



# Citizenship in Society Merit Badge

## *Counselor Guide for the Mid-America Council*



*\*Updated September 2022*



# Agenda/Overview of What Will be Covered

- Review BSA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Vision and Mission Page 3
- Examine the Goals of the Citizenship in Society Merit Badge Page 4
- Analyze Where to Begin Pages 5 - 11
- Examine Merit Badge Requirements Pages 13 - 25
- Appendix
  - General MB Info and MB Counselor Videos Page 27
  - Fact Sheet Pages 28 - 30
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**Citizenship involves people working together to make positive differences to the society in which they live – locally, nationally and globally.**

**This process is beneficial for individuals, and essential for strengthening and safeguarding our society.**



# Review our DEI Vision and Mission

- **Our DEI Vision and Mission are important to share as they explain our goals for Scouting: to expand into additional communities to work with more families and youth – to enable all who wish to participate to benefit from Scouting.**



## Our Vision

To partner with all families and communities in raising young people of high moral character, development of their leadership skills and preparing them to serve and thrive in a world of increasing complexity and challenge.

## Our Mission

The Boy Scouts of America promotes a culture where every youth, volunteer, and employee feels a sense of belonging and builds communities where every person feels respected and valued. Leading by example and encouraging each other to live by the values expressed by the Scout Oath and Scout Law, we welcome families of all backgrounds to help prepare young people to serve as successful members and leaders of our nation's increasingly diverse communities.



# Examine Merit Badge Goals

**Why did we create this merit badge? Because it is important to help Scouts...**

- Learn about the diverse, unique identities and characteristics we each possess.
- Understand different perspectives and experiences.
- Respect the beliefs of others, both within and outside of Scouting.
- Identify actions to help create an inclusive and welcoming culture of belonging.
- **Their understanding of differing identities and abilities is integral to helping them know how to make other Scouts feel welcomed.**
- **It also equips Scouts to become our society's future leaders who will lead with greater empathy and respect for all.**





# Where to Begin...

- Familiarize yourself with the Scout Requirements and Counselor Guidelines.
- Complete the DEI Volunteer Training to learn key terms and Information:  
[https://training.scouting.org/courses/SCO\\_1800](https://training.scouting.org/courses/SCO_1800)
- Remember your role is to elicit thinking, learning, conversation and sharing.
- Please remember to be friendly, courteous and kind and leave any biases at the door. Listening is the most critical skill to facilitate this merit badge.
- For questions in the Mid-America Council (MAC), please reach out to [Janelle Eastman](#), then if you still have questions, please contact the Office of Diversity @ [Officeof.ChiefDiversityOfficer@scouting.org](mailto:Officeof.ChiefDiversityOfficer@scouting.org).

**THANK YOU for serving as a counselor!**  
**We greatly appreciate your collaboration on this important initiative!**



# Host a Meeting to Share Key Information

## Hold a meeting to share key information on the merit badge.

### a. Options:

- Invite parents and host with Scouts and parents.
- Host with parents only.

*Based upon feedback, meeting with both together seems to be most effective and expeditious in gaining agreement. Both Scouts and parents need to understand that sensitive topics of a sexual nature belong in the home and not in this merit badge.*

### b. Discuss the objectives of the merit badge and the unique format.

### c. Review all requirements using an example to engage all in understanding how the requirements help facilitate learnings. (You can review all requirements or just the requirements you feel are necessary for parents to know.)

### d. Field questions.



# Discuss the Unique Approach to Learning

**Scouts working on this merit badge will NOT use a merit badge pamphlet. We intentionally chose this approach as we want to encourage each Scout to explore information that is most relevant/most interests them to help optimize their learnings.**

- How will Scouts learn? They will:
  - Complete all requirements as included in the Scout Requirements document.
  - Conduct research.
  - Explore resources on their own.
  - Participate in a series of conversations with:
    - The counselor
    - Other youth
    - Members of society
  - Identify actions they can take to ensure inclusivity and to act as an upstander.
- Tell me more about the research and execution:
  - Each Scout's journey is unique.
  - The Scout is responsible for research.
  - They are not prescriptive.
  - They're customizable based upon where Scouts are in their journey and their areas of interest.
  - 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.



