

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
EAGLE SERVICE PROJECT
PLANNING GUIDE



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Background

This guide was developed to help Eagle candidates plan and carry out their Eagle service projects. Since the Eagle Service Project Workbook is somewhat vague, widely-differing interpretations have resulted in confusion as to what is expected in an Eagle Service Project; hence the need for this clarification.

Make sure you get a current copy of the Life to Eagle packet from the District Advancement Chair before looking for a project. This packet includes the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook which must be submitted to the district for approval. You should read and fully understand the requirements before deciding on a project. This guide corresponds with the Eagle Service Project Workbook, so refer to it as necessary as you read through this.

Disclaimer

This is an unofficial guide, which I believe conveys the intent and scope of the Eagle Project. Nothing herein overrides the higher authority of the district, council or BSA National. Nor does this guide add to, change or delete any Eagle rank requirements; it is intended only to clarify the requirements and expectations.

Introduction

The project can take up to 6 months or more, from planning through completion and acceptance. Since planning the project is usually the most difficult part of the requirement, you should allow yourself plenty of time. Don't wait until the last minute – this should be your best effort and should NOT be rushed.

All six Eagle requirements must be completed before age 18, including project acceptance – but note that it isn't necessary that the final writeup be completed before age 18. Although early planning is essential to a successful project, you must plan and execute your project while a Life Scout – so don't start too early.

Choosing a Project

The Eagle Project is intended to demonstrate leadership through service to a religious institution, school or the community; it can't benefit the BSA, any business, or any individual, nor can it be routine labor, maintenance or a fundraiser. Fundraising is allowed only to pay for the project itself. You should choose a project that is valuable to the organization and a challenge to you. It doesn't have to be an original idea, but you must do all of the planning for your project and can't use someone else's plan. It must be of sufficient size for you to fully demonstrate your leadership capabilities. Don't plan to do the minimum just to "get by."

Try to get an adult within your troop to serve as your advisor when choosing a project and developing a plan, as well as completing the final write-up and submittal for district approval. Don't spend time planning until you have discussed the idea with your advisor to ensure that it is an appropriate project. Plan on taking detailed notes during the planning phase, as well as when you are carrying out the project. Talk with your advisor as often as necessary to ensure you are on the right track – communication is critical!

Do not plan to use other previously-completed Eagle Service Projects to justify your project. Each project (and plan) must be capable of standing on its own. Remember, this is YOUR project and YOUR plan.

There are typically two types of projects; “hard” projects involving construction, and “soft” projects, which typically provide a service. Some examples include:

- Built 3 picnic tables and fruit-drying boxes for a local state park (hard).
- Re-landscaped and re-sprinklered a school driveway entrance area (hard).
- Collected 1000 pairs of used eyeglasses for the Lions Club (soft).
- Replaced a retaining wall (150 ft long) at a local church (hard).
- Built storage cabinets in a middle school music room (hard).
- Conduct a child safety fingerprinting and abduction safety class (soft).
- Constructed barriers in a state park to reduce damage caused by wild pigs (hard).
- Constructed a split-rail fence (150 ft long) at a state park entrance (hard).
- Constructed musical instrument carts for a high school music department (hard).
- Constructed an arbor and pathway through a church garden (hard).
- Planted trees and built fences in a local park to block off-road vehicle access (hard).

Project Description

After you’ve discussed possible ideas with your troop leader and chosen a project, you’ll begin the detailed planning and write-up, which will be submitted for district approval. **Don’t start on the project’s physical work until it is approved by the district.**

The project plan must be neat, clear, comprehensive and consistent within itself. It should tell someone everything they would need to know to carry out your project without you present. Include the following information (omit those items that don’t apply to your project) and ensure you’re following the format of the published workbook.

A. Project Description (Concept)

Briefly describe the project; don’t include any details.

