

2026 Eagle Scout leadership service project workbook: Frequently Asked Questions

Getting Started

Q1: When must Scouts start using the 2026 workbook?

Any Scout can start using the 2026 *Eagle Scout leadership service project workbook* now that Scouting America has published it. The 2026 workbook will be required for every Life Scout starting work for the first time on an Eagle Scout leadership service project.

Q2: What about a Scout who started a project with the 2023 workbook?

A Scout whose project proposal was fully approved before January 1, 2027, using the 2023 workbook, may continue using that workbook to complete the project.

The 2027 *Guide to Advancement*, published in January 2027, will require Scouts to obtain the beneficiary's and Scoutmaster's approval of the project plan before starting work. That requirement will apply to all Scouts effective January 1, 2027, whether using the 2023 or the 2026 project workbook.

What Changed and Why

Q3: Why did Scouting America update the workbook?

In an April 2024 survey about the *Guide to Advancement*, many people raised concerns about the workbook, even though the survey did not ask about it. A task force was formed to update it.

Q4: What stayed the same?

The workbook keeps the same five parts: Information for Beneficiaries, Project Proposal, Fundraising Application, Project Plan, and Project Report. Many other parts of the workbook, such as the five tests of an acceptable Eagle Scout leadership service project, remain the same.

Q5: What are the major changes?

Please read the full workbook, including the appendices, which are part of the workbook. Key changes:

- **New name.** The title now includes "leadership." Leadership growth is an essential outcome, along with impact and service.
- **Checklist.** Youth reviewers asked for a one-page checklist, so it now opens the workbook.
- **Impact.** The proposal asks more about who the project helps and why it matters to the Scout.
- **Required plan.** Scouts must complete the plan and show it to the beneficiary and Scoutmaster for approval before work begins.
- **Shorter instructions.** The workbook focuses on what the Scout must write and do.
- **More safety questions.** Safeguarding Youth and using safe methods and practices are a top priority.

- **Room for all project types.** Construction projects remain welcome. The workbook no longer leans only toward them, so it now fits other project types too.
- **Time tracking.** Tables in the proposal and plan build toward the hours table in the report.
- **Guidance for adults.** Appendix C, which is part of the workbook, explains the roles adults play in reviewing, approving, and supervising projects. All adults working with Scouts on projects should read it.
- **Completion date.** A project is complete when the Scout finishes, signs, and dates the report to show that the Scout led the approved work using the project plan approved by the beneficiary and Scoutmaster. The Scout must do this before turning 18 and enter this same date on page 2 of the Eagle Scout Rank Application. Beneficiary and Scoutmaster signatures can come after the Scout's 18th birthday.

Q6: What if the 2026 project workbook conflicts with the 2025 *Guide to Advancement*?

The 2026 workbook is the newer publication, so it takes precedence. When the 2027 *Guide to Advancement* is published in January 2027, it will become the definitive source of requirements and will align with the project workbook.

Q7: Why not combine the Eagle, Summit, and Quartermaster workbooks?

An August 2025 survey asked about this. The projects have some similarities, but each program has important differences. A single workbook would be too complex for youth in every program.

- **Summit Award:** A Venturing team is updating the Summit project workbook. Watch the Venturing Facebook page and website for news.
- **Quartermaster Award:** A Sea Scouts team is updating the Quartermaster project workbook. Watch the Sea Scouts website for news.

Format and Technology

Q8: Did the task force look at other formats and technology for the workbook?

The task force looked at several technologies, including custom software. The 2026 workbook uses a fillable Adobe PDF. While some devices still have trouble with it, Adobe PDF works on most devices and does not require a paid software license. The update fixes as many of the reported problems as possible.

Q9: Why do text boxes have character limits?

Survey respondents disliked boxes where the font shrank to fit more text, because the small text was hard to read. The new limits fit a typical project. If a Scout needs more room, the Scout can attach extra pages.

