

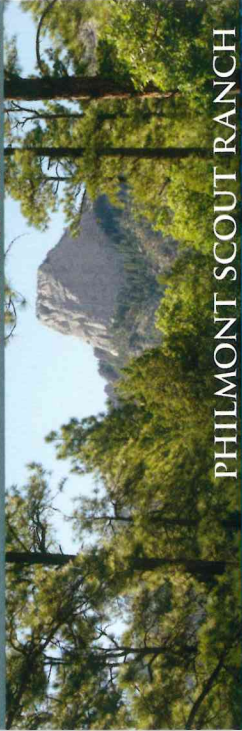
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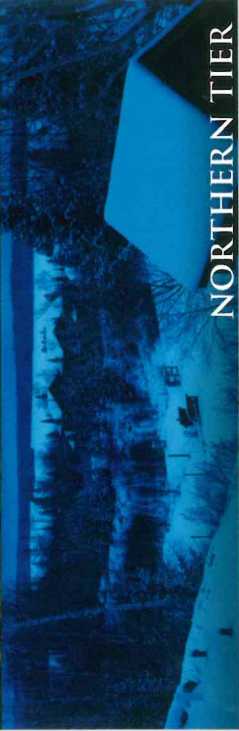
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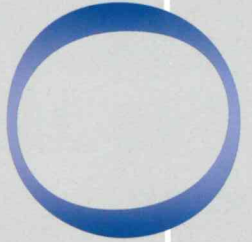
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NORTHERN TIER



ON THE ROAD TO  
HIGH ADVENTURE

THE SUPPLY GROUP IS  
READY TO BE A PARTNER  
ON YOUR TRAIL TO  
EAGLE THROUGH HIGH  
ADVENTURE. THE  
ADVENTURE IS YOURS,  
AND WE ARE READY  
WITH THE GEAR YOU  
WILL NEED. YOU CAN  
DEPEND ON THE LATEST  
IN LIGHTWEIGHT,  
DURABLE, QUALITY  
GEAR THAT WILL  
MEET AND SURPASS  
YOUR TOUGHEST  
REQUIREMENTS.



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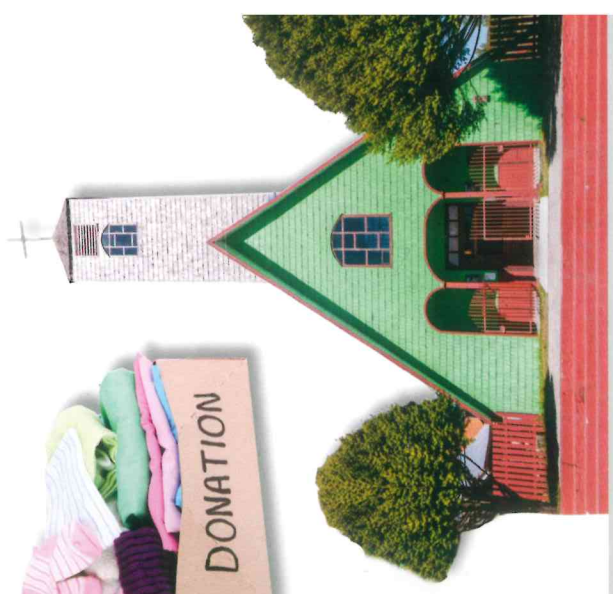


35870 2019 Printing

# MERIT BADGE SERIES



# CITIZENSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY



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SFI-00-032



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA



### How to Use This Pamphlet

The secret to successfully earning a merit badge is for you to use both the pamphlet and the suggestions of your counselor.

Your counselor can be as important to you as a coach is to an athlete. Use all of the resources your counselor can make available to you. This may be the best chance you will have to learn about this particular subject. Make it count.

If you or your counselor feels that any information in this pamphlet is incorrect, please let us know. Please state your source of information.

Merit badge pamphlets are reprinted annually and requirements updated regularly. Your suggestions for improvement are welcome.

### Who Pays for This Pamphlet?

This merit badge pamphlet is one in a series of more than 100 covering all kinds of hobby and career subjects. It is made available for you to buy as a service of the national and local councils, Boy Scouts of America. The costs of the development, writing, and editing of the merit badge pamphlets are paid for by the Boy Scouts of America in order to bring you the best book at a reasonable price.

Send comments along with a brief statement about yourself to  
Pilots and Program Development, S272  
Boy Scouts of America • 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane • Irving, TX 75038  
If you prefer, you may send your comments to [merit.badge@Scouting.org](mailto:merit.badge@Scouting.org).



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
MERIT BADGE SERIES

# CITIZENSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY



*"Enhancing our youths' competitive edge through merit badges"*



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

## Requirements

1. Discuss with your counselor what citizenship in the community means and what it takes to be a good citizen in your community. Discuss the rights, duties, and obligations of citizenship, and explain how you can demonstrate good citizenship in your community, Scouting unit, place of worship, or school.
2. Do the following:
  - a. On a map of your community or using an electronic device, locate and point out the following:
    - (1) Chief government buildings such as your city hall, county courthouse, and public works/services facilities
    - (2) Fire station, police station, and hospital nearest your home
    - (3) Parks, playgrounds, recreation areas, and trails
    - (4) Historical or other points of interest
  - b. Chart the organization of your local or state government. Show the top offices and tell whether they are elected or appointed.
3. Do the following:
  - a. Attend a meeting of your city, town, or county council or school board; OR attend a municipal, county, or state court session.
  - b. Choose one of the issues discussed at the meeting where a difference of opinions was expressed, and explain to your counselor why you agree with one opinion more than you do another one.
4. Choose an issue that is important to the citizens of your community; then do the following:
  - a. Find out which branch of local government is responsible for this issue.

- b. With your counselor's and a parent's approval, interview one person from the branch of government you identified in requirement 4a. Ask what is being done about this issue and how young people can help.
  - c. Share what you have learned with your counselor.
5. With the approval of your counselor and a parent, watch a movie that shows how the actions of one individual or group of individuals can have a positive effect on a community. Discuss with your counselor what you learned from the movie about what it means to be a valuable and concerned member of the community.
  6. List some of the services (such as the library, recreation center, public transportation, and public safety) your community provides that are funded by taxpayers. Tell your counselor why these services are important to your community.
  7. Do the following:
    - a. Identify three charitable organizations outside of Scouting that interest you and bring people in your community together to work for the good of your community.
    - b. Pick ONE of the organizations you chose for requirement 7a. Using a variety of resources (including newspapers, fliers and other literature, the internet, volunteers, and employees of the organization), find out more about this organization.
    - c. With your counselor's and your parent's approval, contact the organization you chose for requirement 7b, and find out what young people can do to help. While working on this merit badge, volunteer at least eight hours of your time for the organization. After your volunteer experience is over, discuss what you have learned with your counselor.
  8. Develop a public presentation (such as a video, slide show, speech, digital presentation, or photo exhibit) about important and unique aspects of your community. Include information about the history, cultures, and ethnic groups of your community; its best features and popular places where people gather; and the challenges it faces. Stage your presentation in front of your merit badge counselor or a group, such as your patrol or a class at school.



