



SCOUTS BSA TROOP 5
Wilmette, Illinois

TO: Eagle Scout Candidates
Parents of Eagle Scout Candidates

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RE: The Journey to Eagle: 1–Eagle Scout Path Overview

This memo is an overview for Eagle Scout candidates and their parents of the path from Life Scout to Eagle Scout.

There is no single right way to go about this process. Scouts have reached the rank of Eagle in Troop 5 in a lot of different ways.

Each of us is a Life to Eagle Advisor (“**LTE Advisor**”) for Troop 5. We work with Eagle candidates on two key aspects of their path to Eagle:

- First, along with the Project Coach (a term we define on p. 4), on the candidate’s written Eagle Project Proposal
- Second, on the various documents that the candidate must prepare in the period after the project workdays have been completed; we call this period the “**Eagle Home Stretch**”

One of us will work with a candidate on the Eagle Project Proposal. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the same LTE Advisor will also work with that candidate on the Eagle Home Stretch documents. We use the term “**your LTE Advisor**” in this memo to refer to the LTE Advisor who is working with you.

This memo is based on the experiences we have had in working with Eagle candidates. What follows below are some steps we suggest that Eagle candidates and their parents take to make the process as productive and meaningful as possible.

This memo and other documents that an Eagle candidate will need to use or consult on the path from Life to Eagle can be found within the Troop 5 website, www.troop5.com. These documents, which we call the “**LTE Materials**,” are referenced in this memo in red ink (and each one starts with a number, to make the various materials easier to identify). Use [this link to the Eagle Scout Resources page](#) to go directly to a listing of, and direct links to, each of the LTE Materials. (Some of the LTE Materials are not referenced in this memo, but they are referenced in other LTE Materials.)

There is one document that is not available on the Eagle Scout Resources page. That is the “**Eagle Contact List**,” which has contact information for many persons with whom an Eagle candidate will need to interact along the path from Life to Eagle. We do not publish that document because we do not want to make anyone’s contact information publicly available on the Troop 5 website. When an Eagle candidate begins working on an Eagle project, Troop 5 will furnish the candidate and the candidate’s parents with a copy of the Eagle Contact List for their use along the path to Eagle.

A Parent’s Role

Before we get too far, a couple words are in order on a parent’s role in the path to Eagle. Those words are, “Get involved!”

It is the case that a number of Scouts and Scouters will be working with your Scout on various aspects of the Eagle requirements. On the project, in particular, the Project Coach and the LTE Advisor will be heavily involved. But parents nonetheless have an important role, even in the project. A parent should take an active interest – know what the requirements are, and know how your Scout is progressing toward those requirements. Know what the deadlines are, and help your Scout manage so that the deadlines do not become problems. Read your Scout’s proposal, read the comments on the proposal (the LTE Advisor will almost certainly make a lot of comments!), and help your Scout work through the revisions.

It is a challenge to make Eagle. It is much harder than the other ranks, and Eagle candidates are challenged in ways that are quantitatively and qualitatively different from the challenges they faced in earning earlier ranks. The Scouts who make it almost always have a great deal of family support along the way. As an Eagle parent, you will get a pin at your Scout’s Eagle Court of Honor, and you will have earned that pin.

Rank Requirements

There are a number of requirements to achieve the rank of Eagle, including:

Merit Badges. Earn 21 merit badges, including 13 that are “Eagle-required.” We won’t dwell on these requirements here. But don’t put this off; remember that several Eagle-required merit badges take at least 3 months to earn.

Position of Responsibility. While a Life Scout, hold one or more positions of responsibility for at least 6 months.

Eagle Scout Service Project. We discuss this requirement below.

Eagle Home Stretch Paperwork. Once the Eagle Project is finished, there is a lot of writing that the Eagle candidate needs to do, including primarily the Project Report and the Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose. We discuss these items in detail in [8–The Eagle Home Stretch Memo](#). You do not need to read this memo until you have finished your project workdays.

Very important note: All Eagle requirements, other than the Board of Review, must be completed by the Eagle candidate’s 18th birthday,¹ and the Board of Review should be completed within three months after the 18th birthday.²

Eagle Scout Service Project

Eagle Scout rank requirement number 5 reads as follows:

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 must benefit an organization other than Boy Scouting.) A project proposal must be approved by the organization benefiting from the effort, your unit leader and unit committee, and the council or district before you start. You must use the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, No. 512-927, in meeting this requirement.

Perhaps the hardest part of this requirement is the identification of the project. It can be daunting to try to find something suitable to do for your project. This memo provides some guidance to you on how you can go about identifying and confirming an Eagle project.