Q10: Why isn't there an online workbook portal?

A digital portal is on Scouting America's list of potential technology enhancements. No development date is set, so the task force updated the fillable PDF workbook.

Q11: Can a Scout print the workbook and fill it in by hand?

Yes. Many Scouts print parts of the workbook to show progress to approvers. Handwriting in ink is fine, but it has to be easy for adults to read. Typed pages are still easier to read.

Workbook Introduction

Q12: Why does the workbook open with a checklist?

The task force asked for feedback from the Scouts BSA National Youth Council, the National Venturing Officers' Association, and the Sea Scout Quarterdeck. More than 100 people, including youth, reviewed the draft. Youth were clear: they wanted a one-page checklist, not pages of text. Many admitted they skipped the old instructions.

Q13: Why does the checklist include finishing other Eagle Scout rank requirements and the board of review?

The project is not officially accepted until the Scout passes a board of review. Scouting America policy has long placed that decision with the board.

Q14: Are the appendices part of the workbook?

Yes. The appendices carry the same weight as the pages a Scout fills out. They hold guidance for adults and for certain project components. Scouts do not need to print the appendices when they print parts of their workbook for adult approvers or the board of review.

Q15: Why add parent contact information?

Survey respondents asked for it. Being able to reach parents, not just the Scout, supports Safeguarding Youth.

Q16: Why does the contacts page say “Committee Representative” instead of “Committee Chair”?

Guide to Advancement section 9.0.2.7 lets a unit committee choose who represents it. Many units choose the committee chair, and that is fine. Each unit must make this choice and tell its committee members, Scouts, and parents. A Scout should never get caught in an adult dispute over who can sign.

Q17: Why was the unit advancement coordinator removed from the contacts page?

Space on the page is limited. Parent contact information was the higher priority. By the Life Scout rank, a Scout should already know the unit advancement coordinator well.

Q18: Can Scouts use AI on their projects?

The workbook and Appendix C cover use of AI. AI offers real benefits and real risks, and both change quickly. Unit leaders and committee members should talk with the Scout about AI at the very start of the project:

- Does the Scout plan to use AI?
- For what, and how?
- Does that fit Scouting America's values?

Make sure Scouts know which parts of the workbook cover AI use. Tell Scouts that they must disclose any AI use. AI questions should not surface for the first time at the board of review.

Q19: Can a Scout use the Eagle project for other things?

- **Yes:** With pre-approval, it can be part of a Distinguished Conservation Service Award or Messengers of Peace project, if the Scout also completes the extra work those programs require.
- **Yes:** For school service hours or as community service on college applications.
- **No:** For Summit Award or Quartermaster Award requirements. Those need a separate project.

Safety

Q20: Why does the workbook put more focus on safety?

Survey respondents said the old workbook had not kept up with Safeguarding Youth policies. The 2026 workbook adds safety questions to protect everyone who works on the project.

Q21: Isn't the Scout responsible for safety, since the troop is Scout-led?

The Scout is responsible for planning a safe project. Adults are accountable for safety. At least two registered adults must be present at all times, enforce Safeguarding Youth policies, and follow the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

Q22: Why must the Scout attach copies of permits to the plan?

The beneficiary gets the permits. Attaching copies lets adults confirm the permits exist and see what they allow. For construction and other higher-risk work, adults should confirm that government officials reviewed the project before approving the plan.

Q23: Won't requiring two registered adults make scheduling harder?

Having at least two registered adults, 21 years of age or older, at every project activity is required. The workbook tells the Scout about this early. The required plan gives the unit enough notice to line up at least two registered adults, 21 years of age or older, for every work session, as the *Guide to Safe Scouting* requires.

Project Proposal

Q24: What is the proposal for?

The proposal is the Scout's pitch. It also sets out what the Scout agrees to deliver to the beneficiary. It shows the beneficiary, Scoutmaster, unit committee, and council or district that the idea helps the community, addresses safety, builds leadership, and is doable. Experienced adults should be able to assess these if the Scout answers the proposal questions reasonably well. Detailed drawings and material lists come later, in the plan.