## Contents

Introduction . . . . .	7
Citizenship: The Value of Belonging. . . . .	8
Seats of Power. . . . .	11
Public Meetings. . . . .	19
Local Issues: What's on the Public's Mind? . . . . .	22
Making a Difference . . . . .	25
Resources . . . . .	31

# Introduction

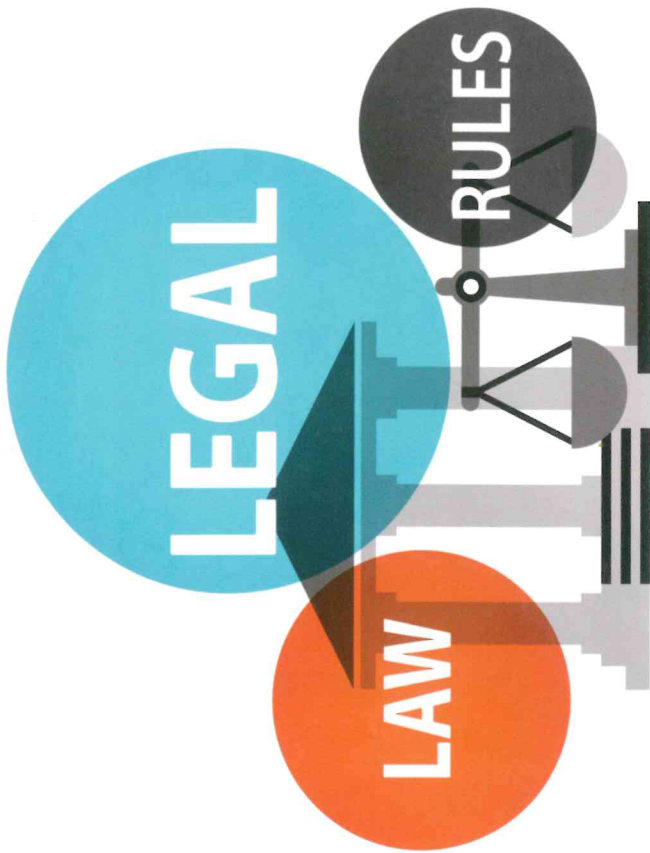
A *community* is a group of people living in a particular area who share common characteristics, interests, activities, or purposes. That group could be as small as a family living together in an apartment or as large as the population of a sprawling metropolitan area. You can belong to communities within communities: family, neighborhood, school, Scout troop, club, team, worship group, and city. The United States is a patchwork of communities.

Local communities are the building blocks of government. They differ from each other and may be governed differently. The makeup of a particular local government depends on its history, population, size, geography, and various laws. But regardless of how local communities differ, they all have one point in common: In the United States, local government means self-government. Here, citizens help to make decisions about their community through their elected local officials.

## Top-Down Government

In many countries outside the United States, the national government controls and directs what happens in local communities.

Every community has a history. Some are centuries old and full of hope or despair; others are beginning right now, as carpenters nail shingles on the last house in a new neighborhood. While you are earning this merit badge, you will discover ways you can help your community, old or new, by participating as a good, active citizen.



## Citizenship: The Value of Belonging

Every time an American family adds a child, the United States adds another citizen. Citizens are people who either were born in this country or were born elsewhere and have been *naturalized*, or granted citizenship by the government.

If you are a U.S. citizen, you also are a citizen of your state and local community.

### The Rights, Duties, and Obligations of Community

Being a member of a community—your family or your Scout troop, for example—gives you rights, privileges, and protection. You may express your opinions, try new skills, hang out with friends, and be safe. In return, you should honor your parents, respect adult leaders and fellow Scouts, help one another, and follow the rules.

As an American citizen, you are entitled to the freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and to the full protection of federal, state, and local laws. You also can count on the support of local service departments like fire and sanitation. But these rights of citizenship come with a price.

Some obligations are required by law, including paying taxes and obeying the law. Other obligations, such as valuing others' opinions, staying informed about candidates and issues, and respecting elected officials, might not be written laws, but they may be considered instructions for good conduct.

Just as you are loyal to your family and troop members—even if you do not always agree with them—you should show allegiance to your local government. If you disagree with what is happening in your community, you have the right to try to change local public policies.



Public policy includes the goals the government sets as well as the actions required to achieve those goals. For example, a city council might set a goal to build the local economy by giving tax breaks to new businesses.

### Participation: The Antidote to Apathy

Many citizens take their rights for granted. Some citizens do not vote, voluntarily giving up their voice in the government. Other citizens do not know or care about what is going on in their community—until a prison is built in their neighborhood, or the crime rate grows. Unless they are upset about a particular issue, most citizens leave the decisions to elected representatives and local activists.

People who feel connected to their community tend to participate. The more active citizens are in their community, with ties to a school, youth groups, businesses, and service clubs, the more interest they will have in the local government. That is why longtime residents often hold local offices.

You have a chance now to build connections in your own community. Look for opportunities to get involved with charities, local companies, your place of worship, and your school. Help people understand the issues in your community and you will develop a respect for the opinions of others and a compassion for those in need. You will appreciate the efforts that your elected officials make on your behalf.

Good citizenship goes beyond feeling loyal to your community. It is how you conduct yourself as a citizen, being constantly alert to ways you can improve the lives of your family, friends, neighbors, and your community as a whole.





## Seats of Power

The U.S. Constitution outlines a federal system in which the powers of the people's government are divided between the national government and the 50 states. State constitutions create unitary systems in which all powers are centralized in the state governments. Nowhere in the Constitution are local governments mentioned.

### The Relationship Between State and Local Governments

Each state has complete authority over all the local governments within its borders. The local governments borrow their powers from state governments and can exercise only those powers specifically given to them by the state.

