

Guide for Merit Badge Counselors

The merit badge counselor is a key player in the Boy Scout advancement program. Whatever your area of expertise or interest—whether it is a special craft or hobby (basketry, leatherwork, coin collecting), a profession (veterinary medicine, aviation, engineering), or perhaps a life skill (cooking, personal management, communications)—as a merit badge counselor, you can play a vital role in stirring a young man’s curiosity about that particular topic. By serving as a merit badge counselor, you offer your time, knowledge, and other resources so that Scouts can explore a topic of interest.

Understanding the Scouting Program

The Scouting program emphasizes helping young men develop character, citizenship, and mental and physical fitness. Among the handful of methods used to build on these aims of Scouting are adult association, leadership development, and advancement.

A Scout’s association with his merit badge counselors provides an excellent way for him to grow and gain confidence through exposure to quality adults who serve as positive role models and mentors. Meeting people from business and community leaders to trained specialists and enthusiastic hobbyists, a Scout can experience personal growth and a positive life-altering experience while in pursuit of a merit badge.

A Merit Badge Counselor Is ...

As a merit badge counselor, your mission is to join fun with learning. You are both a teacher and mentor as the Scout works on a merit badge and learns by doing. Your hands-on involvement could inspire a Scout to develop a lifelong hobby, pursue a particular career, or become an independent, self-supporting adult.

Applications and Training

If you are not yet a merit badge counselor, it is easy to become a volunteer. You will need to register with the Boy Scouts of America, through your BSA local council. This entails contacting the local council, then obtaining, completing, and turning in the “Adult Application.” The council will then process the application. (Every applicant is screened.)

In order to register, merit badge counselors are expected to complete BSA Youth Protection. This training can be done through The BSA’s [Online Learning Center](#). The Boy Scouts of America seeks to create a safe environment for young people and adult leaders to enjoy the program and related activities. BSA Youth Protection training helps preserve that environment

[BSA Volunteer Online application](#)

[BSA Adult application \(PDF\)](#)

[BSA Merit Badge Counselor Information](#)

BSA’s [Online Learning Center-Youth Protection...](#) (Create an Account to facilitate further training)

For more information, consult the [Guide for Merit Badge Counseling, No. 512-065](#)

. To learn more about the merit badge program, see section 7 of the *Guide to Advancement*, “[The Merit Badge Program](#).”