Q25: Why is "Information for Beneficiaries" a separate document?

It saves paper. Scouts can also send beneficiaries a link to that short document instead of the whole workbook.

Q26: Why ask about impact?

Impact is a key part of any service project. Survey respondents said it got too little attention. Asking early helps the Scout answer, "What good will this do?"

Q27: Why ask about the Scout's motivation?

Scouts who care about their project are more likely to finish it. Some Scouts will first say they just need to meet the requirement. Adults can use that answer as a starting point to ask more questions respectfully. That conversation should happen at the start, not after months of delay.

Q28: Why was “briefly” removed from the project description?

Many descriptions were too short to be useful, such as “Will build a bridge.” The proposal does not need drawings or material lists. It does need enough detail for adults to understand the idea, its scope, and its complexity.

Q29: Why were materials, supplies, tools, and other needs combined into one box?

Separate boxes made the workbook lean toward construction. One box lets Scouts describe what any type of project needs.

Q30: Why include an approximate timeline?

Many Scouts underestimate how long a project takes. A rough timeline gives adults a starting point for questions about each stage and possible problems. If the Scout then revises the timeline, that is a good outcome.

Q31: Why start tracking hours in the proposal?

Asking Scouts to recall months of hours at the end is unfair. Starting early makes tracking easier and more consistent for everyone.

Q32: If the beneficiary changes the project, does the Scout need a new proposal?

It depends on the size of the change. The beneficiary can adjust the project during the proposal and plan stages. The Scout can handle small changes in the project plan if the project still meets the five tests in Guide to Advancement section 9.0.2.7. If the project changes a lot in size, complexity, or cost, pause for a review. The Scoutmaster, the Scout, and the council or district proposal approvers then discuss whether a compromise will work. The Scoutmaster may talk with the Scout about a new proposal if a change:

- Moves far from the original idea
- Adds unacceptable safety risk
- Breaks the law
- Keeps the project from meeting Eagle Scout rank requirement 5

In the rare case a unit, district, or council considers withdrawing an approval, it must follow the process in the workbook and the *Guide to Advancement*.

Fundraising

Q33: Why does fundraising now come right after the proposal?

A Scout needs to know where the money will come from while shaping the idea. In the 2023 workbook, fundraising sat between the plan and the report, which was out of order.

Q34: How does a Scout learn the council’s fundraising rules?

Start by asking the Scoutmaster. The council or district adults who approve the proposal are also good sources for council policies. Councils should set a fundraising policy for Eagle projects and share it often with districts and units.

Q35: What decisions belong to the local council?

The council decides:

- Whether Scouts may raise funds on behalf of the beneficiary
- Whether small-donation events, such as bake sales or car washes, need an application
- A dollar amount below which no application is needed
- Whether Scouts may accept discounts or donated materials from certain businesses, such as hardware or craft stores
- Who signs the fundraising application on behalf of the unit
- How Scouts account for and protect the money they raise

Q36: Why is there a section on safeguarding donations?

Projects cost more than they used to. How Scouts protect and spend donations matters as much as how they raise them.

Project Plan**Q37: Why is the project plan now required?**

Planning has always been required. Eagle Scout rank requirement 5 says the Scout must “plan, develop, and give leadership to others.” Too many Scouts filled in the plan after the work was done, or skipped planning. That does not meet the requirement or the Scout motto, “Be Prepared.”

Q38: Why must the Scout show the plan to the beneficiary and Scoutmaster?

Professional project managers often check in with their customers and leadership. Reviewing the plan before work starts helps confirm it meets the beneficiary’s needs and Eagle Scout rank requirement 5. Catching problems early helps the Scout.

Q39: Why don’t the beneficiary and Scoutmaster sign the plan?

