



Citizenship in Society Merit Badge

On November 1, 2021, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) launched the Citizenship in Society merit badge, its newest merit badge for youth in the Scouts BSA program.

The Citizenship in Society merit badge encourages Scouts to explore information on diversity, equity, inclusion, and ethical leadership. The merit badge is designed to help Scouts learn about the diverse, unique identities and characteristics we each possess, understand different perspectives and experiences, and learn how to encourage an inclusive and welcoming culture in Scouting and in society. Scouts will learn why these qualities are important in society and in Scouting, as well as how to help other people at all times and serve as a leader and someone who recognizes when something is wrong and acts to make it right. To earn Citizenship in Society merit badge, Scouts will conduct research, explore resources on their own, have conversations with merit badge counselors, peers, parents and community members and identify actions they can take to ensure inclusivity in our society.

The Boy Scouts of America continues to be committed to developing a culture in which every youth, volunteer, and employee feels included and welcomed — and to building communities where every person feels respected and valued. As such,

- We welcome families and individuals of all backgrounds and identities to help prepare young people to serve as successful members and leaders of our nation's increasingly diverse communities.
- We are committed to creating inclusive environments and promoting a culture of respect and belonging for all.
- We expect all members to be guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
 - As found in the definition of "reverent" in the Scout Law, we expect our Scouts to "respect the beliefs of others," both within and outside of Scouting.
- We want everyone who follows the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law to feel welcomed and able to take advantage of the many opportunities Scouting provides, and we want every Scout to feel a sense of acceptance and inclusion in their unit and in Scouting.
- We expect and appreciate that our Scouts do their best to make all feel welcomed.
 - Learning about and understanding different identities and abilities will help each Scout understand what to do to help make other Scouts feel welcomed and find a sense of belonging in Scouting.

Citizenship in Society Merit Badge Requirements

- Requirements for Citizenship in Society Merit Badge can be found at: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>
- The Citizenship in Society Merit Badge launched on November 1, 2021. It will be required for any Scout holding his/her Eagle Board of Review on or after July 1, 2022.
- The Citizenship in Society Merit Badge replaces one of the optional merit badges needed for Eagle Rank. The number of merit badges required for Eagle will remain at 21, with 14 Required and 7 Optional merit badges.

Citizenship in Society Merit Badge Counselor Considerations

- This merit badge will require a Scout to do his/her own research and to dig as deeply and as detailed as he/she desires. The merit badge will not have a pamphlet.
- The Citizenship in Society Merit Badge Counselor serves 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.
- 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): <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/bsa-scouters-code-of-conduct/>
- Due to the maturity and skill needed to serve as the counselor of this badge, it is recommended that this merit badge not be offered in a summer-camp setting. It is not intended to be added onto the existing duties of summer-camp staff members or included in a class setting like a merit badge college. 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. The goal is to have openness and depth of conversation. (This can be offered in a small group setting or with the merit badge counselor following Youth Protection two-deep leadership requirements of two adults and one youth.)
- BSA has prepared a Citizenship in Society Merit Badge *Counselor Guide* that can be found at: https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/diversity_equity_and_inclusion/Citizenship-in-Society-Merit-Badge-Counselor-Guide-2021.pdf.
- Registered merit badge counselors who would like to be a Citizenship in Society Merit Badge Counselor will need to be approved by the Council Advancement Committee. Prior to approval, counselors must complete DEI Training found at: <https://www.scouting.org/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/>. Please contact your District's Merit Badge Counselor Coordinator and use BSA Form 34405 to apply. (<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf>)