

2025 Northern Lights District Merit Badge Academy

Updated: 11-13-2025

Recommended Pre-work

** Please review the merit badges listed below for any prerequisites. Some requirements currently reflect the 2024 Merit Badge Academy and may be updated as 2025 counselors finalize their sessions. Check back regularly to ensure you're fully prepared. **

Artificial Intelligence

- *Counselor: Leo Cross*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - Stay tuned for an email from the counselor. There may be a pre-event virtual meeting to discuss/complete some of the prerequisites.

Automotive Maintenance

- *Counselor: Rick Outhouse*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - 12. Find out about three career opportunities in the automotive industry. Pick one and find out the education, training, and experience required for this profession. Discuss this with your counselor, and explain why this profession might interest you.

Citizenship In Society

- *Counselor: Kathy Krasny*
 - *AM Session: 14 & 15 year old scouts only*
 - *PM Session: 16 & 17 year old scouts only*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - 1. Before beginning work on other requirements for this merit badge, research the following terms and explain to your counselor how you feel they relate to the Scout Oath and Scout Law: identities, diversity, equality, equity, inclusion, discrimination, ethical leadership, and upstander.
 - 2a. Research and share with your counselor an individual you feel has demonstrated positive leadership while having to make an ethical decision. (It could be someone in history, a family member, a teacher, a coach, a counselor, a clergy member, a Scoutmaster, etc.)
 - 2b. Explain what decision and/or options that leader had, why you believe they chose their final course of action, and the outcome of that action
 - Think about and *be prepared to discuss* the following requirements:
 - 2. Document and discuss with your counselor what leadership means to you. Share what it means to make ethical decisions.
 - 3a. Think about a time you faced an ethical decision.
 - Discuss the situation, what you did, and how it made you feel.
 - Share if you would do anything differently in the future and if so, what that would be.
 - 3b. List three examples of ethical decisions you might have to make in the future at school, at home, in the workplace, or in your community, and what you would do.

- Share how your actions represent alignment with the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- 3c. Explain to your counselor how you plan to use what you have learned to assist you when that time comes, and what action(s) you can take to serve as an upstander and help other people at all times.
- 5. Document and discuss:
 - 5b. An experience you had in which you went out of your way to include another Scout(s) and what you did to make them feel included and welcomed.
- 6. With your parent or guardian's approval, connect with another Scout or youth your own age who has an identity that's different from yours. (This means a trait, belief, or characteristic different from you.)
 - 6b. Share with each other ONE of the following Options:
 - 6bi. Option 1: A time you felt excluded from a group.
 - What was the situation?
 - How did it make you feel?
 - What did you do?
 - Did anyone stand up for you?
 - What did you learn?
 - Would you do anything differently today?

Citizenship in the Community

- *Counselor: Steven Schmitt*
- Prerequisites (2024 session):
 - 4. Choose an issue that is important to the citizens of your community; then do the following:
 - 4a. Find out which branch of local government is responsible for this issue.
 - 4b. 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.
 - 7a. 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.
 - 7b. 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.
 - 7c. 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.

Citizenship in the Nation

- *Counselor: Jonathan Durr*
- Prerequisites (2024 sessions):
 - 5. Watch the national evening news for five days in a row or read the main stories in a national media organization (e.g., a newspaper or news website) for five days in a row. Discuss the national issues that you learned about with your counselor. Choose one issue and explain how it affects you, your family, and community.
 - 6. With your counselor's approval, choose a speech of national historical importance. Explain:
 - 6a. Who the author was.
 - 6b. What the historical context was.
 - 6c. What difficulties the nation faced that the author wished to discuss.
 - 6d. What the author said.

- 6e. Why the speech is important to the nation's history.
- 6f. Choose a sentence or two from the speech that has significant meaning to you, and tell your counselor why.
- One of the following: 7a or 7b or 7c:
 - 7a. Visit a place that is listed as a National Historic Landmark or that is on the National Register of Historic Places. Tell your counselor what you learned about the landmark or site and what you found interesting about it.
 - 7b. Tour your state capitol building or the U.S. Capitol. Tell your counselor what you learned about the capitol, its function, and the history.
 - 7c. Tour a federal facility. Explain to your counselor what you saw there and what you learned about its function in the local community and how it serves this nation.
- 8. Name your representatives in the United States Congress. Write a letter to your representative in Congress explaining your views on a national issue. Show your letter, along with any response you receive, to your counselor.

