



November 1, 2021

Dear MDC Scouting Family,

Today, the Boy Scouts of America has launched the Citizenship in Society merit badge, its newest merit badge for youth in the Scouts BSA program (ages 11-17).

In case you've heard rumors or seen early reports on this merit badge before its release, let me offer some clarity on what the Citizenship in Society merit badge is. All key facts and information about this merit badge can be found at www.scouting.org/dei. If you hear or read something about the merit badge that is not included on the above-mentioned site, then it's not connected to the merit badge.

What you will see in the information and approach surrounding this badge:

Like every other merit badge Scouts earn, this merit badge encourages Scouts to embark on a journey of discovery. In this case, it's a journey of self-discovery. They will explore a variety of topics around diversity, equity and inclusion, and they will discuss how they apply their findings to life as a Scout and good citizen in society.

Though we all come from differing backgrounds, in Scouting, our goals and commitments are the same. **We all take the same Scout Oath, and we all follow the same Scout Law. This merit badge aligns with the Scout Oath and Scout Law**, which collectively encourage Scouts to respect the beliefs of others, be kind and courteous, and help other people at all times.

What you won't see in the Citizenship in Society merit badge:

There is no merit badge booklet with prescribed approaches or ideologies. There are no requirements meant to drive a particular response or lead a Scout down a path toward a predetermined conclusion.

The Citizenship in Society merit badge wasn't developed by one person. In fact, the merit badge was developed by multiple Scouting volunteers, youth, and professional staff working together. Just like every other merit badge, this one connects Scouts with a merit badge counselor who will help facilitate discussion with the Scout as they seek to further understand the topic and the world we live in.

The Boy Scouts of America has a commitment – both to developing a culture where every youth, volunteer, and employee feels a sense of belonging, and to building communities where every person feels respected and valued. The Citizenship in Society merit badge is an important initiative within that larger commitment.

I am grateful to all our volunteers who join us in partnering with families and communities to shape young people of high moral character with greater respect, empathy, and understanding of perspectives, including those different than their own. Thank you again for all you do to support Scouting. Your work is valued and appreciated

Sincerely,

Don

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