# Offer Diverse Options for Scouts to Participate

Offering Scouts the option of pursuing the merit badge “individually” or in a “group setting” will help ensure they’re comfortable in participating. These are guidelines on approaches that have worked effectively. ***The small group study is highly recommended.***

## “Individual” Study

- Meetings must abide by Youth Protection Guidelines (YPT).
- Agree upon preference for study style.
- Discuss goal timing for completion.

## Small Group Study

- Groups are ideally:
  - Comprised of 3 – 5 Scouts.
  - Within two years of age.
  - Within the same unit.
- Agree on timing for meetings and goal on timing for completion.

## Group Study - with Break-Outs

- Share key information with all up front.
- Then break-out into small groups – the same groupings as used for small group study is recommended.
- A counselor is needed for each break-out group.
- Having a “floater” observe interactions and periodic huddles with all counselors.

## • Facilitation – Target Approach to Audience

- MAC may customize the approach as deem most effective for their groups. At this time small group study is what is approved with “Individual” being approved by the unit.

## • Topics for Coverage

- Types of diversity discussed may align with those deemed acceptable by the charter partner. No sexually related content should be discussed.





# Options for Conducting Merit Badge

**You may choose to have Scouts complete pre-work prior to the first meeting, or to hold a kickoff meeting with work on requirements completed between meetings.**

- Timing for Completion of the Merit Badge
  - Varies based upon the depth of study and types and frequency of meetings.
  - Agree on timing so all are accountable for meeting the timelines established.
  - One month is estimated as the average time needed for Scouts to work on and complete the requirements and participate in meetings with their counselor to discuss findings.
  - Feedback has been that the conversations are highly valuable for all, so don't rush the timing.

- Options for Discussions
  - In-person or Zoom may be utilized.
  - If Zoom, all participants must have their cameras on (pending any necessary accommodation needs).
  - Be sure to abide by Youth Protection Guidelines.
  - Ensure conversations are age-appropriate for participants.



# Establish Ground Rules on Safety, Privacy and Respect

**It is imperative that counselors set the stage for all meetings to:**

- **Ensure a safe environment where Scouts feel comfortable to be open and share their thoughts, ideas and experiences without fear of judgment or a lack of confidentiality.**

**Ground rules for counselors to read/share:**

- This is a safe environment.
- We value everyone's thoughts and opinions.
- We will treat one another with respect.
- It is critical that everyone be on time for all meetings.
- Everything discussed during the sessions is confidential.
- There are no stupid questions.
- Share the air – let everyone have a chance to speak.
- Use "I" statements.
- "Document" can mean write or record (via voice or video)
  - Critical for those with differing styles or abilities.





# Share Ground Rules for Scouts' Participation

**Also, important to setting the stage is sharing ground rules for Scouts - majority are relevant for both individual and small group pursuit of the merit badge.**

- Please:

- Share your ideas and experiences with others (even if you feel your ideas are different).
- Give each other the benefit of the doubt.
- Be open and listen to learn vs. respond.
- Be sincere and authentic.
- Be accountable – understand and accept responsibility for your words and actions.
- Be ON TIME.
- Be present – be focused and engaged; eliminate distractions and have your camera on if meeting via Zoom.

- Please DO NOT:

- Be distracted (on phone, etc.).
- Interrupt – if someone is speaking, let them finish, regardless of the time.
- Hold side bar conversations (don't be talking to your friend while someone else is speaking).
- Judge others.
- Share others' experiences with anyone outside the group.

DO



&





# Review Requirements






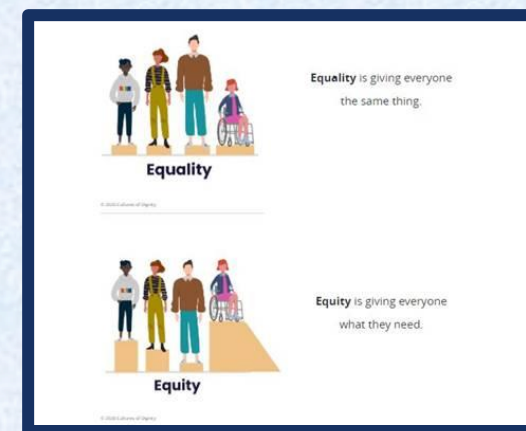
# Set the Stage – Relevance of Requirements

- Our aim/objectives for Scouting are **character development, leadership development, citizenship training, and personal fitness.**
- Critical to achieving these is understanding different preferences and abilities.
- Our goal for this merit badge is to educate, inform and have Scouts think about how to make everyone feel welcomed and be comfortable, so all can take advantage of the benefits of Scouting.
- Critical to helping everyone feel like they belong is understanding different identities and learning from one another what's important to each of us .
  - We need to listen to learn and understand.
- Using an example has been very effective in showcasing how the learnings support and align with the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and values.
  - We've highlighted correlating values with the requirements to help showcase alignment.
- Examples are included and there are additional hypothetical examples for consideration for use in the Appendix.



