

PRELIMINARY – WORKING DOCUMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WILL BE COMING SOON

Dear Life Scouter,

As part of your Eagle requirements, you need to complete a project that demonstrates your ability to provide leadership. This project must provide a benefit to some organization outside of Scouting, and it cannot be for your chartering organization (in our case, the Knights of Columbus).

This package of documents includes a variety of forms and formats to help guide you through what is required. The only items “written in stone” are the National forms and requirements. That being said, however, remember you need to obtain approval, permission and help from two other major groups to start and complete your Eagle project. The first is the South Coast District Eagle review committee. Many of the documents you find here are their “templates” for getting you through. Following their methods makes it easy for them to approve your project. The second is Troop 105’s leadership. The Scoutmaster and the Committee will also review your project, and provide comments, critiques and suggestions on your presentation and project ideas.

This document is intended to provide guidance from the Scoutmaster’s perspective. This writeup should help you to work on your project in the most efficient manner. Be sure to consult with your Scoutmaster soon and often. His goal is to assure your project is clearly stated, and practical. His hope is to have your project pass all required reviews on the first try.

You need to write up a basic idea called the “Project Description” for getting the beneficiary’s approval. Notice that the form has a line above the signature area indicating you have discussed it with your unit leader. Please discuss the project with your Scoutmaster BEFORE you finalize the description with the beneficiary. Also note the Project Description comes after this stage. Don’t hurry to jump into those details until the concepts are approved. This may save you problems and extra work.

In everything you write in the planning process, you should be sure to address the following questions (yes, in every aspect of it). This will help you make clear what you are doing to someone reading the work.

Always answer:

- Why - as in, Why am I doing this? Why does it need to be done? Why am I doing it this way, instead of some other way?
- What - What will be done? Is it a physical thing to be done, or some thought process or decision making? What is the expected result, and how do you know when it is done?
- Who - Who will be involved in this step? Who will contribute labor, money, technical assistance? Who needs to be informed? Who needs to give permission?
- Where - Where will this take place? Am I doing this at home? Can this be done at a remote location? Does this happen onsite?
- How - How will this be done? Paper and pencil? With hand tools? On a ladder? With lots of parts?

- When - When does this step take place? Is it on a calendar of events with other things depending on it? Or can it be done by someone independent of what else is going on?

Here are some aspects to be considered in the entire project. The initial plan doesn't have to include all of these, but the more that you touch on in your description, the more everyone understands you've thought this thing through.

Goals - what problem are we trying to solve at this time?

Remember, at this point we are describing the problem, NOT the solution. Be sure to have several paragraphs describing why this is a problem, and why the beneficiaries want to have you find a solution.

DO NOT describe a solution here. Don't even mention hardware and labor items. Talk about why this is a problem and why simple solutions haven't or can't work.

Discussions with the beneficiaries. This will include the principal beneficiary and others who might deal with the end result. For instance, a landscaping project might have approval from the leader of the organization, but have you talked with the gardener that will be maintaining it? What about the secretary that sits just inside the window? Plan to have discussions with representatives of each group to address their needs and concerns.

For example, the staff might be concerned about a planned tree blocking the view of the entry door. Is this a lighting or security problem? You can address that by talking about these issues in what you are planning.

Fundraising - Obviously, when a solution is discussed, it will involve some hardware that might not be cheap. Mention your ideas for generating funds to purchase the hardware.

Labor - discuss what service opportunities are available to other scouts, and what technical support you need to get from adults. How much time do you estimate will be needed from various specialty labor (i.e. a licensed electrician will be needed for 4 hours of work to connect the final system to the building power.)

Schedule - when do you expect to finish each stage of this project? What are the beneficiary's expectations and needs for various stages? For example, "the planning needs to be done by Feb 28th, with the final system installed before school is out in June." "The parish will need to make the church building available on three Saturday mornings to allow us to run wires and install the system." "The work needs to be done over a single weekend, as the rental of the specialty equipment would be too costly.", "I will need a weekend where I can assure 10-12 boys from my troop will be available to move gravel."

Possible solutions - how will you determine which solution will be best? Can the project be done in stages, where your project ends with a subset of a total solution, and the beneficiary can evaluate and expand the project if they really like it? What criteria are important?

What options do you have in finalizing the solution? For example, "Trees or bushes?", "How high can we go?", "Color vs. B/W cameras?", "Wood or concrete benches?" Remember, you're not answering these questions now, just posing them, so you remember to address them in the execution of your plan.

The first part of your description should not determine a solution. It should only address the means and plans you have to determine the solution. In other words, it is a plan to determine a plan. It will include a date by which you will select hardware and other items to purchase and deploy, but this stage should not select hardware, locations or methods. That is to be determined by your plan. When you execute your plan, those decisions will come out of the plan.

The second part of the description can present your ideas for solutions. Present broad concepts for your solution, not minute details. Details belong in the next section. For example, “we will need an on-site concrete mixer, water and many bags of concrete to install a connecting sidewalk to the new picnic area.”, “the pergola size desired by the agency will require a building permit, and the plans will have to be reviewed by the city.”, “to light an area this size, we will need several hundred feet of conduit, and I will get approval from a licensed electrician to assure my wire sizes are appropriate.”.

After you discussed this description (hopefully several times) with the Scoutmaster, and have finally obtained project concept approval from the beneficiary, you should begin to write up the Project Details section. Here is where you can answer the questions posed in the Project Description, above. Obviously, you have been working out the feasibility of the project as you worked on the description. You probably have stacks of notes and ideas. This is the place for those details. Include everything: ideas that worked, and ones that fell through. Your intent is to show completeness. Have you thought of every aspect of this project? Have you put in a good effort to plan this project? This is where you can show off your leadership skills. Put the tools you have learned in school and scouting to the test.

After you have this written, talk to your Scoutmaster again. He’ll probably have some suggestions. This isn’t a problem, as most projects will have several iterative steps. When the Scoutmaster is happy the project description is complete, you will need to make a presentation of your project to the Troop Committee. At this time, the Scoutmaster and the Committee chair will approve your project. Remember, they are working on your side to assure you have a successful project. Their review and consultation may provide insight to your project on issues you hadn’t considered. This is a normal part of every work situation. When the project is completed, you can bask in the glory of your success, but always remember: Troop 105 is your team, and every team member shares in your success.

Oh, and be sure to log **every** hour you spend doing all the above steps. As a matter of fact, start your log now! Include a five to six word description of what you did, and the time you spent on it.

Glenn Schiferl
Scoutmaster, Troop 105