

# *San Gabriel Valley Council's Guide to* **THE EAGLE PROJECT**

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Few things you've done in life will be as great a challenge, as much work, as much a source of pride and as much fun as your Eagle Scout service project. **Service to others** is one of the fundamental tenets of Scouting – it's right there in the Oath and Law! Through service to others as you advanced through the ranks of Scouting, you've **already made a positive difference** in the world around you, but your Eagle project is an opportunity to make a **significant contribution of your own choosing** in the here-and-now and will help you hone leadership skills so that will let you make even greater contributions in the future!

***HERE'S THE PROJECT REQUIREMENT:*** While a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, any school, or your community. (The project should benefit an organization other than Boy Scouting.) The project plan must be approved by the organization benefiting from the effort, your Scoutmaster and unit committee, and the council or district before you start. You must use the *Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook*, BSA publication No. 512-927, in meeting this requirement.

Let's break it down, step-by-step:

## **1. "While a Life Scout . . ."**

The Eagle project must be started **after** you have "made" Life Scout, and you cannot start the process prior to that time. That being said, **a little thinking ahead** won't hurt – get to know the needs of the community around you!

## **2. ". . . Plan . . ."**

This requirement of a **comprehensive, written advance plan** is taken very seriously, and the best-executed project in the world is not acceptable if it is done before the careful writing and approval of that plan. The planning forms in the workbook will help you with this part.

## **3. ". . . Develop . . ."**

Another important one! As you draft and redraft your written plan, you must also be "pounding the sidewalk," **making the preparations**, getting permission, arranging for off-hours access to your work site, setting up transportation for your helpers and materials, borrowing needed tools, and purchasing supplies. You must carry out this development stage, not your parents, Scoutmaster or friends.

#### 4. ". . . Give Leadership to others. . . "

This puts your years in Scouting and those leadership positions you've held to the really practical test: This is an Eagle project, not a "Lone Wolf" one. **You may not do a project, however worthy, alone.** "Others" is plural – that implies at least two helpers, but you ought to have a lot more. Always plan for extra helping hands because, as you know by now, things "come up" no matter how well you plan or how sure someone is that he'll be there. Many hands may help you finish the project much more efficiently and managing a team of significant size will help demonstrate to the Board of Review that you have **Eagle-caliber leadership skills!**

#### 5. ". . . Helpful to any religious institution, any school, or community . . . "

Were you surprised when you first read this? That you're not allowed to do a project for your Unit? Or even a Council camp?

With this project, you're **doing something as a Scout for the world outside Scouting.** You're going to be doing more than a just "good turn". It must have some relatively **permanent importance; it may not be a maintenance project.** Washing the windows and mowing the lawn of your church are great service ideas, but don't have the permanent impact of an Eagle project. On the other hand, landscaping an area that is just dirt, building new facilities or equipment for your church or school, or undertaking a major rehabilitation project may well be an Eagle project.

As you think about beneficiaries, you can look farther afield than your own school or religious institution. If your school is in pretty good condition, how about a school in a less fortunate area? Do you see something around you where some Scout power could really make a difference? Introduce yourself to the people in charge and find out.

City and county institutions need help all the time, especially in tough economic times. It's likely your public library could use your help, and often, institutions such as the fire, police or parks departments have projects queued up, waiting for someone to help.

Community organizations, including charities such as the Salvation Army, Red Cross, United Way, Cancer Society and many service clubs, such as Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions, as well as local hospitals, are also good bets for projects. Be certain that you are not working for a profit-making institution, however, and consult your Scoutmaster or unit Eagle advisor if you have any doubts. You might also get project ideas from your unit's commissioner, committee members, Eagle advisor, chartered organization, or Eagle Scouts. Ask around. You might be surprised by what all you find.

Bear in mind that dollar cost is of importance to a good Eagle project, and that some of the best cost almost nothing. When you arrange to do a project for an organization, be sure financial details (who is buying that can of paint?) are part of your plan.

Remember that people in institutions such as these may be familiar with Scouting and even with Eagle project requirements, so they may be better able to help think of things than you would expect.

The project must, of course, be your own individual endeavor, even though you must recruit others to help carry it out. Two candidates for Eagle may not share or "go in together on" a project.

It's not a requirement, but will add to your pride: Try to think of a project that has never been done before!

## **6. " . . . The project plan must be approved . . . "**

This is a big deal, but it's not a big stumbling block. The project plan must be approved by the benefiting organization, your Scoutmaster, Unit Committee Chairman and the District Advancement Chair or his or her designee **before you start**. This list of approvals is important, and differs from Star and Life service. The best thing is, of course, to involve your unit leadership before you even begin filling in the project planning and approval section of the *Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook* so that you know you'll have approval when you need it. They will probably also have some helpful advice!

After you have your Scoutmaster's approval, make an appointment with the Unit Committee Chairman and take it to him or her for approval. Finally, your unit Eagle advisor or other unit leadership should get in touch with the District Advancement Committee to get contact information for the member, a "District Eagle Advisor," who will provide district guidance and approval. You will need to discuss your plan with that person to get district approval before you move on.

Then... all you have to do is the project itself! But you have a plan for how to do that now, right?

### **Summary of the Project Approval Process**

1. Discuss, plan, and write a project proposal with the guidance of the unit Eagle advisor.
2. Discuss the written plan with the beneficiary group contact person. Have this person sign the project workbook and provide a letter approving the proposal on behalf of the sponsoring organization.
3. Discuss the written plan with the unit leader. Have the unit leader approve the proposal and sign the workbook.

4. Discuss the written plan with the Unit Committee. Have the Unit Committee representative approve and sign the proposal. (The unit Eagle advisor may act on behalf of the unit committee.)
5. The unit Eagle advisor or other unit leadership should contact the District Advancement Committee to get contact information for the District Eagle Advisor who will provide district guidance and approval.
6. The Scout should make arrangements with the assigned District Eagle Advisor for a review of the proposal for final approval. Allow sufficient time for district approval (with possible revisions) before planning for project work to begin. Eagle Scout service projects are the sole responsibility of Eagle Scout candidates. Therefore, candidates must communicate directly with the District Eagle Advisor regarding their project proposals. Parents and Scouters may play a supporting role only. Direct communication on project proposal changes and approvals should only occur between the Eagle Scout candidate and the District Eagle Advisor.
7. Actual work on the project may not begin until after the project workbook has signed by the District Eagle Advisor.
8. Should the candidate think that approval has been unfairly withheld, or requirements arbitrarily added, he may appeal directly in writing to the District Advancement committee, and subsequently to the Council Advancement committee, should further appeal steps be necessary.

A well-planned project that is carefully written-up can usually go through the District approval process within a week or so. It might take longer, however, to work out the plan and the write-up with your unit leadership and the project's beneficiary.

### **After the Plan is Approved**

1. Scouts (Cubs, Scouts, Venture, Varsity, or Explorer) should perform a major portion of the project, if possible.
2. Adults, family, friends, and others may also be involved in the project work.
3. The Eagle Scout candidate must clearly demonstrate leadership during the project work sessions. (Remember, Scout, this is not your parents' project!)
4. The District Eagle Advisor must approve any significant changes in the planned scope of the project in writing.
5. All candidates should keep a day-to-day logbook with the dates, names, work, performed, and total hours expended by each person involved on the project. The time to be included should begin with the first planning session and end with the completion of the project report. The candidate's development and report-writing time counts, too!
6. The Eagle candidate must direct the project to a successful completion in an orderly and responsible manner. He must demonstrate his best effort in the completion of the Eagle project.