

Scouts and Scout Leaders,

The Scouting America Guide to Advancement (located at <https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>) was updated in 2025. In that update was a change related to the mechanics related to the references required for the Eagle Scout rank application. This was further updated in late February 2026.

This change is found in section 9.0.1.7 of the Guide to Advancement, and is associated with a corresponding change to the Eagle Scout Rank Application (https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/512-728_26-Eagle-Scout-Application_WEB.pdf), which is now labeled “January 2026 Revision” on the bottom of page 2. NOTE: Always go to Scouting.org and seek out the most recent Eagle Scout Rank Application; it may be updated after this document was published.

With these changes, it recommends that the local council sets a best practice for this. We are sharing here first the changes, and then the policy for the Los Padres Council.

The major change in the Guide to Advancement is that the Scout is now identified as the person responsible for requesting references:

9.0.1.7 References Contacted

The Scout is responsible for requesting references from the four people listed on the application—this is a valuable life skill. Councils choose the method (letter, email, online form, etc.) and where submitted. Electronic submissions are allowed only if confidentiality at all stages is guaranteed. Requested references may be returned to the Scout in a sealed envelope, or sent to a designated unit, district, or council adult for safekeeping until the Eagle Board of Review. If after diligent effort four recommendations are not received, the board of review can go forward without them. If the Scout chooses to go forward, the board may ask about their efforts, but may not deny advancement based only on lack of references.

Completed reference responses of any kind are the property of the council and are confidential, and only review-board members and those officials with a specific need may see them after the board. The responses are not to be viewed by or returned to the Scout. Doing so could discourage the submission of negative information. Those providing references do not have the option of waiving confidentiality. Once a review has been held, or an appeal process conducted, responses must be returned to the council, where they will be destroyed after the Eagle Scout credentials are released or the appeal is concluded.

The Eagle Scout rank application modified the requirement for references by listing now a parent or guardian and then four references.



REQUIREMENT 2. As a Life Scout, demonstrate that you live by the principles of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in your everyday life and tell how you have done your duty to God. List the names of individuals who know you personally and would be willing to provide a recommendation on your behalf.

	Name	Address	Telephone	Email
Parents/Guardians	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reference #1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reference #2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reference #3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reference #4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

For these other four references after the parent/guardian, the Guide to Advancement section 9.0.1.3 states that “Parents and other relatives are strongly discouraged from serving as references. The current unit leader and committee chair are not eligible to serve as references; their signature on the application is their endorsement.”

Los Padres Council guidance to Scouts:

1. In order to consistently manage the reference letters, we advise that the scout:
 - a. Makes a request in writing to each reference (this can be an email or letter; it can follow a verbal request but then this serves to document the request); this request for a reference letter should have appropriate 2-deep leadership copied (either two registered leaders in the Troop, or one registered leader and one parent) and include the following:
 - i. Timeline. We suggest giving the reference three (3) weeks to turn in the letter
 - ii. Method of submission – it should be submitted in a sealed envelope, and can be turned in to the Scout. Note that a Troop may choose to have an advancement coordinator or other leader be the point of contact for the return of the reference letters, as long as the Scout can be in possession of them to turn in when needed.
 - iii. Letters should be addressed to “Eagle Scout Board of Review, Los Padres Council, Scouting America”
 - iv. Advise that the reference letter is confidential and will not be read by the Scout, or anyone other than members of the Scout’s Eagle Board of Review.
 - v. There is no form or format; the reference may write it in whatever manner they deem appropriate for submitting the reference.
 - b. Approximately a week before the ‘due date’ provided above, the scout should follow up with all references who have not yet submitted their reference letter.



Again this should be documented in a written correspondence consistent with 2-deep leadership copied (but should also be made in person if that is possible). This can serve as the “diligent effort” as guided above in the event that references do not submit their letters.

2. The requirement is to have the reference letters on hand for the Eagle Board of Review (EBOR). The scout need not wait until they turn in their application to request the letters, or the scout may turn in their application prior to collecting the references. But they must make the request for their reference letters at least three weeks before their EBOR is scheduled; they will need to manage this with their local Eagle chair when scheduling their EBOR.
3. The Scout must bring all reference letters received in their still sealed envelopes to their EBOR. Again, if the Troop has designated an adult leader to receive the letters, this adult can bring them to the EBOR or give them to the Scout or another leader to bring to the EBOR.
4. After the EBOR, reference letters will be retained by the Eagle Board of Review Chair, and disposed of in a manner consistent with council policies.
5. Finally, if the Eagle Scout rank application or Guide to Advancement are updated after the date of this document, the national guidance from Scouting America serves as the official requirement and this guidance would need to be updated to align with any change to this process.

If there are any questions about the policy, please don't hesitate to contact me or any of our Eagle Chairs throughout the council.

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