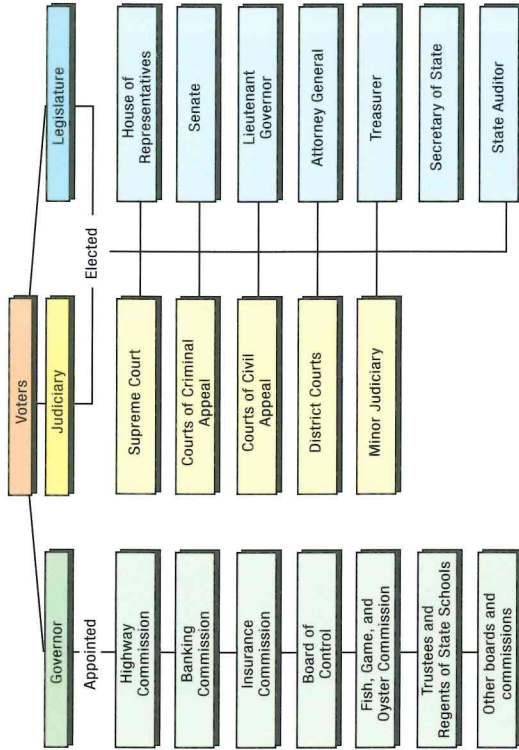
State governments are patterned after the three branches of the federal government: executive, legislative, and judicial. The governor heads the executive branch, which includes other elected officers such as the lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, and treasurer. Elected representatives from districts throughout the state make laws in a two-house legislature. Most states have what they call the upper house, or Senate, and the lower house, or House of Representatives. (Nebraska calls its one house the Legislature.) The judiciary is the system of courts headed by elected or appointed judges.

Citizens vote for many state officials, but the governor and Senate share appointive powers and choose officials to run certain state boards and commissions.

At the federal and state levels, separation of powers is very important and helps ensure that no one branch of government becomes too powerful. It is not as critical at the local level where most governing bodies perform administrative and legislative duties.

### We Can Do It Ourselves

In recent years, many states have added *home-rule amendments* to their constitutions. These amendments give local governments the authority to handle their own internal affairs without interference from the state.



#### Organization of a typical state government

### Structure of Local Governments

No matter where you live, you probably are touched by several layers of local government: city, county, school district, special district, and region. Your family might pay taxes to one or more of these government entities.

### Counties

All U.S. states are divided into *counties* (called *parishes* in Louisiana and *boroughs* in Alaska), which are further divided into *townships* or *districts*. In 48 states, the county is the largest unit of local government. Connecticut and Rhode Island do not have county governments. In Connecticut, counties exist only for the purposes of elections; in Rhode Island, counties are divisions of the state court system.

The main functions of county government are law enforcement; property assessment and tax collection; highway construction and maintenance; recording of important public documents such as deeds, mortgages, and death certificates; issuing licenses for hunting, fishing, and marriage; and providing public welfare.

When state and local government budgets are cut, counties in large urban areas assume more responsibility in providing services such as transportation, water and sewer operations,

With your parent's permission, visit your state's website on the internet.



### Farm to Market

The county has its roots in rural life. Boundary lines that were drawn in the days of the horse and buggy were laid out so that everyone living within a given county could travel in one day to and from the center of local government and commerce.

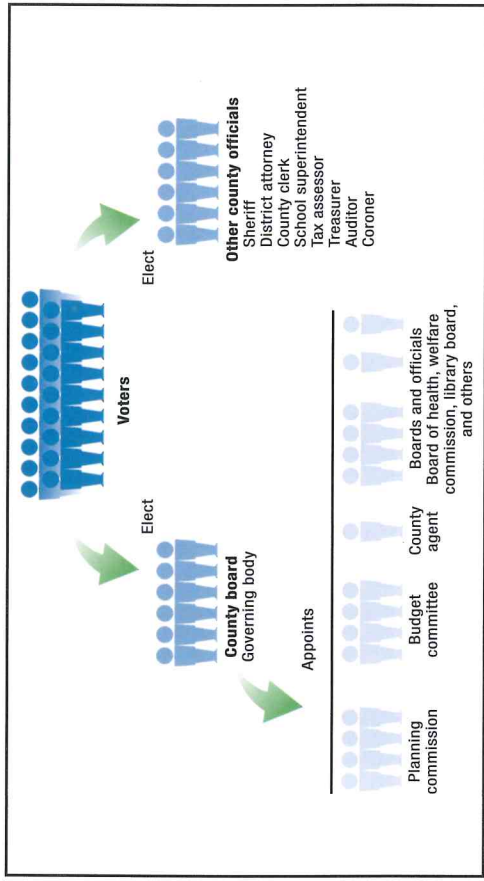
emergency medical services, and land-use planning. Regions made up of multiple counties often regulate air quality control and mass transit networks, and coordinate natural disaster planning.

County governments can be structured several ways. The most common form is the *county board*, in which citizens elect officials from their township or district to represent them on a board of commissioners (usually with three to seven or more members) or a board of supervisors (typically with 15 to 80 or more members). Board members share authority with other elected officials such as the sheriff, district attorney, county clerk, and coroner, and they appoint people to committees and lesser commissions.

Another type of county government is the *council-administrator form*, in which an elected county council passes laws and appoints an administrator to execute the council's policies. The third and least-used form has an *elected county administrator* who serves as chief executive and an elected council that determines legislative policy.

Whenever a call is made to 911, you should know that it is recorded and documented and can never be "canceled." If this number is dialed accidentally or if it is a prank call, someone (such as a police officer or sheriff) will show up at the door to make sure everything is all right.





### Organization of one typical county government

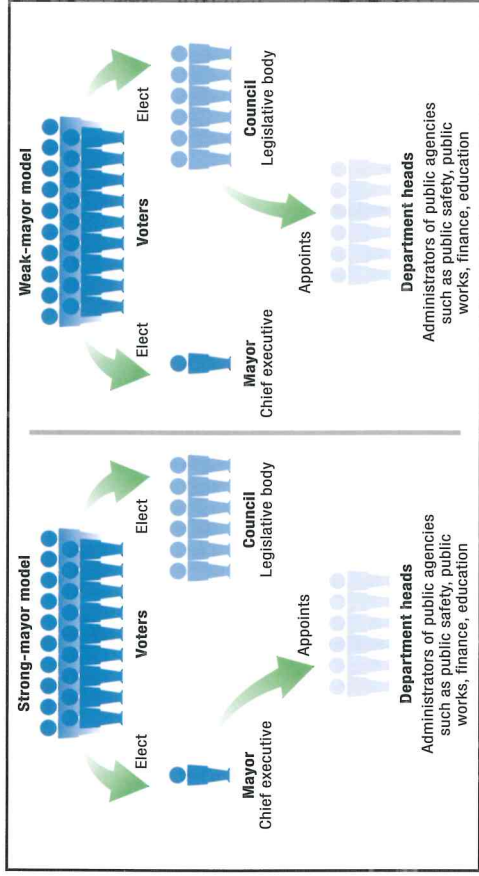
## Municipalities

Unlike counties, which primarily exist to carry out broad local functions on behalf of the state, *municipalities* exist at the request of their residents who want more public services. Municipalities (cities, towns, villages, and boroughs) are densely populated urban areas with local governments. The state creates them by *charters* or other legislation, which then serve as local constitutions.