# Requirement #1 – DEI Terms and Ethical Decisions

1. Before beginning work on other requirements for this merit badge:
    - a. Research the following words to learn their meanings, and explain to your merit badge counselor how you feel they relate to the Scout Oath and Scout Law:
      - **Identities/ differences** are something everyone has many of, which include, but are not limited to:
        - Race - Ethnicity - Gender – Age – Financial background - Mental and/or physical health and abilities
        - Religious or ethical values system - National origin - Language group
      - **Diversity** is the presence of the incredible range of individual identities.
      - **Equality** is the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities.  
*Example: Everyone gets the same thing/is treated the same.*
      - **Equity** in Scouting means helping to provide individuals with the resources they need to ensure their ability to access the same opportunities as everyone else.
        - What people need may differ from person to person or from community to community. *Example: voice to text or sign language.*
        - Equity represents impartiality and fairness by offering even opportunities.
- Helpful Hint: Share this graphic to showcase Equality vs. Equity to help Scouts understand the difference.** 



*\*Definitions are provided for counselor use. Scouts are requested to perform their own research in learning the definitions of the words.*



# Requirement #1 – DEI Terms and Ethical Decisions (*cont.*)

- **Inclusion** is the action or state of including or being included within a group or structure. Inclusion involves authentic participation and a genuine sense of belonging.
  - In Scouting, inclusion denotes sharing of power within the unit through concentrated efforts to bring traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision-making.  
*Examples: Ensure all Scouts have a chance to share their thoughts and ideas. Scouts learn sign language to communicate with another Scout who uses sign language to communicate.*
- **Discrimination** is the act of making unjustified distinctions between human beings based on their diversity, be it groups, classes, or other categories to which they are perceived to belong. People may be discriminated against based on personal biases and the federal government protects certain people against discrimination.
- **Ethical** means relating to moral principles or the branch of knowledge dealing with these terms – *be fair and just.*
- **Leadership** is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, toward the achievement of a goal.
- **Ethical Leadership** is leadership *directed by respect for ethical beliefs and values* and for the dignity and rights of all others. *It is thus related to concepts such as trust, honesty, consideration, empathy, and fairness.*
- **Upstander** – any person who does the right thing at the right time.
  - In Scouting, upstanders stop bullying when they see it, (this means speaking up and/or getting an adult to intervene; physical altercations are not condoned nor tolerated).
  - They support their fellow Scouts. Upstanders support equal rights and equity for all people regardless of their identities.

*\*Have the Scouts do pre-work in researching and defining the terms and come prepared to discuss them to help get the conversation started.*



# Requirement #2 – DEI Terms and Ethical Decisions

2. Document and discuss with your counselor what leadership means to you and what you think 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, teacher, coach, counselor, clergy member, Scoutmaster, etc.
  - b. Explain what decision and/or options that leader had, why they chose their final course of action, and the outcome of that action.

***Example: You're in charge of (or helping with) organizing a troop caving outing that most of your unit is very excited about, but there is a Scout in your patrol who is claustrophobic and would be very uncomfortable going on the trip.***

- ***What could/should you do?***







# Requirement #3 – Ethical Decisions

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.
    - Discuss if you would do anything differently in the future.
  - b. List three examples of ethical decisions you might have to make:
    - At school, at home, in the workplace, or in the community.

***Example: You are leading a team at the Scout skills competition at the Camporee and responsible for choosing the members of the team that will compete in the knot relay. Two of your good friends want to participate, but realistically, two other Scouts who you aren't as good friends with are far more skilled, but no one wants to work with them because they dress differently than other students because of their religion.***

- 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.*



**Integrity - We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.**



# Requirement #4 – Scout Oath, Scout Law and Application

4. Repeat the Scout Oath and Scout Law for your counselor. Choose two of the following scenarios and discuss with your counselor 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*:

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?

