

Eagle Scout service project qualifications and suggestions.....

While schools and religious institutions are the most popular beneficiaries of Eagle Scout projects, they aren't the only options.

The BSA only says that Eagle projects must be "helpful to any religious institution, any school or your community." And to expand things even further, the *Guide to Advancement* specifies that "your community" need not be restricted to something down the street or even within your town. It can actually mean the "community of the world," meaning anywhere on the planet is fair game. (Sorry, no Eagle projects on Mars just yet.)

Here are a few other reminders from the *Guide to Advancement*, which we've excerpted at the end of this post.

An Eagle Scout project beneficiary ...

- **does not have to be** a registered nonprofit.
- **must not be** the Boy Scouts of America or BSA councils, units or camps.
- **can be** another Scouting or youth-serving organization.
- **must not be** a commercial business (though something like a park that's open to the public but owned by a business, for example, would be OK, provided "the project primarily benefits the community, as opposed to the profits of the business").
- **cannot be** an individual, though exceptions can be made, such as an elderly person able to live at home but unable to keep their property safe or visually appealing, raising the project's scope beyond that individual person.
- **must be** fully aware of any work that is being done and approve of this work before it begins.

20 ideas for unique Eagle Scout service project beneficiaries

You won't find religious institutions or schools on this list, though those make excellent Eagle Scout project beneficiaries — especially if it's your chartered organization. This list is all about options that are lesser-known but still worthy of consideration.

1. [Veteran support organizations](#), such as the American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars
2. Organizations that support national parks (there are about [450 such local philanthropic organizations](#) across the country)
3. Libraries (see if your local library has a "Friends of [your town] Library" group, and start there)
4. Animal shelters and other groups that help our furry friends
5. Museums (try a search at the [American Alliance of Museums](#) to get started)
6. Nonprofit performing arts groups, including theater or dance companies, orchestras and more
7. Youth-serving organizations — other than the BSA
8. Historical societies and preservation organizations (search 4,500 listings [here](#))
9. Colleges, universities, vocational schools and technical schools — especially smaller ones that could use the extra help
10. Health care facilities — especially nonprofit clinics that serve lower-income patients (search free and charitable clinics [here](#))
11. Community gardens, botanical gardens and arboretums
12. Youth sports organizations and recreation centers
13. Food banks, soup kitchens and food pantries (search more than 12,000 [here](#))
14. Senior centers (search [the directory](#) at the National Council on Aging)
15. Charities that build houses for people, such as Habitat for Humanity or Building Homes For Heroes
16. Local cities and towns with their various agencies, buildings, parks, monuments and more (this is a pretty broad one, but so is everything offered in an American city or town)
17. Nonprofit groups dedicated to preserving and protecting a specific river, lake, trail or other natural feature

18. Organizations that provide programs to children or adults with physical or intellectual disabilities, such as the Special Olympics
19. Nonprofit groups that put on festivals within your city or town
20. Service organizations like Rotary International, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Lions Club and **many more**

What does the *Guide to Advancement* say?

Here's the relevant excerpt from the *Guide to Advancement*. I've added the bold for emphasis.

9.0.2.5 “Helpful to Any Religious Institution, Any School, or Your Community”

“Any religious institution” and “any school” are self explanatory. But what does “your community” mean? In today’s world of instant communications and speedy travel, we are affected more and more by what goes on all over the world. Prices for goods and services, investment values, our very safety, and how we feel about those less fortunate in other countries, all are involved. Thus, if Scouts want to take their oath “to help other people” more expansively and put their project to work for the “community of the world,” they are allowed to do so. A council may emphasize more local efforts but should not deny worthy projects of a wider scope.

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Normally “your community” would not refer to individuals, although a council or district advancement committee may consider scenarios where an individual in need can affect a community. An example might involve elderly persons able to live at home but unable to maintain their property, with the result being an “attractive nuisance” or related dangerous situations, or even an eyesore — something that raises concern to more than that of just an individual. If it can be determined the community benefits, then it is a matter of identifying who will provide approvals. They must come from a source representing the “community,” such as a neighborhood association, watch group, homeowners association, or perhaps a division of a town or county.

The project beneficiary need not be a registered nonprofit. Projects may not be of a commercial nature or for a business, but this is not meant to disallow community institutions that would otherwise be acceptable to the council or district advancement committee. These might include museums and various service agencies, or some homes for the elderly, for example. Some aspect of a business’s operation provided as a community service may also be considered; for example, a park open to the public that happens to be owned by a business. In cases such as these, the test is whether the project primarily benefits the community, as opposed to the profits of the business.

9.0.2.6 “Benefit an Organization Other Than the Boy Scouts of America”

“To help other people at all times” is a basic tenet. The Eagle Scout service project is an important and meaningful opportunity to practice what we teach. **Projects must not be performed for the Boy Scouts of America or its councils, districts, units, camps, and so forth. The unit’s chartered organization, however, is certainly a good candidate, as are other, international Scouting organizations or other youth organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.**

To help project beneficiaries understand the Eagle Scout service project requirement along with the responsibilities and the rights that come with the benefit, the National Advancement Program Team has prepared an information sheet for project beneficiaries, called “Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project,” which appears in the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook found on this same web site.