their understanding of the unique identities and perspectives we each possess and promote good citizenship in society.

MERIT BADGE PROCESS

7. Who designed the merit badge patch? The merit badge patch was designed by our Youth Development Office, in collaboration with BSA's Chief Diversity Officer, Elizabeth Ramirez-Washka.

8. Can you explain the symbolism behind the Citizenship in Society merit badge patch design? In the Citizenship in Society merit badge patch, the red, white and blue background represents the United States flag, and the leadership role the Scouts play in their communities, our country and society. The globe symbolizes the many cultures and identities represented in our communities, and the hand is our Scout sign. *The silver outline represents that this merit badge is required for Eagle Scout, in line with the design of the other Eagle-required merit badges.*

9. Did BSA consult any external partners or experts on the merit badge requirements? If so, who? Yes. We worked with external advisors and looked at other non-profit youth organizations to learn best practices for advancing DEI throughout our communities and society.

10. Who developed the merit badge requirements? The Citizenship in Society merit badge was developed carefully and thoughtfully by BSA's Office of Diversity and Youth Development Office, with input from a dedicated group of Scouting volunteers, youth, and professional staff.

11. What are the implementation deadlines for this merit badge?

The merit badge officially launches November 1, 2021, and Scouts can begin completing the requirements at that time. For scouts working on Star Rank or Life Rank, Citizenship in Society qualifies as an Eagle-required badge and may be used as such. Starting July 1, 2022, the merit badge is required (mandatory) for any Eagle Scout who has not fully completed Eagle Scout requirements 1 – 6. *The Eagle Scout board of review need not be completed prior to July 1, 2022, only Eagle requirements 1-6.*

12. Will this delay any Scouts who are close to achieving Eagle Scout? Will the deadline for reaching Eagle Scout be pushed back? This will not delay Scouts close to achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. As with all new Eagle Scout requirements, there will be a grace period for it to become essential to allow for adequate planning time. The merit badge will be available starting November 1, 2021, but won't be required for attainment of the rank of Eagle Scout until July 1, 2022, giving Scouts plenty of time to prepare.

13. Does the Citizenship in Society merit badge increase the number of merit badges required for Eagle Scout? No. The Citizenship in Society merit badge replaces one of the optional merit badges, with a total of 21 total merit badges still required (which will now include seven optional and 14 required merit badges) to attain the rank of Eagle Scout.

14. What qualifications do Citizenship in Society merit badge counselors have? BSA has provided specific guidance to local councils on how to prepare counselors for this merit badge. *The intent is for Citizenship in Society merit badge counselors to guide Scouts on their journey of self-discovery and facilitate important discussions about the diverse world we live in.* Counselors should not advocate for a particular point of view; instead, they will determine whether that Scout's response is based on a good faith effort and rooted in the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Counselors must also adhere to the BSA Code of Conduct and Youth Protection Guidelines in all interactions with youth.

Each Scout's journey is unique. The Scout is responsible for research. *The counselor will not serve as an expert or teacher.* The goal is for counselors to have core knowledge, to be educated and informed, to enable them to serve as an advisor and counselor. Active listening and encouragement of the Scouts will help them on their learning journey. *Citizenship in Society merit badge counselors in Occoneechee Council must complete Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (SCO_1800) in addition to all standard qualifications (i.e. registered as a MBC, YPT current).*



Options for Conducting Merit Badge



Offer Two Options for Scouts to Participate

- Option 1: “Individual” Study
 - Meetings must abide by Youth Protection Guidelines (YPT).
 - Agree upon preference for study style.
 - Discuss goal timing for completion.

- Option 2: Small Group Study
 - Input from the soft launch indicated best results for groups:
 - Of 3 – 5 Scouts.
 - Within two years of age.
 - Within the same unit.
 - Agree on timing for meetings and goal on timing for completion.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
MERIT BADGE SERIES

CITIZENSHIP IN SOCIETY



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"Enhancing our youths' competitive edge through merit badges"



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Overview for Scouts

The focus of the Citizenship in Society merit badge is to provide you with information on diversity, equity, inclusion, and ethical leadership. You'll learn why these qualities are important in society and in Scouting, as well as how to help other people at all times and serve as a leader and an upstander. The Boy Scouts of America continues to be committed to developing a culture in which every youth, volunteer, and employee feels included and welcomed — and to building communities where every person feels respected and valued.

- We welcome families and individuals of all backgrounds and identities to help prepare young people to serve as successful members and leaders of our nation's increasingly diverse communities.
- We are committed to creating inclusive environments and promoting a culture of respect and belonging for all.
- We expect all members to be guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
 - ❑ As found in the definition of “reverent” in the Scout Law, we expect our Scouts to “respect the beliefs of others,” both within and outside of Scouting.
- We want everyone who follows the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law to feel welcomed and able to take advantage of the many opportunities Scouting provides, and we want every Scout to feel a sense of acceptance and inclusion in their unit and in Scouting.
- We expect and appreciate that our Scouts do their best to make all feel welcomed.
 - ❑ Learning about and understanding different identities and abilities will help each Scout understand what to do to help make other Scouts feel welcomed and find a sense of belonging in Scouting.

Instructions for Scouts

By now in your journey as a Scout, you have probably completed other merit badges and become familiar with using the merit badge pamphlet that usually accompanies the requirements. The process of earning this merit badge will be different, as it intentionally places the responsibility of research and identification of resources on you instead of using a merit badge pamphlet.