Scenario 2: Your friend confides in you that some students in school are making insulting comments about one of their differences/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?

Scenario 3: A new student in your class moved from another country (or has a parent who immigrated from another country). Your friends make rude comments to the student, making fun of their speech or clothes, and tell the student to “go back home where you came from.” What could/should you do?

**Do a good turn daily.**



# Requirement #4 – Scout Oath, Scout Law and Application (*cont.*)

## ***Helpful Hints:***

- **After Scouts identify what they could/should do, ask them to act it out.**
  - **It will help solidify their ideas and abilities to put thoughts into action.**
- **Ask Scouts to share an example from their own experience that illustrates exclusion.**
  - **Talk about how they could have been (or were) an upstander.**
  - **Ask them to reenact the situation or to act out what they would do.**



# Requirement #5 – Creating a Welcoming Environment

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 where you went out of your way to include another Scout 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.

## ***Helpful Hints:***

### **Also ask:**

- **What should we do to welcome new Scouts?**
- **What ideas do you have on how we should get to learn about new Scouts?**
- **What's something that made you feel welcomed when you joined Scouting?**
- **What's something you wish had been done when you joined Scouting to help you feel welcomed/get to know others?**

**Cooperation - We make a positive difference;  
we cooperate with others and make friends.**



# Requirement #6 – Exploring Identities

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 each of you.
  - b. Share with each other one of the following:
    - i. A time you felt excluded from a group, what the situation was, and how it made you feel.
      - What did you do?
      - Did anyone stand up for you?
      - What did you learn, and 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 this happened at your school, what would you do?
  - c. Discuss with your counselor what you learned from this discussion with the other Scout or youth.

***\*Scouts should feel free to discuss any differences/identities they wish. Sensitive subject matter should be discussed at home with the family unit. All conversations must abide by Youth Protection Guidelines.***

**Belief - We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.**



# Requirements #7 & 8 – Community Research

7. Identify and interview an individual in your community, school, and/or Scouting who has had a significant positive impact 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.

***Examples: You could share information on one of these individuals as an example:***

***\*Please have parents approve any links you wish to provide for consideration for use.***

- 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.
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.

***\*Examples: Women's suffrage; Civil rights movement.***

**...We keep ourselves mentally awake.**





# Requirement #9 – Helping Other People

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.

• ***Examples:***

- ***You're responsible for your Patrol's menu on the next campout. How would you go about ensuring menu offerings provide something for everyone (i.e. food restrictions due to allergies, religious practices, principles, etc.).***
- ***You are the leader of a Scouting "good turn" project. There are two smart, shy, introverted Scouts in your group. How do you make them comfortable to share their ideas?***

**Care - We support others and take care of the world in which we live.**



# Requirement #10 – Addressing Stereotypes

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 stereotypes and celebrating individual traits and characteristics.

### ***Examples of Stereotypes:***

- ***A friend from Scouting is on your hockey league and has parents who are from Canada. You ask your friend why they are not better at the sport.***

**Respect - We have self-respect and respect for others.**





# Requirement #11 – Helping Other People

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 could make an impact in diversity, equity and inclusion. Consider your future in those areas, and then do the following:
  - a. Describe how you will support others with differences/ identities to feel included and heard in daily conversations in your school, workplace, or social settings in your community.
  - b. Explain how including diverse thoughts and opinions from others with differences/ identities can make your interactions more positive, and how all can benefit by considering different opinions.
    - Give three examples of how considering diverse opinions can lead to innovation and success, and three examples of how limiting diverse input could be harmful.

## ***Example:***

- ***You are on the planning committee for an event for your Scouting unit and are in charge of coordination of the date and location.***
  - ***You meet with the planning committee and excitedly share what you have planned.***
    - ***One member of the committee comments that the date falls on Yom Kippur.***
    - ***Another member mentions that the location does not have wheelchair access.***
  - ***Without their input, you would have inadvertently excluded multiple members of your unit from participating. Diverse input is integral to success. Listen and learn.***

**...better citizenship in my troop, in my community, and in my contacts with other people.**



# Appendix





# Videos

View these videos to help prepare to serve as a merit badge counselor or use the general information video to help share information and set expectations with volunteers, parents and/or Scouts.

