

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 22-1

May 2022

This newsletter is prepared by the Susquehanna Council Advancement committee as a resource for leaders of cub scout and Scouts BSA units and merit badge counselors. Its purpose is to provide current information on changes regarding advancement, as well as clarifications of advancement requirements and tips, reminders, and guidelines on advancement.

Headlines

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Merit Badges

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A significant resource available

Go to the advancement section of the council's website, if you need any of the following:

- Information to answer many (most) questions, such as
 - BSA or Council policies and procedures for advancement.
 - Current requirements for rank advancement.
 - Current merit badge requirements and info for counselors, including the application and training.
 - Information to assist Life Scouts, unit leaders, and parents to plan for and complete the requirements for Eagle, including guides and all forms.
 - Headlines with information on current topics.
- Points of contact for advancement questions.
- Other resources for current information.
- Link to the site: <https://susquehannabsa.org/advancement/>

Make it a start point and go-to resource for advancement information and all advancement related forms. Strongly suggest that you bookmark this page or the Council's website on your computer for quick access. Tell us if you think something is missing and we will look into adding it.

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End of temporary changes to advancement due to COVID-19.

BSA National has provided questions and answers regarding advancement changes temporarily approved to deal with closures, cancellations, or other issues caused by the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). **Note: most of the temporary changes, suspensions, and deferrals have been removed as of March 1, 2022.** Click this link to view the Q and A's {[link](#)}. Updated 2/23/2022 – Note: the most recent updates are indicated by a diamond in front of the question.

Scouts BSA

➤ New Merit Badge – Citizenship in Society.

BSA has approved a new merit badge, Citizenship in Society, that Scouts may earn in 2022 starting on 1/1/2022.

The goal of the Citizenship in Society merit badge is to help educate Scouts on what diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are; why they are important; and how to lead ethically and inclusively to contribute to the cultivation of an environment of belonging for all Scouts. This merit badge is one of the educational and awareness initiatives the BSA is implementing to ensure every youth feels welcomed and wholly included, to achieve a sense of belonging with the Scouts, and to prepare them for success in our ever-evolving world.

This merit badge is unique in that it will involve a different experience for the Scout to earn it. The merit badge has no pamphlet that provides the answers or information to meet each requirement. Instead, it will require a Scout to do their own research and to dig as deeply and as detailed as the Scout desires. Scouts should plan for multiple sessions over an extended period of time to complete this merit badge.

Anyone can find the most current requirements for this merit badge on the Advancement website and on the page “The Merit Badge Program”, then finding the “Requirements” section and clicking on the link. For the information on the MB for Scouts – a direct [link](#). For the information on the MB for MB counselors – a direct [link](#).

The Citizenship in Society merit badge will become a required merit badge to earn the rank of Eagle starting on July 1, 2022. The total minimum number of merit badges to earn the rank of Eagle remains as 21.

If a Scout completes all of the requirements for the rank of Eagle by June 30, 2022, the Citizenship in Society merit badge is not a required merit badge.

The Citizenship in Society merit badge is a required merit badge for every Scout that completes one or more of the requirements for the rank of Eagle on July 1, 2022 and thereafter.

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Merit Badges

- **Applying to serve as a merit badge counselor – very important to provide qualifications for each merit badge.**

“In order for a request to be complete, the merit badge counselor must provide a list of qualifications for each merit badge for which the counselor requests approval.

The list must provide specific information that demonstrates the individual’s qualifications in the subject of the merit badge, such as training or education completed, certifications received, and experience (work or personal activity). The counselor should use as much space as necessary to provide their qualifications (such as using additional lines on the form or attach an extra page). The counselor must provide copies of appropriate certificates with the Information form.” {Extracted from 3.1.1.f., Susquehanna Council Advancement Policies and Procedures}

Providing specific qualifications for each merit badge to serve as a counselor is essential to the approval process and will greatly contribute to a more rapid review and approval.

- **Annual Re-registration of merit badge counselors**

It is a requirement that merit badge counselors re-register annually with the Council to continue as an approved counselor for previously approved merit badges. **The current registration expires on May 31, 2022.**

In order to facilitate the re-registration of counselors, the council’s Registrar sent each current counselor a re-registration letter via regular mail in late April. If a currently approved counselor has not received a re-registration letter, please contact the Council’s Registrar immediately. **The counselor must complete and return the re-registration letter to the council service center by June 1** to remain registered as a merit badge counselor for another year, in addition to meeting the prerequisites (current youth protection training and PA child protection clearances). Counselors are strongly encouraged to complete and return their re-registration before the deadline.