Step 1: Read these Background Materials. First, we recommend that you read these three pieces of the LTE Materials, all of which are available from [this link to the Eagle Scout Resources](#):

2a–Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook (the “**Project Workbook**”). This is a long document; at this time, it is really just pages 2 through 6 of the Project Workbook that you should read, as they are the authoritative source of rules on Eagle projects.

2b–Information for Beneficiaries. This is a two-page document (taken from the Project Workbook) that you will need to send to your beneficiary eventually.

¹ For Eagle candidates who joined Scouts BSA in 2019 and who were 16 or older at February 1, 2019, there is an exception to this 18th birthday requirement that extends the deadline until 24 months after the Eagle candidate’s 18th birthday. This memo will not go into all the details, because Troop 5 has already obtained extensions for all Scouts affected by this exception. Where this memo refers to an Eagle candidate’s 18th birthday, it should be understood by those Scouts to refer to the last day of the applicable extension period.

² There are limited circumstances under which the Board of Review may be held more than three months (but, in any event, not more than six months) after the candidate’s 18th birthday. In order to do this, the Northeast Illinois Council must preapprove the Board of Review. The official advancement guidelines specify as follows: “To initiate approval, the candidate, the candidate’s parent or guardian, the unit leader, or a unit committee member attaches to the application a statement explaining the delay.”

3–Eagle Scout Service Project Timing & Approvals. It takes a lot of time, and requires a lot of approvals, to reach the point that you can hold your project workdays. This memo explains why.

Step 2: Find a Project Coach. Find an adult who will coach you in this process (your “**Project Coach**”). It is really valuable to have someone to meet with, who can be a sounding board, a source of advice and a helpful source of guidance. There are many adults in Troop 5 who have served as Project Coaches for other Eagle Scouts, and there are many more who are willing to serve. You can ask your Scoutmaster for a list of Troop 5 adults who are willing to serve as Project Coaches.

Step 3: Look Around for Projects. There are possible Eagle projects in many different places. Talk to your parents about projects; there are many ideas suggested by an Eagle candidate’s parents over the years that have turned into successful Eagle projects. Talk to other adults at school, at your place of worship and around town. Read the newspaper; talk with your Project Coach. Think about other Eagle projects you have worked on or heard about. Do an online search for projects. Be receptive to lots of ideas. Don’t feel like you need to cure cancer to have a successful project.

There are a few things that are “off limits” as Eagle projects:

- You cannot do a fundraising drive as your project. (You can raise funds for the purpose of acquiring materials for your project, but you cannot just raise funds for a beneficiary organization as the purpose of your project.)
- You should not do a “collection drive” project (Scouting for Food being an example of a collection drive). We used to allow these, but they became much too repetitive and formulaic, so we no longer do collection drives.
- Your project needs to demonstrate leadership, so you cannot do something where professionals are doing all or almost all the work (e.g., a blood drive).
- The beneficiary can be “any religious institution, any school, or your community.” and “community” is interpreted very broadly—it can be almost any place in the world. But the beneficiary cannot be a Scouting organization.

Step 4: Meet with Your Project Coach Frequently. Some Eagle candidates find their projects before they line up a Project Coach; others find the coach first, and then work with that coach on finding a project. Whichever way you proceed, try to meet frequently with your Project Coach to talk about the project or the search for a project.

Step 5: Get Preliminary Clearance for your Project. Once you have identified a possible project for a beneficiary, contact your LTE Advisor to describe it and obtain a preliminary approval of the concept. Your LTE Advisor has a lot of experience with different Eagle projects and may be able to save you some precious time by vetting your project idea early on.

Step 6: Start Working on Your Proposal! Once you have identified a project and a beneficiary, it is time to start working on your Eagle Project Proposal. If you are doing a construction project, the first place to start might be with some drawings of the item(s) you will be constructing. If you are doing a conservation project, it might be a trip to the location to photograph the existing conditions. At some point, it will be appropriate to start drafting the Proposal. For that purpose, use the following LTE materials:

- **4a–Eagle Scout Service Project Proposal Form** - this is a Word version of the BSA form. You should use this template to create your Proposal.
- **4b–Eagle Scout Service Project Proposal Form Annotated** - this is an annotation of the Proposal form; it contains guidance from Troop 5’s LTE Advisors on how to approach the drafting your Proposal. If you follow this guidance, it will guarantee that you receive fewer comments from your LTE Advisor on your Proposal drafts!

Timing

Eagle candidates and their parents must recognize that it takes a long time to plan and complete an Eagle Project and to do the Eagle Home Stretch paperwork following completion of the Project. It almost always takes *at least* three months from the time an Eagle candidate identifies a project until the time that candidate is ready to hold the first workday – and it has been considerably longer in many cases. Following project completion, it often takes another two to three months to finish the “Home Stretch” paperwork.

So do not delay. Let’s not get close to your 18th birthday!