- Merit Badge Counselor video: <https://vimeo.com/613861523>
- General Information video: <https://vimeo.com/610950264>





# Fact Sheet

- **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.

- **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 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 encouraging a culture – in Scouting and society – where every person feels respected and valued.

- **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 badge includes some advanced and complex topics, so we recommend Scoutmasters, counselors and parents weigh-in on a Scout’s readiness for participation.



# Fact Sheet *(continued)*

- **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.

- **What are the implementation deadlines for this merit badge?**

The merit badge will be available starting November 1, 2021, and will become required for attainment of the rank of Eagle Scout beginning July 1, 2022, giving Scouts plenty of time to prepare.

- **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.

- **How does this fit into the merit badge and broader Scouting programs?**

This 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 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.



# Fact Sheet *(continued)*

- **Why is there no merit badge pamphlet?**

The Citizenship in Society merit badge encourages a self-guided/self-exploration approach to learning. While there is no official pamphlet, there will be a counselor's guide to serve as the foundation for the badge. The intent is for Citizenship in Society merit badge counselors to guide Scouts on their journey of self-discovery and facilitate discussions as Scouts seek to further understand the diverse world we live in.

- **What qualifications do Citizenship in Society merit badge counselor 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.

- **What role can parents play in this new merit badge?**

The Citizenship in Society merit badge is intended to help Scouts understand, appreciate, and respect the differences we all have that make us unique, to help encourage a culture of belonging for all in Scouting. We hope parents/guardians and caregivers will play a role in guiding Scouts on that journey. However, it's ultimately up to the parents/guardians and Scouts to determine the right level of involvement. Merit badge counselors will also serve as a resource to Scouts and parents.

- **How does this merit badge relate to BSA's previous commitments 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.



# FAQs – Rationale and 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?**

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## **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 badge includes some advanced and complex topics, so we recommend Scoutmasters, counselors and parents weigh-in on a Scout’s readiness for participation.



# FAQs – Rationale and Context (*continued*)

## 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 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.

***Use only if pressed (reactive only):*** In addition to this merit badge, BSA remains committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion through actions and initiatives that encourage inclusivity, such as:

- *Reviewing every element of our programs to ensure diversity and inclusion are engrained at every level for participants and volunteers*
- *Offering diversity and inclusion training for BSA employees and volunteers*
- *Reviewing property names, events and insignia, in partnership with local councils, to ensure that symbols of oppression are not in use today or in the future.*





# FAQs – 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.



# FAQs – Merit Badge Requirements

## **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. Starting July 1, 2022, the merit badge is required for any Eagle Scout having a completed Board of Review July 1, 2022 or later.

## **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.



# FAQs – Merit Badge Requirements *(continued)*

## **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 does not increase the number of merit badges required for attainment of the rank of Eagle Scout – it remains 21. With the addition of the Citizenship in Society merit badge, the Eagle Scouts will now have 14 required merit badges to earn and seven that they may self select for a total of 21.

## **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.

## **15. How will you make sure that the merit badge is achieving its objectives?**

Like all BSA programs, we will continuously evaluate and improve the Citizenship in Society merit badge based on feedback shared by those within the Scouting program.



# Additional Examples for Exercises

- Sample Ideas to Set the Stage:
  - The counselor will share a hypothetical situation (one) to start the conversation with Scouts on thoughts and ideas:
    1. “Due to dyslexia, it makes it challenging for me to complete worksheets and documentation often required for earning merit badges.”
    2. “I use a wheelchair, and there was an event planned where they didn’t realize I couldn’t get in; I was embarrassed and felt bad that I couldn’t participate.”
    3. “English is my second language. When the counselor calls on me to answer a question without giving me time to process, it’s challenging for me to respond.”
    4. “I am diabetic and can’t eat the sweets that are served for all our birthday and holiday celebrations.”
    5. “We had a Scout meeting where we were watching a film on leadership. We were told we had to remain in our seats for the duration of the film. I have ADHD, which can make it difficult for me to sit still for long periods of time, and I was afraid to get up but embarrassed to share why I couldn’t sit that long.”



# Need More Information?

- If you:
  - Have questions
  - Require more information
  - Feel resources would be helpful

...Please reach out to [mac@scouting.org](mailto:mac@scouting.org)