B. Who Will Benefit (Concept)

Identify the benefiting organization. Again, the project cannot benefit businesses, individuals, or the BSA. Be sure to investigate this thoroughly before spending much time on the project.

C. Benefit to the Group

Describe, in detail, the benefit to the organization. Include a discussion of the existing situation and how your project will improve the existing situation.

D. Conceptual Discussions/Approvals

You’ll need to obtain several signatures/dates at this time, including your unit leader and the benefiting organization before proceeding. You should also begin to consider finances at this point.

Project Details

This part will require the most work, as you'll need to include all details needed to carry out the project. Since the workbook has limited space, add pages into the appropriate sections. Coordinate with the benefiting organization, as some agencies may have requirements that have to be incorporated into your project. Allow time for their review and approval, if necessary.

A. Present Condition

Describe the current condition and include pictures as appropriate.

B. Plans and Drawings

Construction-related projects should include detail plans or drawings, and should show all dimensions, paint schemes, plans, layouts, or other details that can be drawn. Plans and drawings should be neat and labeled, and refer to them in the appropriate sections of the text.

C. Materials and Supplies

A detailed table of materials and supplies should be included in any construction-related project. Include all material specifications (size, quality, color, brand, finish, etc.), quantity, and cost.

If the organization is providing materials and/or supplies, make sure you understand exactly what is to be provided, and by who. Following is a sample of a materials & supplies list:

Table 1 – Materials & Supplies

Item	Description	Qty	Cost ea.	Total Cost	Source
1	Plywood, ½", 4' x 8' marine grade	4 sheets	\$22.00	\$88.00	Yardbirds
2	Paint, Sears Exterior off-white (#9999) enamel	3 gallons	\$20.00	\$60.00	Sears
3	Paint rollers	2	\$5.00	\$10.00	Ace Hardware (Donated)

D. Tools

Include a detailed list of all tools being used on the project. Most tools can be borrowed; if you do purchase tools, you'll need to include them in the financial plan, and discuss what will be done with them after project completion. Following is an example of a Tools list:

Table 2 – Tools

Tool	Qty	Source
Claw hammers, 10 oz	6	Workers to bring
Air compressor, 2 HP	1	Dick Tracy
Circular power saw, 7"	1	Sam Ketchum
Extension cord, 50', grounded	1	Doug Williams

E. Schedule

Include a schedule in the plan. This will show each task's duration, when each task is completed and in what order each step happens. This schedule can take any form – calendars, bar charts, task lists, etc... and should show the number of people required for each task. Your final write-up will discuss how well you followed the plan and discuss any deviations from the original plan.

F. Step-by-step instructions

Include detailed instructions in addition to the schedule – this tells the workers exactly what to do. List every task, what order they will be done, and who will do them; don't forget work site clean-up in your plan. Following is a sample detailed workday plan:

1. Workers arrive at work site (est. 8 am)
2. Assign 4 group leaders and brief them on their duties.
3. Get all workers together, assign them to groups and assign work activities.
4. Group 1 begins clearing ground. Group 2 begins cutting lumber as shown in Drawing #2.
5. Groups 3 & 4 begin constructing the structure as shown in Drawings #3 through #8.
6. Lunch (est. noon).
7. All 4 groups remove old structure.
8. All workers clean up work area and stack old structure materials (est. 4pm).

If you need access to a building or property to carry out your project, you should also include the name and contact information as one of the steps.

G. Work Site

Where will the work be done? If you are going to build something, discuss where you are going to build it; at the final location, or somewhere else then moved? You may need permission from the responsible person to use a work site. If so, who do you contact and when? If special facilities or tools are required, state so.

H. Finances

Discuss the project's costs in your plan, even if the benefiting organization is funding the entire project. List all materials, tools, supplies, etc. with a cost of each, even if items are loaned or donated. Any fees should also be included your estimate.

Once you've determined the project cost, you'll need to find the funding. The benefiting organization may fund it (totally or partially), or you may have to raise the funds yourself. Obtaining project funding is your responsibility. If you can't come up with the necessary funding, either look at cutting costs to reduce your budget; or choose another less-expensive project.