The failure to return the re-registration letter in a timely manner will result in a termination of the individual’s registration to serve as a merit badge counselor. After the designated cut-off date, an individual must reapply for approval as a merit badge counselor through submission of a new application (utilizing the Merit Badge Counselor Information form).

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➤ **Counselors needed for Citizenship in Society merit badge**

Are you interested in taking on the challenge of serving as a counselor for this new merit badge (MB)? While we do currently have a few counselors for this MB in the council, we need more to serve our Scouts.

Read the overview of the merit badge provided in this [newsletter](#). Here is more information about serving as a counselor for the Citizenship in Society MB and the application process.

Instead of a pamphlet for the MB, National BSA has provided two documents:

- Citizenship in Society Merit Badge Counselor Guidelines
- Citizenship in Society Merit Badge For Scouts

Both documents are available through the Advancement section of the Council's website. Use this link to access the section of the website pertaining to MBs:

<https://susquehannabsa.org/advancement/scouts-bsa/the-merit-badge-program/>

Then click on the link under the "Requirements" section and scroll down the listing of MBs to Citizenship in Society.

The role of a MB counselor for Citizenship in Society is different than most other MBs in that you are to be a facilitator in the Scouts learning experience versus a coach or mentor. National BSA has established these expectations for the MB

1. The counselor is to serve as a facilitator who draws out from the Scout what they have discovered and learned, and how they plan to put it into action. The counselor is not to interject their own opinions and beliefs but instead should consider the Scout's experience and journey into these topics. The role of the counselor is that of a skilled listener and discussion leader, as well as someone informed on key concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion through BSA-provided training and self-guided exploration.
2. A safe environment must be provided for the Scout to discuss these topics and their observations without judgment. The Scout Oath and Scout Law are the appropriate boundaries to use in these discussions, and your skills as the counselor should demonstrate inclusive leadership and how to value everyone's thoughts and opinions. In addition, review the Boy Scouts of America Scouter Code of Conduct (including Youth Protection Guidelines, with which all in-person and virtual interactions must comply).

Like all other MBs, submitting to the council service center (Janis) a MB application to add this MB is the first step to becoming a MB counselor for Citizenship in Society.

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BSA National has given each council the responsibility to determine how to prepare and select adult leaders to serve as a counselor for this MB. Consequently, the Council Advancement Committee has established prerequisites and the submission of additional information for approval as a counselor for this MB.

The council has established the following prerequisites for approval as a counselor for this MB. Completion of these prerequisites is to provide a baseline of understanding and preparation for the adult leader to serve as a counselor for the Citizenship in Society MB.

1. Complete BSA's on-line DEI training (available through MyScouting.org; course title: "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Scouting"; time = 30 minutes).
2. Reviewed the counselor guide presentation (provided as a separate document by the District Advancement Committee).
3. Reviewed the MB Counselor Guidelines (available at the link provided previously).

You must certify completion of these prerequisites to the district advancement committee before the Council will approve you as a counselor for the Citizenship in Society MB. You may complete prerequisites 1 and 3 before or after submission of the MB application and provide the information with the application or upon request from the district advancement committee. Following receipt of your MB application, the district advancement committee will provide you the information to complete prerequisite 2.

The council also will require the submission of additional information to consider in the determination of approval as a counselor for this MB, in addition to the information submitted on the MB Application. You will be asked to provide an explanation of your experience and/or training in diversity, equity, and inclusion in different areas. Following receipt of your MB application, the district advancement committee will provide a description of the additional information needed to complete the review of your application.

It will involve an extra measure of wisdom, discernment, and skill to serve as the counselor of this merit badge. The intent is for the true learning to be experienced through the Scout's own research. It will work most effectively in the Scout's discussions with their merit badge counselor or in a small group setting (following Youth Protection requirements). The goal is to have openness and depth of conversation.

Completion of this MB will be a very different experience for each Scout, and will require multiple engagements, and likely more time in preparation on the Scout's part.

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Links

- Susquehanna Council's Advancement pages {[click here](#)}.
- Guide to Advancement: <https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>
- Advancement News from the National Advancement Program Team, Previous issues are available at: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/advancement-news/>
- Merit badge requirements: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>
- Advancement and awards: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/>
- Information for Life Scouts in the Susquehanna Council to help in attaining the rank of Eagle: <https://susquehannabsa.org/advancement/boy-scouts/information-and-resources-for-life-to-eagle-advancement/>