2026 Washington D.C. District Merit Badge University **Participant Handbook**

Hosted by the Washington DC District, Scouting America National Capitol Area Council
&
The Catholic University of America

December 12th & 13th | 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. both days

Introduction & Contact Information

Thank you for your interest in the **2026 Washington D.C. District Merit Badge University** hosted at The Catholic University of America. This guide provides all the information you will need to prepare for your session.

This is an approved event of the Scouting America National Capitol Area Council administered by the Washington, DC District. The Scouts BSA advancement program is administered in compliance with the requirements in the Guide to Advancement 2025 and the January 2026 updates as well as applicable Scouting America National Capitol Area Council large Merit Badge event policies.

For general event questions, please contact:

- Zachary White, Washington, DC District Merit Badge Dean & Merit Badge University Event Lead
- meritbadgedean@scoutingindc.org

For registration questions, please contact:

- Christa Waterwiese, Washington DC Senior District Executive
  christa.Waterwiese@scouting.org

For counselor feedback or Scouts BSA advancement related questions, please contact:

- Zachary White, Washington, DC District Merit Badge Dean & Merit Badge University Event Lead
- meritbadgedean@scoutingindc.org
- David Astle, Merit Badge Lead, National Capital Area Council
  dave.sonia@verizon.net

In case of emergency during the event, please contact:

Department of Public Safety, The Catholic University of America - (202) 319-5111 or dial 911

To report abuse in the Scouting America program, contact 1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8871) directly.

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Event Code of Conduct

The following code of conduct has been written to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all involved at the CUA Merit Badge University. Please review this document carefully before attending CUA Merit Badge University.

Follow the Scout Oath, Scout Law, & Outdoor Code: All attendees are expected to uphold the values in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Scouts are expected to be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent throughout the entirety of Merit Badge University.

Treat all members of volunteers, counselors, university staff, participants, and other personnel with respect: We expect all participants to treat each other respect, as they have volunteered their time to make MBU happen. This includes, and is not limited to, respecting participants' race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, genetic information, disability, matriculation, or political affiliation.

Respect the property and materials of The Catholic University of America: This Merit Badge University is hosted at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. We expect that you will respect the spaces and materials provided to you for MBU. This includes but is not limited to: only using materials provided to you, not using CUA technology unless explicitly instructed by your counselor, and not being in any CUA rooms unless a volunteer or counselor is present.

Restroom Policy: Following malicious incidents at the 2025 Merit Badge University that resulted in damage to CUA restroom facilities, Youth will not be allowed to visit the restrooms in groups larger than two (2) at a time. Counselors will keep a log of those Scouts who use the restroom during their sessions, and Adult staff members will continually monitor the restrooms for signs of vandalism.

Vandalizing Property: Any youth caught vandalizing CUA property, equipment, furniture, or restrooms will be immediately removed from the event. The youths parents may be held financially liable for any necessary repairs.

Personal responsibility for breakage or loss of personal property: CUA and the MBU staff are not responsible for any breakage or loss of personal property. It is the personal responsibility of attendees to keep track of their belongings throughout the Merit Badge University.

No drugs, alcohol, firearms, vaping, or tobacco: We want Merit Badge University to be a fun and safe time for all involved. As such, absolutely no drugs, alcohol, firearms, vaping or tobacco products are permitted during the Merit Badge University. Any participant caught with one of the above or similar will be immediately removed from the event.

By attending MBU, you are agreeing to abide by the rules and regulations outlined in this code of conduct. As event staff reserves the right to remove any event participant in violation of this code of conduct.

Registration & Event Schedule

Registrations for the 2026 Washington D.C. District Merit Badge University will be handled exclusively online via Black Pug, the National Capital Area Council's registration platform. Space at this event is limited. Session registration slots are capped at a maximum of 15-20 Scouts or fewer at the discretion of the counselor and are awarded on a first-come-first-served basis.