Citizenship in the World

- *Counselor: Mike Fahey*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - 3a. Pick a current world event. In relation to this current event, discuss with your counselor how a country's national interest and its relationship with other countries might affect areas such as its security, its economy, its values, and the health of its citizens.
 - 3b. Select a foreign country and discuss with your counselor how its geography, natural resources, and climate influence its economy and its global partnerships with other countries.
 - [Note: The discussions for 3a and 3b should not be more than 10 minutes total (up to 10 minutes for both, not 10 minutes each).]
 - 7. Do TWO of the following (with your parent or guardian's permission) and share with your counselor what you have learned:
 - 7a. Visit the website of the U.S. State Department. Learn more about an issue you find interesting that is discussed on this website.
 - 7b. Visit the website of an international news organization or foreign government, OR examine a foreign newspaper available at your local library, bookstore, or newsstand. Find a news story about a human right realized in the United States that is not recognized in another country.
 - 7c. Visit with a student or Scout from another country and discuss the typical values, holidays, ethnic foods, and traditions practiced or enjoyed there.
 - 7d. Attend a world Scout jamboree.
 - 7e. Participate in or attend an international event in your area, such as an ethnic festival, concert, or play.

Collections / Coin Collecting

- *Counselor: Jason Krueger*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - Collections
 - 1. Prepare a short written report or outline for your counselor, giving a detailed description of your collection, including a short history, why you enjoy your collection, and what you have learned from collecting. Be sure to include why you chose that particular type of collection/collecting method.
 - 5a. Discuss with your counselor at least 10 terms commonly used to describe your collection and be prepared to discuss the definition of each.

- 5b. Show your counselor any two groups from your collection. Explain how you organized your collection and why you chose that method. (Note: if your collection is too large to transport and your counselor is unable to view your collection directly, photographs should be available to share.)
 - 5c. Explain the monetary value of your collection and where you learned about those values.
 - 5d. Explain how your collection is graded for value, physical defects, size, and age. Show the various classifications or ratings used in your collection.
 - 5e. List the national, state, or local association(s) related to or associated with your collection.
 - 5f. Explain to your counselor the purpose of and reason for the identification number (if applicable), series, brand name (if any), and any other special identification marks.
 - Be prepared to discuss requirements 2, 3, and 4.
- Coin Collecting
 - 4. Do the following and explain to your counselor the design features, designer name, designer initials, and where to find them for each item:
 - 4a. Collect a one-cent coin from the year group: 1959-2008 (that is, dated between 1959 and 2008) and a one-cent coin from the year group 2010-present. Explain how and why the one-cent coins issued in 2009 were different from either of the other two year groups.
 - 4b. Collect two five-cent coins, one from each of these year groups: 1959-2003 and 2006-present. Explain how and why the five-cent coins issued in 2004-2005 were different from either of the other two year groups.
 - 4c. Collect a ten-cent coin from 1965-present.
 - 4d. Collect a twenty-five-cent coin from 1965-1998, two examples from the 50-State Quarter® /territories Program 1999-2009, two designs from the America the Beautiful® program 2012-2021 and two designs from the American Woman Quarter® program (2022-2024). Explain the purpose of each of those programs.
 - 4e. Collect a half dollar coin from 1965-present.
 - 4f. Collect a dollar coin from the following design groups: Susan B. Anthony 1979-81, Sacagawea 1990-2005, U.S. Presidents 2000-2014.
 - 7. Do **ONE** of the following:
 - 7a. Collect and identify for your counselor 20 different world coins from at least seven different countries. Identify the country, major design elements, and denomination of each.
 - 7b. Collect and identify for your counselor 20 different world paper money from at least 7 different countries. Identify the country, major design elements, and denomination of each.
 - 7c. Collect and identify for your counselor 20 different tokens and/or medals. Identify the issuer and use of each.
 - 7d. Complete one of the following and report to your counselor what you experienced:
 - 7d1. Attend a coin show.
 - 7d2. Attend a coin club meeting.
 - 7d3. Tour a U.S. Mint facility or museum.
 - 7d4. Tour a virtual exhibit (with your parent or guardian's permission) approved by your counselor.

Communication

- *Counselor: Mark Miller*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - 1a. For one day, keep a log in which you describe your communication activities. Keep track of the time and different ways you spend communicating, such as talking person-to-person, listening to teachers, listening to the radio or podcasts, watching television, using social media, reading books and other print media, and using any electronic communication device. Discuss with your counselor what your log reveals about the importance of communication in your life. Think of ways to improve your communication skills.
 - 2a. Think of a creative way to describe yourself using, for example, a collage, short story or autobiography, drawing or series of photographs, or a song or skit. Using the aid you created, make a presentation to your counselor about yourself.
 - 4. Interview someone you know fairly well, like, or respect because of his or her position, talent, career, or life experiences. Listen actively to learn as much as you can about the person. Then prepare and deliver to your counselor an introduction of the person as though this person were to be a guest speaker, and include reasons why the audience would want to hear this person speak. Show how you would call to invite this person to speak.
 - 8. Plan a troop or crew court of honor, campfire program, or an interfaith worship service. Have the patrol leaders' council approve it, then write the script and prepare the program. Serve as master of ceremonies.