As you prepare your initial cost estimates, talk with local businesses to see if they would provide donations or discounts. Many businesses are willing to help out; you should send them a letter indicating the materials or supplies you're looking for. Save a copy of this letter for your Eagle project binder.

Address how the money will be handled. How will supplies and materials be paid for – and when? Ensure you have a complete paper trail for all financial transactions and include this in your final report. You should not be raising any more funds than is required for the project.

I. Helpers/Workers

Identify the number of people and the skills required to carry out each task. Describe how you will organize the workers to get the work done efficiently. What are the adult/scout roles?

J. Two-Deep Leadership

BSA policy requires at least two adult leaders to be present at all times during Scouting activities; at least one must have current 'Youth Protection' certification. You are responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed, as you will not be able to work your project without adults being present.

K. Safety

Discuss all safety aspects, including first aid, tool use, emergency communications, weather factors, protective equipment, etc,... and identify potential jobsite-related hazards that may exist (ie, power lines or buried water pipes). Once you have the district approval and are ready to begin the work, you may need a BSA tour permit. If needed, keep it in your project binder. Note that acquiring a tour permit implies that you are familiar with BSA's "Guide to Safe Scouting" and "Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities."

L. Transportation

You may need to move people, materials, supplies and tools to/from a work site; discuss what transportation needs will be required and who will supply the transportation.

M. Written / Printed Information

Include copies of any handouts, posters and letters you intend to use as part of your plan; these should be included as attachments in the workbook and labeled appropriately. Any required permits should also be included here.

N. Project Plan Approval

After your plan is prepared and ready to submit, you'll need the signatures of your troop committee, Scoutmaster, the benefiting organization's representative, and the District Advancement Committee prior to proceeding with the project.

The benefiting organization (such as a public school) may require additional levels of approval beyond that of the actual recipient. For instance, the district maintenance supervisor may have to approve any project plans, so be sure to consider all possibilities and allow sufficient time in your plan for approvals (at least a month, possibly more).

The District Advancement Committee will be the last signature – make sure to allow sufficient time to review the project plan. Remember - do NOT carry out any part of the project (except planning) until the District Committee has approved it.

Carrying Out the Project

After the plan has been approved, you can carry out the project. Keep all receipts and take accurate notes about everything being done, including who worked and time spent by each person. For your final report, you'll need to discuss how well the plan worked and what changes were made, so keep track of this information as you go along. Take pictures of each stage of the work, as these will be included in the final report. Keep track of all materials, supplies, tools, etc. used, paying particular attention to changes from your original plan. Make sure your track hours worked by all, as this information will be transferred to the Eagle Rank application.

Remember – this is YOUR project. Although there will be adults working on the project, you are responsible for the overall project - don't allow them to take over supervision. Although there is nothing wrong with asking for suggestions and making changes to the plan, you are still responsible for the project and providing leadership in carrying out the project plan.

Once the project has been completed, you, the benefiting organization's representative and your Scoutmaster will approve it, indicating that the project was completed and accepted by the benefiting organization. This date is the date that will be included on Requirement #5 of your Eagle application.

Final Project Write-up (Changes, etc...)

Once the project has been accepted, you can complete the final report – you'll describe what actually happened as you carried out the plan. As with any project, it is important to analyze any and all changes. Use the project plan as a guide for preparing the final report. In the 'Carrying Out the Project' workbook section, describe what was done and how you deviated from the plan. Go through each section of the plan and summarize the results as compared to the plan.

For example, discuss changed conditions, excess material, tools needed that you didn't have and anything else of interest. Provide a record of all the time worked by your volunteers. Include a list showing names, dates, hours worked, and tasks performed by each volunteer.

If you were successful in obtaining donations or discounts from local businesses, write thank-you letters to the businesses and keep copies in your Eagle project binder.