The goal is a real conversation, not a signature. The plan has boxes for the Scout to record input from the beneficiary and from the Scoutmaster.

Q40: What if the Scout does not show the plan before starting work?

Adults should do all they can to prevent this. If it happens, the beneficiary and Scoutmaster should review the work closely. If the Scout planned the project and completed the work described in the proposal, they may approve the project but should use the missed step as a coaching moment.

Q41: Can the Scoutmaster let someone else approve the proposal, plan, or report?

Yes. Under *Guide to Advancement* section 4.2.1.2, the Scoutmaster decides who may sign off on rank requirements, including the Eagle Scout leadership service project. The Scoutmaster might delegate duties, such as approving a project proposal, plan, or report, to another registered adult, like an assistant Scoutmaster or Eagle project coach. This could happen because the troop is large, during a Scoutmaster’s illness or travel, or when the Scout is the Scoutmaster’s child or ward. The Scoutmaster stays responsible for the quality of that review.

Project Report

Q42: Why is a project “complete” when the Scout finishes, signs, and dates the report?

In the past, councils defined completion differently: when the work ended, when the report was done, or when the Scoutmaster signed. Scouts deserve one standard. The Scout’s own signature on a completed report is the one step fully in the Scout’s control.

Q43: Why not use the date the beneficiary and Scoutmaster sign?

A slow or unavailable signer could cost a Scout the Eagle Scout rank before turning 18. Holding the Scout to their own signature date is fairer.

Q44: What if a Scout rushes a sloppy report to beat their 18th birthday?

Remind Scouts that the board of review reads the whole workbook before meeting them. A careless report can make the board longer and harder. If a Scout knows this and rushes anyway, that is the Scout’s choice.

Q45: What if the Scoutmaster doesn’t like the report?

The report is not an English paper. Do not ask for rewrites over style, grammar, or punctuation. If the report seems rushed, raise it in a Scoutmaster conference. Since the Scoutmaster already saw the proposal and plan, it should be rare for the project to fall short at this point.

Q46: What if the beneficiary won’t sign the report?

The beneficiary may ask for fixes before signing. Scouts should complete reasonable requests that fall within the project proposal scope and project plan. If the beneficiary requests out-of-scope changes or refuses to sign the report, and the Scout believes the project meets Eagle Scout rank requirement 5, the Scout may request a board of review.

Q47: What if the Scoutmaster won’t sign the report?

The Scout may request a board of review under disputed circumstances, as described in Guide to Advancement section 8.0.3.2.

Q48: What if the Scout doesn’t finish by their 18th birthday?

This is like any other unfinished Eagle Scout rank requirement. The Scout may apply for a time extension under *Guide to Advancement* section 9.0.4.0 and must meet its three tests.

Q49: Should time spent writing the report count toward project hours?

Yes. Writing the report and getting it approved are part of the project. Scouts should do their best to track hours, but exact, billing-level accuracy is not expected.

Project Roles (Appendix A)

Q50: Why add descriptions of project roles?

Many survey respondents found the workbook’s terms confusing. Youth, parents, beneficiaries, and new leaders may not know every role, so Appendix A explains them.

Q51: Why say “Scoutmaster” instead of “unit leader”?

Every Scout working toward the Eagle Scout rank earned at least the First Class rank in a troop under a Scoutmaster. Youth rarely use “unit leader,” but every Scout knows “Scoutmaster.” Appendix A explains that if a qualified member is completing a project in a Venturing Crew or Sea Scout ship, the Crew Advisor or Skipper, respectively, fulfills this role.

Q52: Why does the Eagle project coach description differ from how my council does things?

Councils, districts, and units assign coaches in many ways. The *Guide to Advancement* sets the coach’s qualifications and duties. What matters most is that the coach guides the Scout respectfully and follows the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

Still have questions? Contact your local council or district advancement committee. If your council or district can't answer it, email advancement.team@scouting.org.