

## San Gabriel Valley District

### How to Register as a Merit Badge Counselor

Adult volunteers can play an important role in the advancement of Scouts, whether or not they have any youth of their own in the program. By serving as a merit badge counselor, you share your professional experiences and personal interests with Scouts and not only assist them with their advancement journey but may also inspire them to pursue a career or take up a hobby in that field.

There are over 135 merit badges in the Scouting program that cover all manner of skills, careers and interests. Of these, 18 are identified as Eagle-required, and a Scout needs to earn 13 of these on their way to their Eagle Scout rank.

*Adult volunteers with a particular interest or professional experience in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) may also be interested in signing up as Nova Counselors and Supernova Mentors for the BSA's STEM Nova Awards program. These awards combine merit badges with additional activities to earn additional awards in STEM fields. The application process is similar - please see below for a more detailed discussion of the application requirements.*

To register as a new Merit Badge Counselor within San Gabriel Valley District, you must complete the following steps:

1. Complete the BSA's **Merit Badge Counselor Information Form**. Please use the latest version, available here: <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf>
  - You may apply to add ("A") up to 8 badges on one form – use additional forms if necessary (complete and sign each one).
  - Please provide a short (one line) justification to show why you are qualified to counsel each merit badge.
  - Scouters are strongly encouraged to offer to counsel other Scouts in the district, not just within their own unit.
2. Complete the BSA's **Adult Application Form**. Please use the latest version, available here: <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-501.pdf>
  - On page 3, please use "42" for the position code and "Merit Badge Counselor" for the Scouting position title. Your SSN is **REQUIRED** in order to complete your application.
  - This form does NOT need to be signed by a unit leader or COR, only by the applicant.
  - If new to scouting, please be sure to complete and sign the Background Check Authorization on page 9. This is **REQUIRED** in order to complete your application.
3. Complete the BSA's **Youth Protection Training (YPT)**. This training may be completed online at <https://my.scouting.org>. For more information about YPT, please visit <https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection>.
  - If you have already completed YPT, your certificate **MUST** be dated within the last 12 months
4. Complete all the required modules of the **Scouts BSA Merit Badge Counselor Training** plan and print out the completion certificate. This training may be completed online at <https://my.scouting.org>. The current modules are:
  - Scouts BSA - Merit Badge Counselors - Before the First Meeting
  - SCO\_431 – Aims & Methods of Scouts BSA
  - SCO\_433 – Ideals & Beliefs of Scouts BSA
  - SCO\_448 – Merit Badge Counselors for Scouts BSA
  - SCO\_435 – Intro to Merit Badges for Scouts BSA
  - SCO\_434 – Merit Badge Counselors Sign up
  - Scouts BSA - Merit Badge Counselors - Position Trained
  - SCO\_430 – Advancement for Scouts BSA
  - Scouters who have completed older versions of some of these classes do not have to retake the new versions, as the old versions never expire. However, if you have not completed any of the classes listed here, please complete those training courses and send me the individual completion certificates for those training courses.

5. Some merit badges may require evidence of additional training or certification before you can be approved as a counselor, e.g. badges involving first aid, aquatics, shooting or other potentially hazardous activities. These requirements are listed in section 7.0.1.1 “Qualifications of Counselors” of the BSA’s *Guide to Advancement*, here: <https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/the-merit-badge-program>.
6. Submit your completed paperwork (Merit Badge Counselor Information form, BSA Adult Application form, YPT certificate, and proof of completion of your Merit Badge Counselor Training and any other badge-specific certification) to Susan Perez-May, Merit Badge Counselor Dean, using the following method
  - Email it to Susan Perez-May at [sperezmay@gmail.com](mailto:sperezmay@gmail.com).
7. Your approval notification will be emailed to you-
  - Please note that it may take 3-5 days to review your application, and longer if any paperwork is incomplete.
  - Please wait for approval before counseling any Scouts for a particular merit badge.
8. A Google Docs list of merit badge counselors is shared with unit Scoutmasters, Committee Chairs, Advancement Chairs and District Commissioners.
9. **Merit Badge Counselor Resources**
  - The BSA provides a wealth of resources for merit badge counselors online at: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/mb-counselor-guide>

In particular, please review the *Guide for Merit Badge Counseling* before counseling youth: <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-065.pdf>

The latest merit badge requirements may be found online at: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges>

Please also consult the BSA’s *Guide to Safe Scouting* for any particular requirements relating to your field of expertise: <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss>

## **BSA STEM Nova Awards**

There are specific Nova Awards for Scouts of all BSA programs, so please follow these instructions for all levels of the program.

Individuals who wish to serve as a Nova Counselor should apply as follows:

1. There is no official Nova Counselor information form so please complete the BSA’s **Merit Badge Counselor Information Form**, as per step 1 above, and list each Nova award that you wish to counsel.
2. Complete the **BSA Adult Application Form** as per step 2 above, but use position code 58, position name “Nova Counselor”.
3. Complete the BSA’s **Youth Protection Training (YPT)** as per step 3 above.
4. Complete all the required modules of the **STEM Nova** training plan and print out the completion certificate. This training may be completed online at <https://my.scouting.org> - in the Course Catalog, look under Expanded Learning – STEM in Scouting.
5. Submit paperwork as per step 6 above.

**Individuals who wish to serve as a Supernova Mentor should apply as follows:**

1. Complete the BSA’s **Supernova Mentor Information Form**. Please use the latest version, available here: [https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/stem/pdf/514-017\\_WB.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/stem/pdf/514-017_WB.pdf)
2. Complete the **BSA Adult Application Form** as per step 2 above, but use position code 52, position name “Supernova Mentor”.
3. Complete the BSA’s **Youth Protection Training (YPT)** as per step 3 above.

4. Complete all the required modules of the **STEM Nova** training plan and print out the completion certificate. This training may be completed online at <https://my.scouting.org> - in the Course Catalog, look under Expanded Learning – STEM in Scouting.
5. Submit paperwork as per step 6 above.

### **Changing and Renewing Your Counselor/Mentor Status**

Once you have been approved as a Counselor or Mentor, you may add (“A”) badges/awards to, or drop (“D”) badges/awards from, your approved list, or change which Scouts you are willing to counsel (district-wide or unit only) at any time simply by completing and submitting another copy of the Merit Badge Counselor or Supernova Mentor Information Form (see steps 1, 5, 6 and 7). If there are any changes to your contact information, please let me know as soon as possible and I will update your contact status in the next list.

You will need to renew your Counselor or Mentor status and your Youth Protection Training every year. You will receive your renewal form and renewal instructions through your unit later this fall. If your Youth Protection Training expires before the end of the next calendar year, please plan to retake it by the end of September in order to speed up the renewal process and keep your name on the list of active counselors.

Counselors and Mentors who do not renew before the deadline will be dropped from the approved list as soon as their Youth Protection Training expires. If you no longer wish to serve as a Counselor or Mentor, please indicate as so on the renewal form, and sign and return it to Susan Perez-May, District Merit Badge Dean at [sperezmay@gmail.com](mailto:sperezmay@gmail.com)

### **Questions? Comments?**

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Susan Perez-May, SGVD Merit Badge Counselor Dean, at [sperezmay@gmail.com](mailto:sperezmay@gmail.com)

***THANK YOU for offering this valuable service to our Scouts! You are appreciated!***