Discuss your leadership role and give examples of how you were able to lead the volunteers. Did you have problem with getting them to come to work or to stay focused on the assigned tasks? The Eagle Board of Review will want to read about what you learned about leadership. You can use the 11 leadership skills as taught by Wood Badge/JLT to organize your thoughts.

The final project book should be laid out in a manner that allows for easy reading. Include a table of contents, number your pages, identify all drawings and photographs and be neat and consistent in your terminologies. Once you are satisfied with the final report, you should now get the final approval signatures. Again, your project and the final report is a reflection on you and everything you've learned and done in Scouting. **Make it your best effort!**

Final Project Approval

Once the three signatures noted earlier (you, your Scoutmaster, the benefiting organization) are added to the booklet, you'll submit the entire project book along with your completed Eagle Scout Application and Troop Advancement Report to the District Advancement Committee Chair. Note that you'll need to obtain a copy of your personal scouting history from the Council to verify all dates on your Eagle application BEFORE meeting with the District Advancement Chair. The full write-up is kept until your Board of Review and is then returned to you.

Remember – The entire package, from the initial application and plans through the final submission to the council, should be neat, complete, comprehensive, consistent and clean; the project is your final demonstration of leadership in that you are applying everything you've learned in Scouting and applying it as a leader. **Make it your best effort that you will be proud of for years to come.**

Only the Eagle Board of Review can determine if the completed project has met all standards as set forth by BSA.

Wood Badge Leadership Skills (Reference)

Leadership is "the process of persuasion or example by which an individual influences a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the followers." Thus, the leadership process is a function of the *leader*, the *follower*, the *goals*, and the *situation* at the time. It is active, exerts influence, requires effort, and is related to goals. Leadership skills become the vehicle by which the leader achieves given objectives.

Skill # 1 (Communicating) - Communication involves receiving, storing, retrieving, giving, and interpreting information. It is important that members of a group communicate freely with each other. Make sure you're sensitive to the group, asking for feedback and summarizing what has been given results in an effective transfer of information. Interpreting information is vital.

Skill # 2 (Knowing and Using Resources) - Resources available to a Scouting group can come from literature, parents, friends, local businesses, community organizations, and local Scouting programs. This can be obtained by simply asking the question, "What do I need and where can I get it?" The more people doing this type of thinking, the more resources will appear.

Skill # 3 (Understanding the Characteristics and Needs of the Group and Its Members) - A *characteristic* is "a trait or quality distinguishing an individual, group, or type." A *need* is "a want, a requirement, feeling the lack of something useful." These will vary from person to person, and depend on the person's background in the home, school and church as well as the situation.

Skill # 4 (Planning) - Effective planning is usually the result of seven specific steps.

1. **Consider the task.** Identify what has to be done, who does what, when, where, and how.
2. **Consider the resources.** What time is available? What are the skills of the group? What equipment and supplies are needed and available? What other items should be considered?
3. **Consider alternatives.** What happens if something goes wrong? What are the emergency procedures? What is the alternate plan? Is it better than the original plan?

4. **Reach a decision.** Who is responsible? Is a poor decision better than no decision? Is no decision a decision? Is a group decision best? A decision usually is needed at every step.

5. **Write down the plan.** The act of writing down an action plan may cause it to be revised or refined. The final plan might need considerable discussion.

6. **Put the plan into action.** All too often, great plans are formed but never followed.

7. **Evaluate.** Evaluation must take place all during this process. As each step is taken, it is evaluated against the previous steps to assure that the original task is still being considered.

Skill # 5 (Controlling Group Performance) – This skill is necessary, as control is needed to keep members moving in the same direction for best results. This involves six basic operations:

1. **Observing.** The leader is in a position to see the group, communicate with its members, and be available, but not appear to dominate. Suggestions are given for improvements.