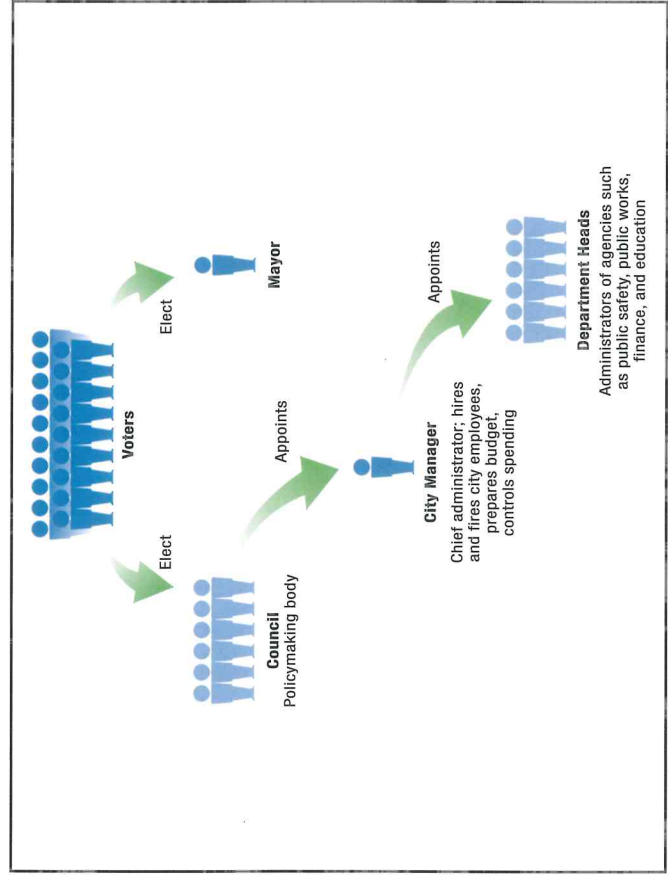
Municipal governments are organized according to their *charters*. The most widely used form of city government is the *mayor-council charter*. Voters elect a mayor as the chief executive and a council as its legislature. For cities larger than 5,000 people, the average size of a city council is seven members, but huge cities like New York City may have as many as 50 council members. Depending on how many formal powers are given to the mayor, the mayor-council form of government often is described as a “strong-mayor” or “weak-mayor” type.

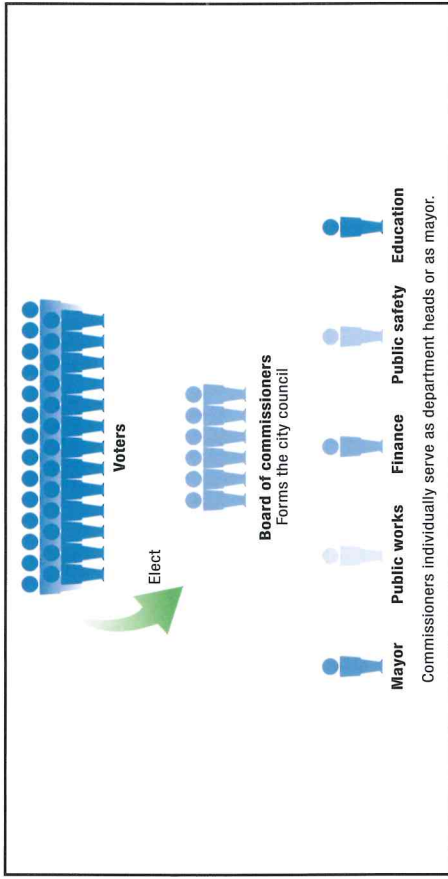
Another form of city government that is gaining wide support is the *council-manager government*, also called the city manager plan, in which citizens vote for council members in a nonpartisan, at-large election and elect a mayor with limited authority. The council then hires a *city manager*, often a professionally trained career administrator who is given the authority

A *charter* is a formal, legal document that defines the boundaries of a city and creates its government.



### Organization of strong-mayor council and weak-mayor council forms of government





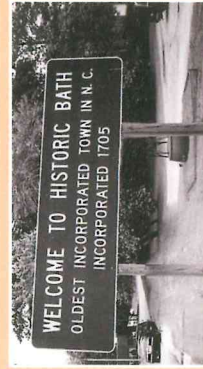
### Organization of the commission form of government

to appoint all department heads. Under this arrangement, the council makes policies to be carried out by the city manager. The city council retains the right to dismiss the manager at any time.

The third and least-used type of municipal government is the *commission* form. Voters elect three to nine commissioners who act together as a council to pass ordinances and control finances, and individually to head the different departments of city government. The voters or the commissioners may choose one of the commissioners to be mayor. The mayor, who also heads a city department, leads meetings and represents the city at ceremonies, but has no more authority than the other commissioners.

## Bath, Population 248

A state establishes a community as a legal entity through a process called *incorporation*. Each state constitution defines the conditions and procedures for a local area to become an incorporated municipality. States generally require that a minimum number of people live in that particular area so that providing services makes financial sense.



In at-large (or citywide) elections without political party affiliations, the majority of voters tend to elect well-known candidates. Some citizens in neighborhoods with a high concentration of one ethnic minority might think they are not adequately represented on the city council. They may protest that elections should be based on single-member districts so that racial and ethnic groups can have stronger voices in local government. What do you think?

### Special Districts

The fastest growing form of local government is the *special district* run by an elected board. This separate legal unit provides a single service—such as flood or mosquito control—to a particular area, and often overlaps other local jurisdictions. These special districts range in size from neighborhood blocks concerned with historic preservation to the mammoth Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates tunnels, bridges, and airports.

School districts are by far the most common kind of special district. Voters in most districts elect a board of education whose policies are carried out by an appointed school superintendent. The board sets school tax rates, hires teachers, and runs all the public elementary and secondary schools under its authority. The board of education is one of the most important official groups of citizens and is generally independent of the city council.

A school district's name may include "ISD" for "independent school district."

### Responsibilities of Local Government

The state entrusts the local government to protect and provide services to its citizens. Cities differ in the number and kinds of services they provide. In the nation's snowbelt, local governments spend huge sums of money on snow removal. Communities in America's tornado alley have to pay for sophisticated early-warning systems. Most cities provide roughly the same services to meet a community's basic needs.