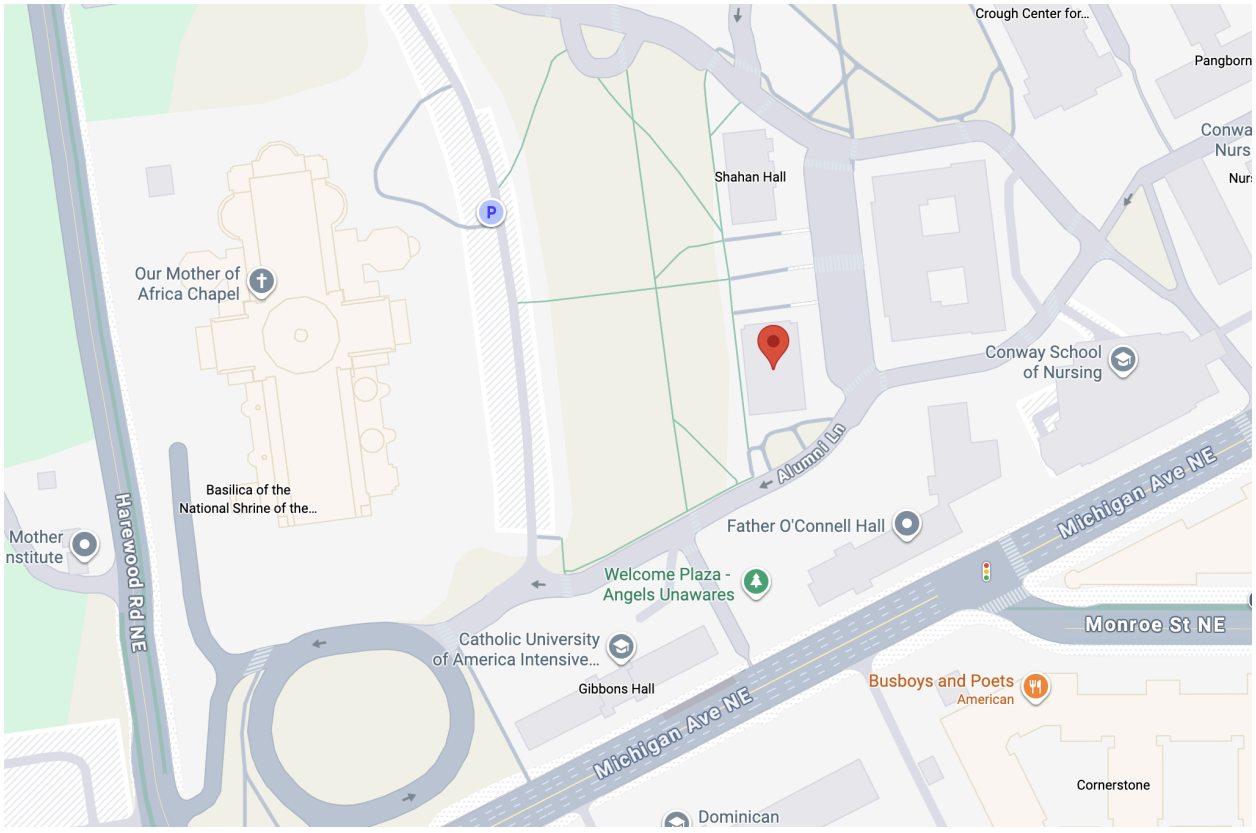
Please arrive at the event before your session begins to check in with staff and receive your room assignment. Check-in opens at 8:00 AM for All Day and Morning participants. Afternoon session check-in opens at 1:00 PM for Afternoon participants.

Check-in closes for all at 8:45 AM and 1:45 PM.

For 2026, check-in will occur at:

McGivney Hall.

552 Alumni Lane, NE, Washington, DC 20064



We anticipate a large number of Scouts each morning for check-in, so please plan to arrive as early as possible. Showing up to morning check in at 15 minutes prior to your session or less will likely result in a late arrival to your session. Those with afternoon sessions only are encouraged to check in during the lunch break. Thank you in advance for your patience.

We anticipate parking will be available in the McMahon Parking lot and throughout campus. Metered parking is available via the Flowbird App.

IMPORTANT: We are NOT able to accommodate same-day registrations. We will do our best to accommodate same-day schedule changes for Scouts, but those are not guaranteed. Please communicate any cancellations in advance to christa.waterwiese@scouting.org so we may accommodate other Scouts.

