

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 23-2

December 2023

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

[A significant resource available](#)

[Special needs Scouts](#) {Information repeated from content in Edition 23-1}

Cub Scouts

[Significant changes to Cub Scout program.](#)

Scouts BSA

[Merit Badge College 2024.](#)

[Updates to requirements for rank advancement and merit badges.](#)

Merit Badges

[Applying to serve as a merit badge counselor](#) – very important to provide qualifications for each merit badge.

[Required training for merit badge counselors](#) {Important info updated from content in Edition 23-1}

[Registration fee for merit badge counselors](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 23-1}

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.

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 23-2

December 2023

Special needs Scouts

- **Resources.** A section has been added to the main Advancement page. The section provides links to resources available to plan for request modifications to assist a special needs Scout in completing advancement requirements. [{click here}](#) and scroll down the page.

Cub Scouts

- **Significant changes to Cub Scout program.**

The Cub Scout program is being updated for the 2024-25 program year. Over the past several years the National Cub Scouting Committee has identified four areas to improve the Cub Scout program to ensure that it is fun, simple, and easy.

The four areas of improvement are the Bobcat badge, Cub Scout Adventures, Webelos, and Cub Scout Awards.

Bobcat will no longer be a badge that is earned once when a Cub Scout joins. It will become a required Adventure for each rank and earned each year. The requirements for the Bobcat Adventure are different for each grade to make them age-appropriate.

Cub Scout Adventures have been improved to make it easier to deliver the program to multi-rank dens or as a Pack. To earn each rank in Cub Scouting will require a Cub Scout to earn the six required Adventures and two elective Adventures. Required Adventures reflect the aims and focus areas of the BSA. The number of elective Adventures increases.

Webelos and Arrow of Light will be separated. Webelos becomes the 4th-grade program in Cub Scouting. Arrow of Light becomes a stand-alone badge of rank for 5th graders and will no longer be associated with Webelos. Arrow of Light will be the program that prepares Cub Scouts to join Scouts BSA.

Cub Scouts Awards will be reimagined as Cub Scout Adventures. Topics like camping, STEM, and range and target sports will remain and are reimagined into elective Adventures that can be used towards earning a badge of rank.

The changes will take effect officially on June 1, 2024.

This link provides [additional information](#).

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 23-2

December 2023

Scouts BSA

➤ **Merit Badge College 2024.**

The Merit Badge College in 2024 is scheduled for Saturday, **February 17, 2024**. The event will offer an opportunity to earn up to three of 20 merit badge offerings. Most of the merit badge offerings are related to a STEM area of interest.

The website is now open for registration (<https://susquehannabsa.org/2024-merit-badge-college/>).

A prerequisite for every Scout that attends the Merit Badge College is to have a current Cyber Chip; so make sure each Scout has completed the Cyber Chip requirements for their age group with a completion date of 2/1/23 or later. Please go to and carefully read the information on Be Prepared requirements. Scouts are encouraged to start now to work on the Be Prepared requirements!

Registration closes for the event on February 5, 2024.

- **Updates to requirements for rank advancement and merit badges.** At the start of every year, BSA National publishes updates to the requirements for selected merit badges and sometimes rank advancement. The January 2024 edition of the Soaring News will highlight all of the changes.

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.

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 23-2

December 2023

➤ **Required training for merit badge counselors.**
Attention merit badge counselors.

The council has changed the required training policy to require all individuals to complete the position specific training for merit badge counselors prescribed by National BSA to serve as a merit badge counselor in the council, with a phased implementation plan.

The policy: All individuals are required to complete the position-specific training for merit badge counselors prescribed by National BSA to serve as a merit badge counselor in the council. The training is available on-line or scheduled classroom training.

The implementation plan for this change in the required training policy for Merit Badge Counselor training is as follows:

Effective November 1, 2023, all individuals applying for the first time to serve as a merit badge counselor must meet the training requirement as a prerequisite for approval as a counselor.

Effective June 1, 2024, all individuals currently approved to serve as a merit badge counselor must meet the training requirement as a prerequisite for renewal as a counselor. Thus, **currently approved counselors that have not completed the training should do so before the end of May 2024.**

The training is available on-line through my.scouting.org. The training for merit badge counselors is called: "Scouts BSA - Merit Badge Counselor Position Specific Training". The training consists of two modules requiring a total time of about 34 minutes. The training only needs to be completed once.

➤ **Registration fee for merit badge counselors.**
Attention merit badge counselors.

BSA National has implemented an annual registration fee of \$25.00 for merit badge counselors. However, the payment of this fee is only applicable for adults registered with BSA only as a MB counselor; it is not applicable if the adult is also registered for another adult leader position. The implementation of the fee is as follows:

Effective now, first time applicants to serve as a merit badge counselor must pay the fee to be registered as a MB counselor.

Effective June 1, 2024, any adult currently approved to serve as a merit badge counselor and is not also registered for another adult leader position must pay the fee to re-register.

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 23-2

December 2023

Significant 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/>