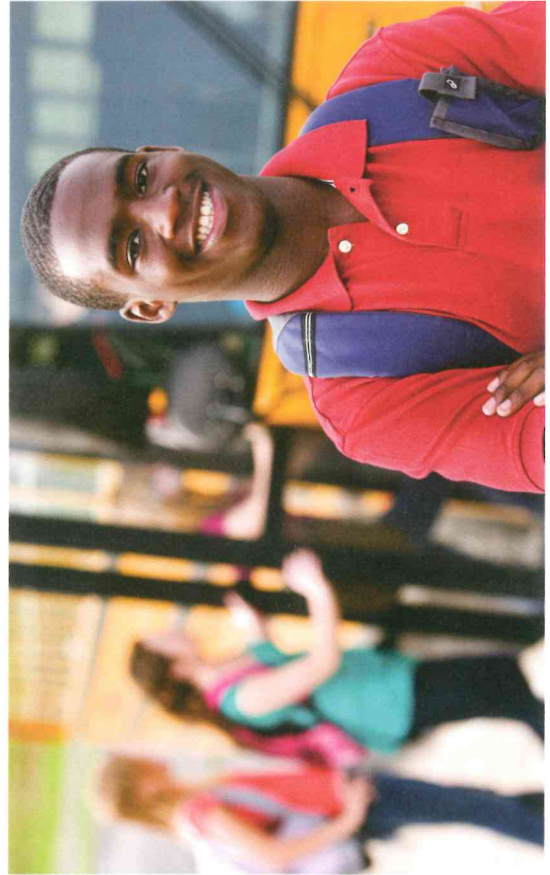
### By the Numbers

State and local governments use the latest U.S. Census Bureau data to project population growth and determine the need for new schools and additional public services.

Mandates funded by taxpayers are the responsibility of local governments.

- To protect life and property, the local government provides public safety and fire departments, and a municipal court system.
- To guard the health of its citizens, the city or county runs hospitals and clinics, manages sanitation services, and handles animal control.
- To provide education, the city supports libraries and the school district maintains schools for students in grades K through 12.
- To care for those in need, local government may offer social services such as foster home care and mental health facilities.
- To make the community a good place to live, local government builds and maintains streets, provides public transportation, creates parks and recreational facilities, and attracts new businesses.

For a quick overview of the variety of services provided by your community, look under “Government and Community Services” (the blue pages) in your local telephone book. Or, search the internet with your parent’s permission.



## Public Meetings

More than 300 years ago, American colonists regularly met to decide how best to manage and protect their communities. At those gatherings, people discussed and argued and finally voted for their convictions. This is the purest form of democracy—when voters participate directly in making laws, levying taxes, and spending money.

Attending a city, town, or county council or school board meeting or a court session is a major step toward becoming an informed citizen. Imagine what it would be like to live in a community where all public meetings were held in private. However, some executive meetings are closed sessions and are not open to the public. Generally in those cases, the actions taken will be announced after the closed session.

Today, the New England town meeting still exists in many small towns. But because of population growth, time constraints, and modern-day complexities, it has given way to a modified form in which citizens elect representatives to attend the meetings and vote on their behalf.

Local government—regardless of its structure—is the level of government most directly accountable to the public. Citizens meet face-to-face with their representatives at public meetings. If you do not know what local voting district you live in or who represents you, call the city, town, or county council or school board. Then attend one of those meetings and watch how elected representatives participate and vote. If you get the opportunity, introduce yourself to local council members or school board representatives.

Charters require that city councils publish proposed *ordinances*, or municipal laws, in local newspapers. That way, interested citizens can voice their concerns at scheduled hearings before the laws are enacted. This prevents the council members from legislating in secret and acting out of self-interest.

Public meeting agendas are posted in advance in the newspaper and on the city, town, county, or school board or district's website, if it has one. In most places, a citizen must register to speak at the meeting about an item on the agenda. Topics at a council meeting might include architectural requirements for new commercial buildings, a proposal for a multilane highway through a residential neighborhood, the sale of municipal bonds, and the best use of a vacant parcel of land.

At a school board meeting, you might hear about the cost of buying band instruments, the need to reduce expenses, the value of block schedules compared to six-period days, whether to award physical education credit for off-campus sports, and other similar issues.



## Be Aware

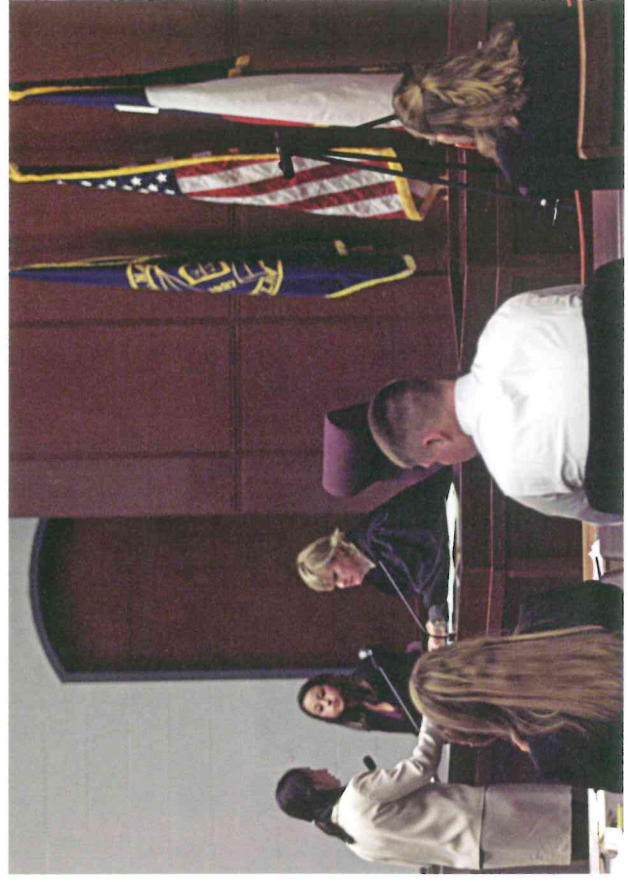
How can you know how the council or board members voted on a motion? Do certain representatives seem more knowledgeable about the issues than others? Some people at the meeting do not vote. What are their roles? Are you surprised at how many citizens attend these meetings?

## The Court System

Municipal courts have citywide authority and are organized in divisions: civil, criminal, domestic relations, small claims, traffic, and probate courts. If you sit in on a session of one of these courts, you will hear cases involving *misdemeanors* (less serious crimes) and matters involving small amounts of money. County and state courts (known as general trial courts) handle more serious civil and criminal cases, which are tried before a judge.