Cybersecurity

- *Counselor: Leo Cross*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - Stay tuned for an email from the counselor. There may be a pre-event virtual meeting to discuss/complete some of the prerequisites.

Electricity

- *Counselor: Nick Malson-Huddle*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - Purchase and bring a simple circuit kit similar to the following to the Merit Badge Academy: [Simple Circuit Kit from Amazon](#)

Electronics

- Counselor: Matt Rung
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - None
 - Note: Bring a pair of safety glasses for use during the session.

First Aid

- *Counselor (full day session): Bartlett Durand*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - 1. Demonstrate to your counselor that you have current knowledge of all first-aid requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class ranks.
 - [Note: These will be covered in class; however, the counselor cannot sign-off on scout's rank advancements.]

- [Note: Scouts who have completed these will need to provide proof from their Scoutmaster.]
- 5a. Prepare a first-aid kit for your home. Display and discuss its contents with your counselor.
 - [Note: Scouts should bring this kit with them to the session.]

Healthcare Professions

- *Counselor: Amy Steinmetz*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - 5. Select one career from any of the lists in Requirements 1, 2, 3, or 4 and arrange to visit that professional at their workplace. Discuss with your counselor the following:
 - 5a. Why did they choose their particular career?
 - 5b. What do they most like about their job?
 - 5c. What are their biggest challenges in doing their job?
 - 5d. Identify the tools/instruments that may be used in their jobs.
 - 5e. What has been the most surprising aspect of their career?
 - 5f. What continuing education requirements are required to maintain certification?
 - 9. With your parent or guardian's and counselor's approval, serve as a volunteer at a health-related event or facility in your community (e.g. blood drive, health fair, blood pressure screening event). Report to your counselor what you did and learned from the experience.

Leatherwork

- *Counselor: Ron Last*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - 2. Explain the following:
 - 2a. Where leather comes from
 - Resource: [How leather is made? \(video\)](#)
 - 2b. Kinds of hides that are used to make leather
 - Resource: [Picking the Best Part of the Leather Hide \(video\)](#)
 - Resource: [Using Leather Crafting Charts \(website\)](#)
 - 2c. Five types of leather
 - Resource: [Leather Is Made From Which Animal \(video\)](#)
 - 2d. Best uses for each type of leather
 - Resource: [What Leather Should I Use for Tooling? \(video\)](#)
 - Resource: [Choosing the Correct Leather for your Project \(video\)](#)
 - 5. Do ONE of the following
 - 5a. Learn about the commercial tanning process. Report about it to your counselor.
 - Resource: [How is Leather Made? \(video\)](#)
 - 5b. Tan the skin of a small animal. Describe the safety precautions you will take and the tanning method that you used.
 - Resource: [How to Tan Animal Hides \(Never Destroy Animals for This Purpose\) \(video\)](#)
 - 5c. Recondition or show that you can take proper care of your shoes, a baseball glove, a saddle, furniture, or other articles of leather. Discuss with your counselor the advantages or disadvantages of leather vs. synthetic materials.
 - Resource: [How to Clean & Shine Leather Shoes! \(video\)](#)
 - Resource: [How to Care for Your Baseball Glove \(video\)](#)
 - Resource: [How to Clean a Western Saddle \(video\)](#)
 - Resource: [How to Remove Mold and Mildew on Leather \(video\)](#)

- 5d. Visit a leather-related business. This could be a leathercraft supply company, a tannery, a leather goods or shoe factory, or a saddle shop. Report on your visit to your counselor.
 - Resource: [A Random Walk Through Horween Leather \(video\)](#)

Leather craft (no merit badge/craft only)

- Counselor: Ron Last
- Craft: Walking Stick
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - No prerequisites for this craft session.

Music

- Counselor: Tim Wurgler
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - No prerequisites for this badge/session.

Personal Fitness

- Counselor: Norra Stachel
- Prerequisites (2023 sessions):
 - 1a. Before completing requirements 2 through 9, have your health-care practitioner give you a physical examination, using the Scout Health and Medical Record.
 - 1b. Have a dental examination. Get a statement saying that your teeth have been checked and cared for. Tell how to care for your teeth.
 - 6b. Keep track of what you eat and drink for three days. Identify three healthy eating goals you want to work on.
 - 7. Outline a comprehensive 12-week physical fitness program using the results of your fitness tests. Be sure your program incorporates the endurance, intensity, and warm-up guidelines discussed in the Personal Fitness merit badge pamphlet. Before beginning your exercises, have the program approved by your counselor and parent or guardian.
 - 8. Complete the physical fitness program you outlined in requirement 7. Keep a log of your fitness program activity (how long you exercised; how far you ran, swam, or biked; how many exercise repetitions you completed; your exercise heart rate; etc.). Keep a log of your weekly healthy eating goals. Repeat the aerobic fitness, muscular strength, and flexibility tests every four weeks and record your results. After the 12th week, repeat all of the required activities in each of the three test categories, record your results, and show improvement in each one. Discuss how well you met your healthy eating goals over these 12 weeks. Discuss the meaning and benefit of your experience, and describe your long-term plans regarding your personal fitness.