- You are encouraged to explore as deeply and broadly as you see fit for your personal learning and growth.
- Your merit badge counselor may, for certain requirements, ask you to identify your sources.
- Your counselor will not be providing you with answers or resources, but will be engaging you in conversation to ask about what you have learned and how you plan to apply your new knowledge to your life as a Scout and as a good citizen in society.
- As you undertake these learnings, think about how you can demonstrate the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in your daily life.

Requirements

“Discussion” requirements will be either with a counselor and another individual (in accordance with Youth Protection Guidelines <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss01/>), or with your counselor and a small group (of Scouts), depending upon your preference.

1. Before beginning work on other requirements for this merit badge:
 - a. Research the following terms, and then explain to your merit badge counselor how you feel they relate to the Scout Oath and Scout Law:
 - Identities
 - Diversity
 - Equity
 - Equality
 - Inclusion
 - Discrimination
 - Ethical Leadership
 - Upstander
2. Document and discuss with your counselor what leadership means to you. Share what it means to make ethical decisions.
 - a. Research and share with your counselor an individual you feel has demonstrated positive leadership while having to make an ethical decision. (It could be someone in history, a family member, a teacher, a coach, a counselor, a clergy member, a Scoutmaster, etc.)
 - b. Explain what decision and/or options that leader had, why you believe they chose their final course of action, and the outcome of that action.
3. Consider ethical decision-making.
 - a. Think about a time you faced an ethical decision.
 - Discuss the situation, what you did, and how it made you feel.
 - Share if you would do anything differently in the future and if so, what that would be.

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- b. List three examples of ethical decisions you might have to make in the future at school, at home, in the workplace, or in your community, and what you would do.
 - Share how your actions represent alignment with the Scout Oath and Scout Law
 - c. Explain to your counselor how you plan to use what you have learned to assist you when that time comes, and what action(s) you can take to serve as an upstander and *help other people at all times*.
4. Repeat the Scout Oath and Scout Law for your counselor. Choose two of the three following scenarios and discuss what you could do as a Scout to demonstrate leadership and your understanding of *what it means to help others who may seem different from you*:
 - a. Scenario 1: While at camp, a youth accidentally spills food on another camper. The camper who gets spilled on gets angry and says something that is offensive to people with disabilities; their friends laugh. What could/should you do?
 - b. Scenario 2: Your friend confides in you that some students in school are making insulting comments about one of their identities, and that those same students created a fake social media account to impersonate your friend online and post messages. What could/should you do?
 - c. Scenario 3: A new student in your class was born in another country (or has a parent who was born in another country). Your friends make rude comments to the student about their speech or clothes and tell the student to “go back home where you came from.” What could/should you do?
5. Document and discuss with your counselor:
 - a. Ideas on what you personally can do to create a welcoming environment in your Scouting unit.
 - b. An experience you had in which you went out of your way to include another Scout(s) and what you did to make them feel included and welcomed.
 - c. Things you can do to help ensure all Scouts in your unit are given an opportunity to be heard and included in decision-making and planning.

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6. With your parent's or guardian's approval, connect with another Scout or youth your own age who has an identity that's different from yours. (This means a trait, belief, or characteristic different from you.)
- a. Share with each other what makes the different aspect of your identity meaningful/special to you.
 - b. Share with each other either one of the following:
 - i. A time you felt excluded from a group.
 - What was the situation?
 - How did it make you feel?
 - What did you do?
 - Did anyone stand up for you?
 - What did you learn?
 - Would you do anything differently today?
 - ii. This imaginary situation:
 - You're attending a new school and don't know anyone there yet. You notice they dress very differently than you do. At lunchtime, you decide you'll try to sit with a group to get to know other students. People at two tables tell you there is someone sitting at the currently empty seat at their table, so you end up eating by yourself.
 - How would that make you feel?
 - What could the students have done?
 - If that happened at your school, what would you do?
 - c. Discuss with your counselor what you learned from the discussion with the other Scout or youth.
7. Identify and interview an individual in your community, school, and/or Scouting who has had a significant positive impact in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. If you feel your community, school, or local Scouting group does not have such an individual, then research a historical figure who meets these criteria, and discuss that person with your counselor.
- a. Discover what inspired the individual, learn about the challenges they faced, and share what you feel attributed to their success.
 - b. Discuss with your counselor what you learned and how you can apply it in your life.

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8. With the help of your parent or guardian, study an event that had a positive outcome on how society viewed a group of people and made them feel more welcome. Describe to your counselor the event and what you learned.
 9. Document and discuss with your counselor three or more areas in your life outside of Scouting where you feel you can actively provide stronger leadership in.
 - a. Making others feel included.
 - b. Practicing active listening.
 - c. Creating an environment where others feel comfortable to share their ideas and perspectives.
 - d. Helping others feel valued for their input and suggestions.
 - e. Standing up for others.
 10. Discuss with your counselor how stereotyping people can be harmful, and how stereotypes can lead to prejudice and discrimination. Share ideas you have for challenging assumptions and celebrating individuality.
 11. Scouting strives to develop young people to be future leaders in their workplaces, schools, and community environments. As you look at your current involvement in school, your family, Scouting, your job, and/or community, think about how you can have a positive impact in diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - a. Describe your ideas on how you can and will support others with different identities to feel included and heard at your school, workplace, and/or social settings in your community.
 - b. Explain how including diverse thoughts and opinions from others with different identities can:
 - Make your interactions more positive.
 - Help everyone benefit by considering different opinions.
 - c. Give three examples of how limiting diverse input can be harmful.
 - d. Give three examples of how considering diverse opinions can lead to innovation and success.