

## Joining the BSA and Becoming a Merit Badge Counselor

**The actions to take to become a Merit Badge Counselor if you are not a member of the BSA:**

<p>Complete the Youth Protection Training</p>	<p>Sign onto <a href="http://my.scouting.org">my.scouting.org</a>. Create an account and take the mandatory Youth Protection Training that consists of the Overview and Policies, Sexual Abuse, Bullying, and YPT Certification Test. A link to the training will be on your home page.</p> <p>You will receive a certificate by email when the training has been completed.</p> <p>This training has a 2-year expiration and must be taken every 2 years.</p> <p>Please keep your email address up to date so that National can reach you with reminders of when the training is due. If you have already taken YPT please make sure your training is up to date.</p> <p><a href="https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/">https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/</a></p>
<p>Complete the Merit Badge Counselor Training</p>	<p>This training is required.</p> <p>It can be located in <a href="http://my.scouting.org">my.scouting.org</a>. 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.</p> <p>This training takes approximately 30 minutes and is a one-time training.</p>
<p>Complete an Adult Application and disclosure form.</p>	<p>These two forms must be signed either: with a wet ink signature or a digital authenticator. The Unit section will be left blank; however, all other parts must be completed. These documents along with a copy of the YPT certificate should be delivered to the Council office or emailed to the appropriate person at the Council office.</p>
<p>Request the badge(s) you wish to work with.</p>	<p>Make this request online using our Counselor Directory and Online Application tool. You do not need a sign on code to make this request.</p> <p><a href="https://stlbsa.org/advancement-awards/">https://stlbsa.org/advancement-awards/</a> In the Merit Badge Counselor drop down</p>
<p>Pay the \$25.00 fee</p>	<p>This fee can be sent by mail, paid at the office, or paid by phone.</p> <p>The office address is 4568 West Pine Blvd, St. Louis MO 63108. Phone is 314-361-0600. There is a small credit card fee.</p>
<p>Provide special qualifications or certifications as applicable</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><a href="https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/">https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/</a></p>

	Climbing, Snow Sports, Canoeing, Kayaking, Lifesaving, Motor Boating, Rowing, Scuba Diving, Small Boat Sailing, Swimming, Water Sports, Whitewater, Archery, Rifle Shooting, Shotgun Shooting.
Special Badge – Citizenship in Society	<p>Citizenship in Society badge requires Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training and a special council agreement form.</p> <p>DEI training is located in <a href="https://my.scouting.org">my.scouting.org</a>. You will find the link on your home page.</p> <p>The agreement form should be sent to the appropriate person at the Council office.</p> <p>The agreement form can be located at <a href="https://stlbsa.org/advancement-awards/">https://stlbsa.org/advancement-awards/</a> in the Merit Badge Counselor Drop down.</p>

**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.
Background check is submitted	Once the District has approved the application the background check will be submitted. The results of the check can take approximately five business days. The applicant may receive emails regarding the progress.
Council systems updated	Once the clear background check is received the council system will be updated with the position. The Applicant may receive a notice from Scoutbook of this action. 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 2 months before the expiration date of your position to invite you to renew.

Badge selection is a Council function. Merit Badge Counselor membership is a two-step process. One step is the position, which is a district position, not a unit position. The second step is the badge(s) you have selected to work with. 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.