If a dispute arises about how the law has been applied in one of these trial courts, a judge in an *appellate court* (often called a court of appeals) reviews the case and makes a decision.

In some instances, a case is appealed to the state's Supreme Court, which is the court of last resort in the state's judicial system. Five to seven justices sit on the high bench and have the final say about all cases relating to state law. On rare occasions, when a question of federal law is involved, a case may be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.



## Local Issues: What's on the Public's Mind?

You can learn a lot about your community just by paying attention to what is going on around you. You might hear people talking in the grocery store, in the post office, in restaurants, or in the stands at athletic events. Listen closely, read the newspaper, watch the local news on television, and you will find out what issues concern the public.

For example, you might hear a mother expressing worry that her child's frequent asthma attacks may be caused by air pollution in the community. Or you might hear that many car accidents have occurred at a particular intersection. You might see news coverage on television about how graffiti has been a problem in a particular community.

Read the *editorials* in your local newspaper. If you have attended a court session, you might have discovered connections between cases in the courtroom and articles in the paper. Consider the subjects you heard discussed at the city council or school board meeting. Think about the hot topics. Pick an issue that interests you and find out how to help.

An *editorial* is a piece of writing that expresses the writer's opinions. Editorials usually are separated from regular news stories in the newspaper.

## Getting to the Bottom of an Issue

You can easily figure out which branch of local government is responsible for resolving the problem by calling the city council office or school board, or asking the reference librarian at your local library. If you read about the problem in the newspaper, look for names in the article or contact the newspaper for a lead.

Once you know which branch, board, or committee is responsible, find out who might be willing to discuss the issue with you and how to reach that person. Then request an interview (by telephone probably is the most convenient). Allow yourself enough time before the interview to thoroughly prepare. Try to find out as much as you can about all sides of the issue. What is currently being done to address it? How can young people help?

In many cities, young people serve as representatives on advisory boards for the library, city, town, or county council, school board, and parent/teacher association, and as members of teen court. Citizens 18 or older usually are eligible to run for local office.

Before you contact an official to interview, be sure you have your counselor's and parent's permission.

## Tips for Interviewing

- Do your research. Understand the issue and different points of view.
- Prepare a list of questions. Include questions about how young people can help.
- Allow the person time to think and reply to your questions. Do not interrupt.
- Thank the interviewee for his or her time.



Do not show up to an interview unannounced. Call first to set up an appointment or a time when you can call back and talk at length by telephone.



# Making a Difference

A good citizen looks for opportunities to help improve the community. Small efforts make a difference, and you also can join forces with others to benefit many people.

Young citizens who participate in Scouting, school activities, and religious organizations tend to volunteer far more often than students who do not participate in those groups. This willingness to help continues into adulthood. By fulfilling requirement 7, you will make a real contribution to your community and open the door to a lifetime of rewarding experiences.

## Matching Your Interests to Volunteer Work

You know how much more you enjoy doing something if you are good at it or if it really interests you. So keep that in mind as you consider volunteer opportunities. List your skills and talents. Think about whether you are willing to teach those skills to other people. Consider your personal goals and what you want to learn, too. List the issues that are most important to you.

Think of the merit badges you have earned and how you might use those skills to be a valued volunteer. Perhaps you like to play an instrument. Maybe you can repair electronic equipment. If you are bilingual or computer savvy, there are many opportunities to put those skills into practical and fulfilling experiences. Having a good sense of humor is a valuable skill, too.

Many people volunteer because they care about social problems like illiteracy and poverty, or environmental issues, or finding cures for specific diseases. Others take pleasure in helping elderly people, animals, or children. There are endless opportunities to volunteer, so pick one that suits you. That way, you will make a bigger difference.





### Choosing a Charity

Once you decide what cause interests you, it is time to find out which charitable organizations in your community address the issue. You can start by looking at the community services pages in your telephone book. Call the local Better Business Bureau. Pick up fliers about charities at the local chamber of commerce. With your parent's permission, visit the websites listed in the resources section of this merit badge pamphlet.

Find out if the group is a not-for-profit organization. Read its mission statement and decide if you agree with its goals. If you want to volunteer for that organization, call to discuss possible responsibilities or suggest what you would like to do. Even though you are giving your time and effort for free, you may have to interview for the position. Most organizations want the best people working for their cause. They also know volunteers can make big contributions, of time and other resources and many are needed.

### At the Movies: Activists, Whistle-Blowers, and Ordinary People

Individuals sometimes make great personal sacrifices to tackle problems that threaten a community or to stand up for what is just. Filmmakers love to turn these bigger-than-life stories into movies. You can find *documentary films* (factual or objective films) and blockbusters about people who acted alone or with others to have a positive effect on society. Examples include true stories of people exposing a cover-up about a contaminated water supply, leading a country to freedom through passive resistance, publicly disclosing a company's strategy to profit by harming consumers, and creating an inspiring program of musical instruction for urban children. Also look for movies about people who played a powerful role in business or government to benefit society.

### Shining a Light on Your Community

When you aim a spotlight at something, your focus is narrow. You have chosen one perspective to highlight and ignored the rest. But by learning more about your community, you shine a floodlight. Suddenly, you see lots of different kinds of people and places with varying world views. Good government officials and good citizens always try to understand different points of view.

#### The Hometown Tourist

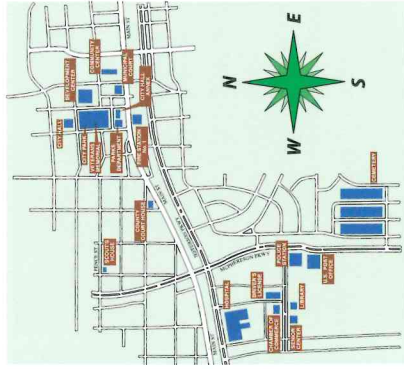
There are people who have lived in New York City all their lives and never been to the top of the Empire State Building. Have you been to the tourist attractions in your hometown? You probably remember driving in your community with family or friends when someone looked out the car window and said, "I've never noticed *that* before." Ride through your community with your parents (or with their permission) and explore streets you have never traveled. You will discover unfamiliar and interesting neighborhoods, businesses, historical places, elementary schools, parks, and more.

To fulfill requirement 2, you must map out your community. If you go to the building where the local government board or council meets, you likely will find a map of your community

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As you become familiar with your community, it is important to know the major streets in your area.

