

Advancement News

OCTOBER

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From the Guide to Advancement

In this regular feature, *Advancement News* will provide clarifications and rationale behind the procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*.

Introducing the Guide to Advancement

The long-awaited—and much anticipated—new *Guide to Advancement* is finally finished. Your electronic copy can be accessed via this link: <https://rcpt.yousendit.com/1248434208/aa3b5cf4b81427d26dabf4562825f940>. It is currently on the press and will be delivered for sale at Scout shops in the fall. The guide has been reorganized for easy reference and features a list of the questions most often asked of the national Advancement Team. It is a complete rewrite of the *Advancement Committee Policies and Procedures*, which it replaces.

Councils may choose to make a transition over the next few months from the former advancement publication to the new *Guide to Advancement*. After January 1, however, the new guide must be consulted for all advancement procedures. Until January 1, Eagle Scout candidates may choose to use either the new *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* or the one we have been using. The new workbook in fillable PDF will be added shortly to www.Scouting.org. A nonfillable version is attached. See the article in this issue on the new workbook.

Because the new guide has been completely rewritten, it is difficult to cite specific differences. However, a number of sections merit close review. These can be found in the guide under section 1.0.2.0, "Significant Changes." Note that the contents pages and index based on the new section numbering system should make it more efficient to find various references on advancement procedures.

About Advancement News

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America national Advancement Team. Its intent is to support and clarify procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*, announce various changes and updates in advancement, and to assist advancement committees in making decisions that can help increase the rate of advancement. The plan is to distribute it monthly, but we're flexible. It will go out when there is something important to say. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at advancement.team@scouting.org.

In This Issue

Introducing the Guide to Advancement

The New *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*

On Increasing Advancement: Unnecessary Barriers

Advancement Committee Mechanics:
Committee Size Makes the Difference

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators:
Advancement and a Week in the Florida Keys—
Jan. 16–21, 2012

The Cub Scout Angle: The Inverted Percentage

The Venturing Perspective: Sea Scout Procedures
Covered in *Guide to Advancement*

Eagle Issues: Who Hears National Eagle Scout
Rank Appeals?

Merit Badges—What's New?: Chess Merit Badge
Rollout, and Merit Badge Maintenance Task Force
Takes Shape

What Do You Think: Survey Questions for October 2011

The New Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook

You will find a nonfillable version of the new workbook as an attachment to *Advancement News*. The fillable PDF document will be available shortly at <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx>. Like the *Guide to Advancement*, it has been completely rewritten. The new workbook supports the revised wording in Eagle Scout requirement 5, which calls for a project *proposal* to be approved by the council or district, rather than “the project plan.”

Scouts have a choice to use either the new workbook or the one it is replacing. If they have already had their Eagle Scout service project approved by the council or district under the current wording of requirement 5, using the current workbook, they should continue with the same workbook. If their project has not yet been approved by the council or district, they may elect to use the new wording and the new workbook. For Scouts who choose to use the new workbook, those approving Eagle Scout service projects must evaluate projects accordingly, using the procedures outlined in the *Guide to Advancement*, and judging candidates’ project proposals.

Those responsible for council or district project approval do not have the authority to require use of the previous workbook edition if Scouts have elected to use the new requirement and the new workbook.

We are aware of issues some Eagle Scout candidates have encountered using fillable PDF workbooks. Though we have taken some measures to improve the fillable PDF, some may still experience difficulties with it. As a solution, we are currently working toward a new approach to the workbook that may involve an online, interactive, downloadable application. If testing proves it to be a superior document, fully functional on virtually any operating system, we will abandon the fillable PDF version. Regardless, the workbook will continue to be available for printing a hard copy that can be completed by hand or with a typewriter.

On Increasing Advancement

In this regular feature, *Advancement News* will provide ideas, best practices, and commentary that may have the potential to increase the number of youth members who advance.

Unnecessary Barriers

Each edition of *Advancement News* will feature an article on increasing the rate of advancement. This one relates advancement to the aims and mission of the BSA. In general, the more our youth members advance, the longer they remain in the program, and the better our chances of seeing development in their character, **citizenship, and personal fitness, and their ability to make ethical and moral choices throughout their lifetimes.**

Advancement is a carefully designed method that we use to achieve the aims and fulfill the mission of the BSA. It provides hurdles, but those are surmountable. When leaders add or intensify requirements, they raise the height of the hurdles to an unintended level. This means fewer youth will clear those hurdles.

BSA Mission Statement: The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout law.

The aims of Scouting: character development, citizenship training, and mental and physical fitness.

Perhaps leaders intend to enhance learning in the subject matter at hand. It could also be they desire an even higher level of character development. In either case higher hurdles or other unnecessary—and unauthorized—barriers tend to decrease the rate of advancement. When that happens, it results in fewer youth involved, and though those remaining may have learned somewhat more, this actually represents a decrease in mission achievement.

District and council advancement chairs and their committees are encouraged to consider in every decision how the outcomes might contribute to the rate of advancement. The key is to facilitate and promote a program in which every member advances at a good strong rate. Too often, however, those decisions result—perhaps unintentionally—in preventing or impeding the earning of ranks.

Managing Subscriptions to Advancement News

Advancement News is designed for council and district advancement chairs, advancement staff advisers, and Eagle processors. You are receiving it because your Scout executive or an area, regional, or national administrator believed you would find it helpful.

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Advancement Committee Mechanics

This feature focuses on covering methods intended to help council and district advancement committees manage their operations, expand capacity to increase the rate of advancement, and to accomplish the responsibilities outlined in the *Guide to Advancement*.

Committee Size Makes the Difference

In the *Guide to Advancement*, under "Council Advancement Committee Responsibilities," section 3.0.0.1, and the following section, 3.0.0.2, relating to the district, there are comprehensive listings of what effective advancement committees should accomplish. With all the different functions described, it makes sense to consider a practical organization and the launch of an effort to increase volunteerism related to advancement.

In addition to an advancement chair and a representative for each district, there could be the following positions on a council advancement committee:

- District advancement chairs coordinator (who works with and guides district advancement chairs)
- Volunteerism specialist (who prospects units or districts for possible advancement committee volunteers)
- Advancement promotions specialist
- Advancement training and events coordinator
- Camping committee and outdoors program liaison
- Records keeper, statistician
- Internet Advancement specialist
- Merit badge chair (with committee members to assist with counselor lists and counselor approval processes)
- Eagle Scout issues coordinator
- Specialist in advancement for Scouts with special needs
- Awards and recognition chair (with committee members to consider lifesaving and meritorious awards, etc.)
- Religious emblems coordinator

This sample list calls for 12 council advancement committee members in addition to the district advancement chairs. Any district could build a similar list, and councils with different needs would construct tailor their committee based on their council's current circumstances.

To many, assembling a committee of 12 members would be daunting. However, with prospecting methods such as "Friendstorming On Tour," No. 510-003, it is possible to search out and recruit enough volunteers to fill this committee as well as the others in the council.

Watch this space for more ideas on building advancement committee capacity.