2. **Instructing.** The leader gives instructions as work proceeds and the situation changes. The leader must communicate well, apply the skill of effective teaching, and allow members to use their own initiative. The leader doesn't intrude as long as the work is progressing well.

3. **Helping.** When a group performs a task, the leader must help the members be successful. The leader does a good job personally, takes a positive approach, and gives a helping hand when needed. Care is taken to see that an offer to help is not implied criticism.

4. **Reacting.** How the leader reacts to the efforts of the group is important. Praise the person if the work is good, but the praise must be sincere. If the work is not correct, praise the parts that were done well and accept responsibility for work not done well. React to the total job.

5. **Inspecting.** The leader must know what to expect to see. The leader should know the plan and the skills involved. If the work is not correct, positive approaches to the worker with helpful suggestions for improvement is vital.

6. **Setting the example.** The most effective way of controlling group performance is the personal example of the leader. How he observes, instructs, helps, inspects, and reacts is vital.

Skill # 6 (Effective Teaching) - Effective teaching is a process by which the learning of a group or an individual is facilitated. Five elements (in general) are involved:

1. **Learning objectives.** Before attempting to teach, you need to know what is being taught. Asking "What should the participants be able to do by the end of the session?" determines the learning objectives.

2. **Discovery.** A discovery is any sort of happening that has three results.

- Knowledge is confirmed. People discover what they do know.
- The need to know is established
- Motivation is instilled. Participants discover the desire to learn more.

3. Teaching-learning. Once discovery has shown what the participant already knows, the instructor has choices to make.

- The person knows and can do what is desired. The learning objectives have been met.
- Work on what the person needs to know.
- Give the full instruction session. The participant will learn what he or she needs to know.

4. Application. Each person should have an immediate chance to apply what was learned. Application can be deferred, but immediate application is more desirable. In applying what has been learned, another discovery likely will occur, leading to new learning objectives, more teaching and learning, and further application.

5. Evaluation. Essentially, this is a review of what happened to see if the learning objectives were met. In a teaching situation, we always check to see. "Did it work? Do I understand? What do I do next?" The evaluation itself often becomes another discovery.

If evaluation shows that the person has not learned what was to be taught, it needs to be taught again. The approach may be changed, the steps simplified, the explanation more detailed, or the learning objectives changed. The five elements of effective teaching are *not necessarily* a series of steps, but are a mix of factors that can be used to plan a learning experience or evaluate its worth. They are *not* a lockstep process through which one marches in a training experience. Training must flow and stay flexible to meet the needs of participants.

Skill # 7 (Representing the Group) - With a knowledge of resources, skill in communicating, and an understanding of the needs and characteristics of the group and its members, the leader is prepared to represent the group.

Before representing the group, you need to get all of the facts, decide on the nature of the situation, determine the group's reaction, and make notes. It is vital to give the facts; give the group's reaction, feelings, and position; respect opinions of other groups dealing with a third party; consider personality problems; and again make notes. Then the third party's decision, attitude, or actions must be represented back to the group. Again, it is important to present the facts, explain the decision, and thoroughly represent the third party's attitude and opinion.

As a leader represents the group to the "outside world," the group begins to develop its own attitude, identity, and direction. The role of the patrol leader in sharing the interests and desires of the patrol to the PLC - and carrying out the decisions of the patrol leaders' council with the patrol members - is a classic example of representing a group in Scouting.

Skill # 8 (Evaluating) - Evaluation is done during and after the activity. It may be necessary to make changes during the activity due to unforeseen circumstances to meet the objective; it may be better to evaluate the activity after completion. In any case, it is important to find out how well the objectives were met and if improvements can be made for the future. Six simple questions can be used to evaluate almost any project or program. The first three relate to the group's success in carrying out the project; the second three questions relate to individual members.

1. Did the job get done?
2. Was it done right?
3. Was it done on time?
4. Did everybody take part?
5. Did they enjoy themselves?
6. Do they want more?