Personal Management

- Counselor: Jason Mascitti
- Prerequisites (2024 sessions):
 - 2a. Prepare a budget reflecting your expected income (allowance, gifts, wages), expenses, and savings for a period of 13 consecutive weeks.
 - 2b. Compare expected income with expected expenses.
 - (1) If expenses exceed budget income, determine steps to balance your budget.
 - (2) If income exceeds budget expenses, state how you would use the excess money (new goal, savings).

- 2c. Track and record your actual income, expenses, and savings for 13 consecutive weeks (the same 13-week period for which you budgeted). (You may use the forms provided in this pamphlet, devise your own, or use a computer-generated version.) When complete, present the records showing the results to your merit badge counselor.
- 2d. Compare your budget with your actual income and expenses to understand when your budget worked and when it did not work. With your merit badge counselor, discuss what you might do differently the next time.
- 8b. Make a seven-day calendar or schedule. Put in your set activities, such as school classes, sports practices or games, jobs or chores, and/or Scout or place of worship or club meetings, then plan when you will do all the tasks from your "to do" list between your set activities.
- 8c. Follow the one-week schedule you planned. Keep a daily diary or journal during each of the seven days of this week's activities, writing down when you completed each of the tasks on your "to do" list compared to when you scheduled them.

Surveying

- *Counselor: Nick Lawton*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - 2b. Measure to three of the same points with GPS measurement and compare the distances between the points measured.
 - Note: With parent(s) permission, bring an electronic device with a GPS measuring app preloaded. Below are examples
 - Android example: Mapulator
 - Apple example: GPS Land Measurement & Survey
 - Note: Part of this merit badge session will be held outdoors. Scouts should dress appropriately for the weather. Scouts should expect to spend approximately 1.5 hours outdoors.

Sustainability

- *Counselor: Cody Butcher*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - Read and review the [Sustainability Merit Badge pamphlet](#)
 - Download and print the [Sustainability Merit Badge worksheet](#)
 - Bring the following items to this session: printed and partially completed workbook, Sustainability merit badge pamphlet (printed or digital), pen/pencil, Scout Handbook, positive attitude and Scout spirit.
 - This workbook is a helpful tool for organizing your thoughts and recording your research. Remember, you still need to read the pamphlet to understand the concepts thoroughly.
 - 1. Describe the meaning of sustainability in your own words. Explain the importance of sustainability to society and how you can contribute to fulfilling the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations.
 - Watch: [Sustainability Overview](#) (use this to help you complete Requirement 1)
 - 6a. Create a list of 15 items of your personal "stuff." Classify each item as an essential need (such as soap) or a desirable want (such as a video game). Identify any excess "stuff" you no longer need, working with your family, if possible. Donate, repurpose, or recycle those items you can.
 - Watch: [Why do we have so much stuff?](#) (fill out the chart for requirement 6a after viewing)
 - 8a. On a campout or other outdoor Scouting activity that you attend, make notes on the sustainability practices you and your fellow Scouts practice. Observe transportation, forestry, soil

conservation, water resources, habitat, buildings, campsites, and sanitation. Share what you observed and learned with your counselor.

- Watch: [Sustainable camping tips](#) (complete the workbook questions for this section)
- 8b. Discuss with your counselor how living by the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code in your daily life helps promote sustainability.
 - Watch: [Sustainability in your life](#) (complete the workbook questions for this section)
- 9. Learn about career opportunities in the sustainability field. Pick one and find out the education, training, and experience required. Discuss what you have learned with your counselor and explain why this career might interest you.
 - Watch: [Career paths in sustainability](#) and [Green jobs](#)
 - Fill in your responses and reflections.

Textile

- *Counselor: Erin Mears*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - 6. Explain to your counselor, either verbally or in a written report, five career possibilities in the textile industry. Tell about two positions that interest you the most and the education, cost of training and specific duties those positions require.

Wilderness Survival

- *Counselor: Jerry Noel*
- Prerequisites (2025):
 - 5. Put together a personal survival kit and be able to explain how each item in it could be useful.
 - [Note: Scouts should bring their personal survival kit to the Merit Badge Academy.]
 - 6. Using three different methods (other than matches), build and light three fires.
 - [Note: Bring a note from your Scoutmaster attesting to the completion of this requirement.]
 - 8. Improvise a natural shelter. For the purpose of this demonstration, use techniques that have little negative impact on the environment. Spend a night in your shelter.
 - [Note: Bring a note from your Scoutmaster attesting to the completion of this requirement.]