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**Community map**

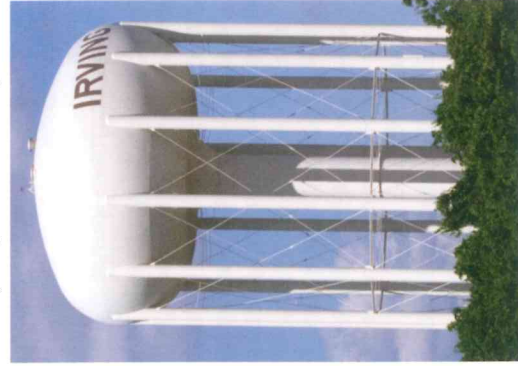
marked with the chief government buildings and public service facilities. Read the government and community services pages in your local telephone book to learn the addresses of the hospital, fire, and police stations nearest your home. Call or visit the local historical society to know where to find historic sites in your community.

Regardless of whether you live in a city with a mass transit system and a take-it-for-granted clean water supply or in a rural area with unpaved roads and well water, you live in a unique community with its own history and special places.

If your community has a tourist center, go there to collect information about local attractions. You can gather all sorts of information about local *demographics*, parks, lakes, and recreational facilities, museums, public gardens, sports attractions, and cultural events. You can pick up similar fliers at the local chamber of commerce. With your parent's permission, check out the internet. Most towns and cities regularly update their own websites with helpful information.

While walking or riding through your community, pay attention to the names of schools, community centers, and streets. These are clues to the history of your community and to the people who played active roles. Notice how many signs on businesses and religious buildings are posted in different languages. Take a tour of the produce section in your grocery store. How do the varieties of fruits and vegetables reflect the ethnic influences in your community?

Think about what makes a neighborhood. How is one neighborhood different from another? Isn't your community a cluster of all these local groups?



*Demographics* are statistical characteristics of human populations that reflect the composition of a group of people (community, state, or country). Commonly tracked characteristics include ethnicity, age, income, religious preference, and level of education. People use these statistics to determine who might buy certain products, whether to build more apartments or houses, or if a community will be best served by an extreme sports park for teenagers instead of a traditional recreation center.

**The Informed Booster**

Every community needs an enthusiastic supporter who will promote it as a great place to live. You can be a booster for your community when you make your public presentation for requirement 8. To make a fair and balanced speech or exhibit, be sure to also point out the challenges your community faces and what the community is doing to address the challenges.

When you interview someone in the local government (for requirement 4b), use that opportunity to discuss community challenges. Consider contacting your elected officials to discuss those problems, too. Include something about your community's geography.

Think about the geography of your community. How do the physical features contribute to the local lifestyle or attract industries?

Use your talents to shape your presentation. If you enjoy talking in front of a group of people, make a speech. If you love to take photos, then create a photographic exhibit. Keep in mind, however, that people in your audience respond differently to information. Some like to hear it presented; others prefer to see it. Combine aural and visual elements so that your presentation interests everyone.

For tips about making speeches and multimedia presentations, refer to the *Public Speaking, Communication, and Photography* merit badge pamphlets.





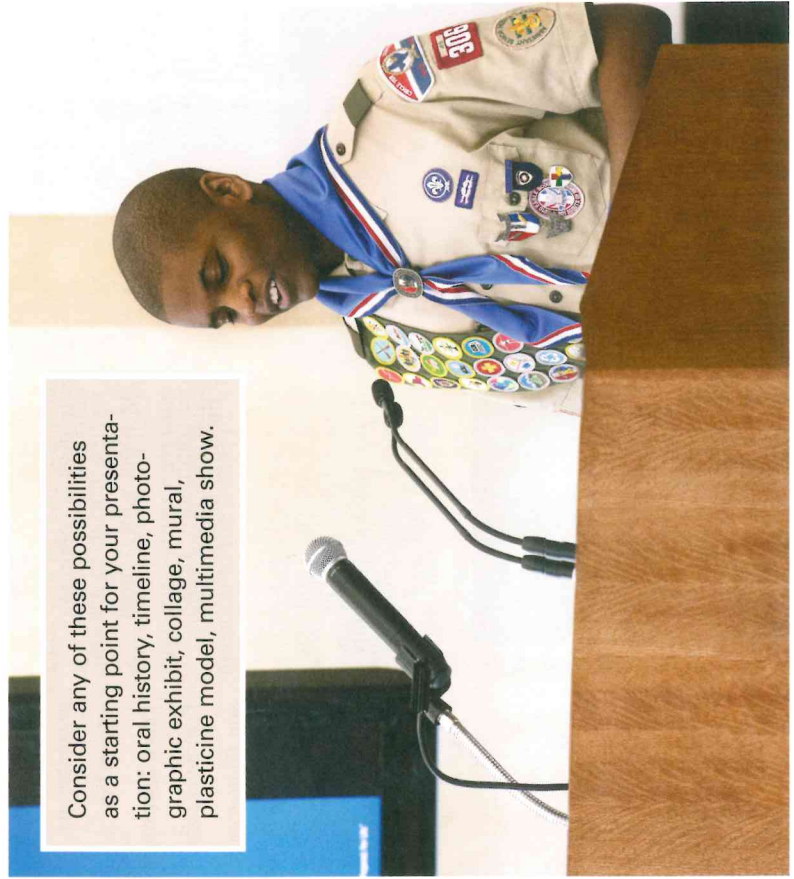
### STAGING YOUR PRESENTATION

Reach out to your community when you make your presentation. Consider staging it at a nursing home, senior citizens center, Rotary Club meeting, YMCA after-school program, or volunteer group.

Invite people who helped you with your presentation, such as residents and officials you interviewed. You might include elected officials or members of the volunteer organization you assisted for requirement 7c.

Have fun doing this project as well as the other requirements. As you learn more about your community and make more of an effort to get involved, you will develop a greater sense of belonging, a stronger pride in your hometown, and a better understanding of what it means to be a good citizen in your community.

Consider any of these possibilities as a starting point for your presentation: oral history, timeline, photographic exhibit, collage, mural, plasticine model, multimedia show.



## Resources

### Scouting Literature

*Boy Scout Handbook; American Business, American Cultures, American Heritage, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communication, Crime Prevention, Photography, Public Speaking, and Scouting Heritage* merit badge pamphlets

With your parent's permission, visit the Boy Scouts of America's official retail website, [www.scoutshop.org](http://www.scoutshop.org), for a complete listing of all merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.

### Books

Abriss, Monica Dwyer. *Quietly at Work: Township Government in America*. Specialty Press Publishers, 2000.

Bankston, John. *Careers in Community Service*. Mitchell Lane Publishers, 2001.

Bowman, Ann, and Richard C. Kearney. *State and Local Government*. Houghton Mifflin Company, College Division, 2001.

Brownlie, Alison. *Charities: Do They Work?* Raintree Publishers, 1999.