- 8:00 AM - Check-In Opens
- 8:46 AM - Welcome Message and transit to All Day and Morning Sessions
- 9:00 AM - All Day sessions begin
- 9:00 AM - Morning sessions begin
- 1:00 PM - Morning sessions conclude
- 1:00 PM - Lunch break (1 hour)
- 1:00 PM - Afternoon Check-in Opens
- 2:00 PM - Afternoon sessions begin
- 6:00 PM - All Day sessions conclude
- 6:00 PM - Afternoon sessions conclude
- 7:00 PM - All participants should be picked up no later than this time

As a courtesy to our event staff and volunteers, please plan to provide transportation for your Scouts immediately at the conclusion of their final session.

Packing List

Scouts are asked to bring the following items with them to the Merit Badge University:

- All Scouts should wear a full Scout uniform throughout the day
- Properly layered clothing - for indoor and outdoor activities (rain or shine)
- Bag lunch
- Paper and pens for note taking
- Any prerequisite Merit Badge work - including the Standardized Scoutmaster Attestation Letter
- One Application for Merit Badge ("BLUE CARD") for each badge, filled out in **blue or black ink (not pencil)**, with the Scout's name, Scout's address, and Unit Leader's signature.

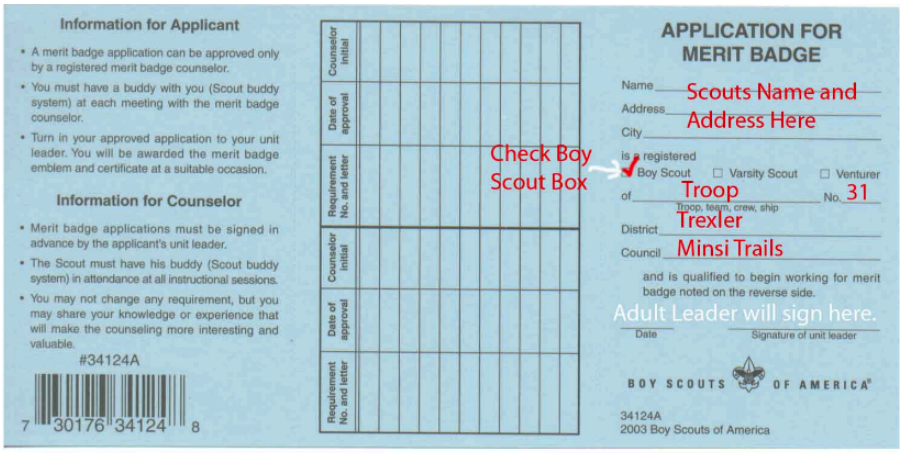
7 Steps to Ensure a Successful Merit Badge University Experience

Please review this guide before you arrive on campus for the event, there are a few steps every Scout should take to make sure they get the most out of this opportunity:

1) Meet with your Unit Leader and acquire a signed BLUE CARD

For those units that use Scoutbook Plus, please be advised that not every volunteer counselor will have experience with the platform. Be prepared to accept a BLUE CARD for badge completion.

Before starting any Merit Badge, Scouts are required to meet with their Unit Leader to have a conversation and receive a BLUE CARD. Fill out the sections below highlighted in red text with their information and make sure to bring it with them you to Merit Badge University:





This BLUE CARD is a very important document, it is your official record of your Merit Badge work. Do your best to keep track of it. It may be very difficult to replace if lost. Ensure that your name and address are filled in in **blue or black ink** (**not pencil**).

2) Review the current requirements for the Merit Badge

It is important for Scouts, personally, to know the steps you need to take to complete your Merit Badge. The most current requirements are found here: [All Merit Badges A-Z | Scouting America]

Navigate to your badge(s) and review the current requirements.

The Scouting America website above is the only authoritative website with the current Merit Badge requirements. Third Party "Workbooks" are NOT official and are not endorsed by Scouting America. Additionally, with the 2026 changes to many Merit Badge requirements, they may be out of date.

3) Start working on requirements and prepared materials for Merit Badge University

It is strongly encouraged that you come prepared to show as many requirements finished and ready for sign off as possible. Over and above the prerequisites included in this guide.

Prepare to take pictures, printouts, models, and other evidence of your work with you to Merit Badge University. Counselors will not assume that you've finished your badge prerequisites or other requirements without seeing evidence that the work has been completed.

While researching, you may find many great resources to help you work on your Merit Badges, including unofficial "worksheets" for Merit Badges. Please know that while "worksheets" may be helpful learning aids for you personally, worksheets alone do not suffice for requirements that require you to discuss, tell, show, or demonstrate things. No Scouts will be required to use "worksheets" to complete Merit Badges.

