

Becoming a Merit Badge Counselor or Make Badge Selection Changes

The actions to take to become a Merit Badge Counselor when you have a paid position in a unit or district **OR** to request additional badges.

Complete the Youth Protection Training	Verify that your Youth Protection Training is up to date.
Complete the Merit Badge Counselor Training	This training is required. It can be located in my.scouting.org . From your home page select the box that is titled My Training. Select the box titled Scouts BSA to reach the Merit Badge Counselor training. This training takes approximately 30 minutes and is a one-time training.
Adult Application and Disclosure forms were completed with your primary position application.	If you are a paid member of the BSA you will have already submitted this information and the background check has occurred.
Request the badge(s) you wish to work with.	Make this request online using our Counselor Directory and Online Application tool. You do not need sign on codes to make this request. https://stlbsa.org/advancement-awards/ In the Merit Badge Counselor drop down menu
Provide special qualifications or certifications as applicable	The following merit badges have special qualifications or certifications for either the merit badge counselor or the supervisor of certain activities that may be involved. Please refer to the Guide to Advancement, section 7.0.1.0 for the full details and other reference materials such as the Health-and -Safety links. https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/ Climbing, Snow Sports, Canoeing, Kayaking, Lifesaving, Motor Boating, Rowing, Scuba Diving, Small Boat Sailing, Swimming, Water Sports, Whitewater, Archery, Rifle Shooting, Shotgun Shooting.
Special Badges	Citizenship in Society badge requires Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training and a special council agreement form. DEI training is located in my.scouting.org . You will find the link on your home page. The agreement form should be sent to the appropriate person at the Council office. The agreement form is in the Merit Badge Counselor drop down at https://stlbsa.org/advancement-awards/

After your application is received at the Council Office:

Approval process begins with the District Advancement Chair	The appropriate District Advancement Chair will be notified of the application for review and approval. This can take a day, or it can take several weeks. The turnaround time varies District by District.
Council systems updated	Once the approval is received the counselor position will be added to the applicants file, if not already a merit badge counselor. The following business day the badges will be added to the person's profile and to Scoutbook. The Merit Badge Counselor Directory will be updated.
Notification will be emailed	The council office will email the applicant to inform them of the approval and other various information regarding renewals, etc.
Counseling may begin	Only after the approval process is completed should a counselor have contact with the youth.

Important Information

Merit Badge Counselors do not qualify for overnight activities/events. If you wish to participate in your unit's activities, you will need to join the unit. If joining the unit is the better option for you, please do that first. Your Merit Badge Counselor position can be added as a multiple position at no cost after that primary unit membership is processed.

Merit Badge Counselor positions must be renewed annually. National will email you approximately 60 days before the expiration date of your position to invite you to renew.

Badge selection is a Council function. Merit Badge Counselor membership has two steps to it. One step is the position, which is a district position, not a unit position. The second step is the badge(s) you have selected. The position requires youth protection and background checks that are reviewed at a National level. The badge requires subject matter knowledge that is reviewed at a local level. Badges do not need to be renewed. To make any changes to badges contact your Council office.

Generally, there are four badges approved per counselor in the most populated districts. Your District Advancement Chair will work with you regarding limits.

Scoutbook vs Merit Badge Counselor Directory. Your counselor information will be listed in two places. Scoutbook has a direct link to the registration systems used by the Council and National. It is important to keep your email contact up to date in Scoutbook/my.scouting.org as this is how National will contact you for updates and renewals. The Directory is maintained for use by units and scouts/families that do use Scoutbook or do not have access to Scoutbook or like the ease of the Directory. Once you are approved as a counselor you will be given the access codes to open the Directory. It is password protected and does not align with your other BSA passwords.

A lapse of Youth Protection Training will automatically remove you from the counselor list in Scoutbook. Followed by removal from the Directory.

If you need to send any documentation to the office you can send directly to the person who handles the Merit Badge Counselor files, to the Help Center at stlbsa.org/contact-us, or by mail:

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