An evaluation as soon as an event or activity ends is a good measure of the immediate reaction. Sometimes, however, a more valid evaluation can be made two to three weeks following the activity, as it is less subject to the enthusiasm of the event.

Skill # 9 (Sharing Leadership) - Five styles of leadership generally are recognized.

1. Telling (or ordering). The leader alone identifies the problem, makes the decisions, and directs the activities. The style is autocratic and doesn't involve the group's opinions.

2. Persuading (or selling). In this style of leadership, the decision still is made by the leader. Having made the decision, the leader must sell it to the group to get cooperation.

3. Consulting. Group members participate and provide input. The leader may suggest a tentative decision and get the group's reaction. Having consulted the group, the leader still makes the final decision, based on group consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the group is encouraged to note and follow the desires of the majority.

4. Delegating. The leader identifies the problem, sets guidelines, boundaries, or rules, and then turns the problem over to the group or one of its members. The leader accepts the decision of the group if it falls within the boundaries and guidelines established. While authority may be delegated, the responsibility must remain with the leader.

5. Joining. The leader steps down as leader, joins the group and agrees in advance to abide by the group's decisions. Remember that joining the group is still leadership. Before using this style, he must consider the group's resources and change to a more direct style, if necessary.

No single leadership style is "best." Each depends on the situation, experience of the group members, and tasks to be done. As leadership styles move from telling to joining, the leader's authority appears to diminish and the group's participation increases. Selecting the appropriate style of leadership is based on the situation and the ability and experience of the group. It is a dynamic process, varying with changes in leaders, followers, goals, and circumstances.

Skill # 10 (Counseling) - Counseling goes on as the leader works with the group's members, and can be used to encourage or reassure an individual, to develop a more effective member of the group, or to solve a specific problem. He must recognize the need for counseling and that no two situations are alike, that each person is different, and each problem is different. There are no pat solutions. Following are six keys:

1. Listen carefully. Give undivided attention to what the person is saying.
2. Ask yourself, "Do I understand what this person is trying to say?"
3. Summarize frequently to assure understanding and check what is being told.
4. Additional information might be all that is needed. The person might not have all of the facts, or might not know all of the resources available. Give *information*, not *advice*.

5. The person must be encouraged to think of different ways of handling the problem. The individual has the problem, has thought about it in greater detail than the leader, and might have arrived at a solution. He or she might only be seeking confirmation of that solution.

6. Allow the individual to develop their own solution that supports the desired result.

Skill # 11 (Setting the Example) - The most persuasive leadership skill is the personal example of the leader. A good leader sets a positive example in these ways:

1. Following instructions. Following instructions, obeying the law, and carrying out tasks in the recommended manner points out that rules and procedures are important.

2. Trying hard. The leader must work as hard as--if not harder than--any member of the group. Leadership by direction is not as effective as leadership by example.

3. Showing initiative. A good leader must do what has to be done without waiting to be told or forced to act. He respects the good suggestions of the group members and encourages each person to show initiative.

4. Acting with maturity. An effective leader shows good judgment. The group members see that the leader's personal behavior is directed toward accomplishing the task.

5. Knowing the job. Generally, a leader should have a mastery of the skills to be used. If not, the leader must apply the resources of the group toward achieving the task.

6. Keeping a positive attitude. A positive attitude is vital as an example to group members. The leader's personal frustration or discouragement should never be apparent. Failure should be considered a potential learning experience. Enthusiasm is contagious.

Role models are an important method in Boy Scouting. This applies to adults, as well as youth leaders. Boys often will copy the actions and behaviors of leaders they like and admire. Boys will literally walk, talk, and act as the example set by the adult and youth leaders of the troop.

Table of Changes

10/6/04 – Initial issue

6/3/05 – Updated approval requirements (school districts) and recommendation letter requirements

2/1/06 – Updated final project approval requirements

6/26/07 – Minor changes (reformatting and clarification)

1/1/09 – Minor changes