4) Meet with your counselor and get your individual requirements signed off

Your Merit Badge counselor will work with you during your session to complete requirements. It's important to know that they will only sign off requirements that you, personally, have completed before or during the session. Your counselor will sign off the requirements that you personally have completed as you complete requirements, or at the end of the session, on your BLUE CARD and return it.

Attendance at your session does not guarantee that you will complete a Merit Badge. ***You alone are responsible for completing the requirements as written for your Merit Badges.***

If you complete your Merit Badge during the session, then congratulations! Your counselor will detach the "Counselor Record" segment from the BLUE CARD, write their contact information on the card, and then give you the remaining 2/3rds of the card. As soon as possible, take your completed BLUE CARD back to your Unit Leader to ensure that you receive credit for your work.

If you didn't complete your Merit Badge during the session, that is perfectly OK. You have still made progress towards earning your badge! **Make sure to get your counselor's contact information before leaving Merit Badge University so that you can follow up with them.**

Make sure to take your BLUE CARD back with you at the end of the session and keep it in a safe place. This is your record of your progress to completing your Merit Badge. It may be very difficult to replace if lost.

You don't have to start your badge over again, because any requirements you have recorded on your BLUE CARD are considered to be complete and valid until your 18th birthday.

5) Commit to following up with your counselor

No matter how many requirements you have left, it's recommended that you continue your work on your Merit Badges shortly after your session at Merit Badge University and keep in touch with your counselor to wrap up the rest of your requirements. At a time of mutual convenience, you may arrange to meet with your counselor and a buddy (or parent) to finish requirements in person. **Make sure to get your counselor's contact information before leaving Merit Badge University so that you can follow up with them.**

If meeting with your session's counselor after the event is inconvenient, you may choose to continue and complete your Merit Badges with a different counselor for the same badge (so long as they are registered Merit Badge Counselors). This includes counselors in your own Unit, at summer camp, and counselors closer to you geographically. Make sure you keep your BLUE CARD so that the new counselor can continue your progress. **Speak with your Scoutmaster to locate another counselor.**

6) Return completed BLUE CARDS to your Scoutmaster immediately

Once you have completed your Merit Badge. The counselor who completed the badge with you will detach the "Counselor Record" segment from the BLUE CARD, write their contact information on the card, and then hand you back the remaining 2/3rds of the card. Take your completed BLUE CARD back to your Unit Leader as soon as possible to ensure that you receive credit for your work.

7) If you have any questions, ask for help as soon as possible

If you have any questions about this document, suspect unfair treatment at the event, or suspect that Scouting America procedures have not been followed during or after this event, then please contact the following individuals:

For general event questions, please contact:

- Zachary White, Washington, DC District Merit Badge Dean & Merit Badge University Event Lead
- meritbadgedean@scoutingindc.org

For registration questions, please contact:

- Christa Waterwiese, Washington DC Senior District Executive
  christa.Waterwiese@scouting.org

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- David Astle, Merit Badge Lead, National Capital Area Council
  dave.sonia@verizon.net

To report abuse in the Scouting America program, contact 1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8871) directly.

Appendix 1 - Campus Map

Link to view and download a campus map: HERE

Parking - Please use Flowbird app Google Play OR Apple Store

Appendix 2 - Merit Badge Pre-requisites

START HERE: Know Your Merit Badge Requirements

Current Merit Badge Requirements:
(SCROLL DOWN ON THE WEBSITE TO FIND YOUR BADGE)

Guide to Advancement:
(This document outlines the rules for the BSA advancement program. The merit badge section begins at Chapter 7.0.0.0 – Scouts BSA and event policies are derived from this guide)

Guide to Advancement 2026 Updates:

Standardized Scoutmaster Attestation Form (for Pre-Reqs):
PRINT THIS AND HAVE YOUR SCOUTMASTER SIGN. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO TURN THIS INTO YOUR COUNSELOR.

Outside Work Requirements by Session

2026 Washington D.C. District Merit Badge University – Pre-Requisites and Outside Work

It is strongly encouraged that you come prepared to show as many requirements finished and ready for sign off as possible - over and above the pre-requisites included in this guide.

Participant Guide Changes

- ~~September 25, 2025 – Second Edition~~
- October 11, 2026 - Third Edition