Burns, James M., and others. *State & Local Politics: Government by the People*. Prentice Hall, 2001.

Coplin, William D. *How You Can Help: An Easy Guide to Doing Good Deeds in Your Everyday Life*. Routledge, 2000.

Gary, Lawrence. *How to Win a Local Election: A Complete Step-by-Step Guide*. M. Evans, 1999.

Isler, Claudia. *Volunteering to Help in Your Neighborhood*. Scholastic Library Publishing, 2000.

Jungreis, Abigail. *Know Your Hometown History: Projects and Activities*. Franklin Watts, 1992.

Lewis, Barbara A., Pamela Espeland, and Caryn Pernu. *Kids' Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose—and Turn Creative Thinking Into Positive Action*. Free Spirit Publishing Inc., 1998.

Kielburger, Marc, and Craig Kielburger. *Take Action! A Guide to Active Citizenship*. John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2002.

Perry, Susan K. *Catch the Spirit: Teen Volunteers Tell How They Made a Difference*. Scholastic Library Publishing, 2000.

Ryan Jr., Bernard. *Community Service for Teens 8-Volume Set*. Facts on File, 1998.

Rusch, Elizabeth. *Generation Fix: Young Ideas for a Better World*. Beyond Words Publishing Inc., 2002.

RESOURCES

**Organizations and Websites**

**GovSpot**

Website: <http://www.govspot.com>

**Kids Care Clubs**

975 Boston Post Road  
Darien, CT 06820  
Website: <http://www.kidscare.org>

**National Constitution Center**

Independence Mall  
525 Arch St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
Website:  
<http://www.constitutioncenter.org>

**National Crime Prevention Council**

2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 500  
Arlington, VA 22202  
Website: <http://www.npc.org>

**USA.gov**

Office of Citizen Services  
and Communications  
U.S. General Services Administration  
1800 F St. NW  
Washington, DC 20405  
Website: <http://www.usa.gov>

**U.S. Census Bureau**

Website: <http://www.census.gov>

**VolunteerMatch**

Website: <http://www.volunteermatch.org>

**Youth Activism Project**

Website: <http://www.youthactivism.com>

**Youth Service America**

Website: <http://ysa.org>

**Acknowledgments**

The Boy Scouts of America is grateful to Harry C. Boyle, Ph.D., codirector; Center for Democracy and Citizenship, for his assistance with developing the revised requirements. The center, which seeks to “address the growing gap between citizens and government,” also aims to “develop citizenship initiatives and the concept of public work.” Thanks to Robert Hildreth, also of the center, for his contribution.

The Boy Scouts of America is grateful to the men and women serving on the National Merit Badge Subcommittee for the improvements made in updating this pamphlet.

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**MERIT BADGE LIBRARY**

Though intended as an aid to Boy Scouts, and qualified Venturers and Sea Scouts in meeting merit badge requirements, these pamphlets are of general interest and are made available by many schools and public libraries. The latest revision date of each pamphlet might not correspond with the copyright date shown below, because this list is corrected only once a year, in January. Any number of merit badge pamphlets may be revised throughout the year; others are simply reprinted until a revision becomes necessary.

If a Scout has already started working on a merit badge when a new edition for that pamphlet is introduced, they may continue to use the same merit badge pamphlet to earn the badge and fulfill the requirements therein. In other words, the Scout need not start over again with the new pamphlet and possibly revised requirements.

Merit Badge Pamphlet	Year	Merit Badge Pamphlet	Year	Merit Badge Pamphlet	Year
American Business	2013	Family Life	2016	Plant Science	2016
American Cultures	2013	Farm Mechanics	2017	Plumbing	2012
American Heritage	2013	Fingerprinting	2013	Pottery	2008
American Labor	2018	Fire Safety	2014	Programming	2013
Animal Science	2014	First Aid	2015	Public Health	2017
Animation	2015	Fish and Wildlife Management	2014	Pulp and Paper	2013
Archaeology	2017	Fishing	2013	Radio	2017
Archery	2015	Fly-Fishing	2014	Railroading	2015
Architecture and Landscape Architecture	2014	Forestry	2015	Reading	2013
Art	2013	Game Design	2013	Reptile and Amphibian Study	2018
Astronomy	2016	Gardening	2013	Rifle Shooting	2012
Athletics	2016	Genealogy	2013	Robotics	2016
Automotive Maintenance	2017	Geocaching	2016	Rowing	2014
Aviation	2014	Geology	2016	Safety	2016
Backpacking	2016	Golf	2012	Salesmanship	2013
Basketry	2017	Graphic Arts	2013	Scholarship	2014
Bird Study	2017	Hiking	2016	Scouting Heritage	2017
Bugling (see Music)	2018	Home Repairs	2012	Scuba Diving	2009
Camping	2014	Horseshooping	2013	Sculpture	2014
Canoing	2014	Indian Lore	2008	Search and Rescue	2018
Chemistry	2018	Insect Study	2018	Shotgun Shooting	2013
Chess	2016	Inventing	2016	Signs, Signals, and Codes	2015
Citizenship in the Community	2015	Journalism	2017	Skating	2015
Citizenship in the Nation	2014	Kayaking	2016	Small-Boat Sailing	2016
Citizenship in the World	2015	Landscape Architecture (see Architecture)	2011	Snow Sports	2017
Climbing	2011	Law	2017	Soil and Water Conservation	2016
Coin Collecting	2017	Leatherwork	2017	Space Exploration	2012
Collections	2013	Lifesaving	2017	Sports	2013
Communication	2013	Mammal Study	2014	Stamp Collecting	2004
Composite Materials	2012	Medicine	2012	Surveying	2013
Cooking	2014	Metalwork	2010	Sustainability	2014
Crime Prevention	2012	Model Design and Building	2010	Swimming	2014
Cycling	2017	Motorboating	2015	Textile	2014
Dentistry	2016	Moviemaking	2013	Theater	2014
Digital Technology	2014	Music and Bugling	2013	Traffic Safety	2016
Disabilities Awareness	2016	Nature	2014	Truck Transportation	2013
Dog Care	2016	Nuclear Science	2017	Veterinary Medicine	2015
Drafting	2013	Oceanography	2012	Water Sports	2013
Electricity	2014	Orienteering	2016	Weather	2015
Electronics	2014	Painting	2016	Welding	2016
Emergency Preparedness	2015	Personal Fitness	2016	Whitewater	2005
Energy	2014	Personal Management	2015	Wilderness Survival	2012
Engineering	2016	Pets	2013	Wood Carving	2016
Entrepreneurship	2013	Photography	2016	Woodwork	2011
Environmental Science	2015	Pioneering	2016		
Exploration	2016				

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