



Citizenship in Society Merit Badge 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 merit badge includes some advanced and complex topics, so we recommend Scoutmasters, Counselors and parents weigh-in on a Scout’s readiness for participation.

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.

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

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 merit 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.

Why is the Citizenship in Society merit badge the first to be translated into Spanish? Will all other merit badges (past and future) be translated into Spanish or other languages?

As we look to better represent and reflect the communities we serve, we want to continue looking for opportunities to make Scouting accessible for more people. As such, we felt it was appropriate to make Spanish-language materials available as a test-and-learn for the Citizenship in Society merit badge to better understand how many of our current or potential Scouting families find this option helpful. At this time, we do not plan to translate requirements for existing merit badges, but will continue to evaluate moving forward if this is an action we may consider taking in future.

For more information regarding the Citizenship in Society merit badge, [click here](#).