

101 great Scout service project ideas

October 9, 2015 Bryan Wendell



Nothing your Scout unit can do raises community awareness more than a service project.

These good turns are some of our best marketing tools. They send the message that Scouts are here, making life better for others.

But where to start? I've collected 101 Scout service project ideas below. These should get you started, but really anything that fulfills a community need (and follows the BSA's *Guide to Safe Scouting*) can count for service hours.

And those service hours count toward your Journey to Excellence, or JTE, score.

At the **pack** level, you can achieve JTE bronze status by completing two service projects in the year — and entering them on the JTE website. Complete three service projects, and you'll get silver. If at least one of those three is conservation-oriented, you'll get gold.

At the **troop** and **team** levels, it's three projects a year for bronze, four for silver and five for gold. At the **crew** and **ship** levels, it's two for bronze, three for silver and four for gold.

Note: While some of these might make great Eagle Scout service projects, most are intended for unit-level service.

Here's the list:

1. Organize a book and magazine drive, with the collected items going to a daycare, overseas soldiers, a VA medical center or an inner-city school
2. Help out a local Cub Scout pack at its pinewood derby, Arrow of Light presentation or by teaching camping or cooking skills
3. Improve your local Scout summer camp, perhaps by clearing trails, splitting wood, repairing tents or more
4. Volunteer at a district event, running the first-aid station or staffing the Klondike derby
5. Participate in *Scouting for Food*, the annual canned-food drive
6. Help at the Scout Show, the council-level event where your volunteer service is always welcome
7. Lend a hand at University of Scouting, the training event for volunteers, can always use help
8. Go caroling at a local nursing home
9. Perform skits or songs at a homeless shelter, nursing home or children's advocacy center
10. Collect gifts and make gift baskets for elderly people with no families
11. Prepare and distribute holiday cards (Valentine's Day, Christmas, etc.) for people without families of their own
12. Assist in snow/ice removal for members of the community or businesses that need a hand
13. Assist in yard work for members of the community or businesses that need a hand
14. Adopt a needy family
15. Help agencies cook and serve meals for the homeless
16. Make gift boxes to be distributed by a local charity
17. Stock shelves at a local food pantry
18. Place flags on gravesites for Memorial Day or other special days of remembrance
19. Create and deliver thank-you cards to veterans on Veterans Day (or any day)

20. Help religious organizations set up religious exhibits or activities
21. Deliver, retrieve and dispose of Christmas trees
22. Help residents set up or take down Christmas lights
23. Repair and paint holiday decorations
24. Collect toys for Toys for Tots (or a local equivalent)
25. Prepare and serve hot chocolate or apple cider at the annual town tree-lighting ceremony
26. Purchase and distribute toys for the children's hospital near you
27. Make stuffed animals, such as a Build-a-Bear, to brighten up a child's holidays
28. Assist with parking cars at a local event (but please follow strict safety protocols!)
29. Assemble Easter baskets and distribute to local shelters
30. Provide free coffee at rest stops on heavy travel weekends, such as Thanksgiving or Memorial Day
31. Help run a fall carnival or pumpkin patch
32. Create or help create and run a haunted house
33. Assist at alternative trick-or-treat events
34. Adopt a town after a disaster
35. Assist organizations that provide home maintenance service
36. Help paint a school, church or chartered organization
37. Clean a Habitat for Humanity house before the family moves in
38. Clean a local animal shelter
39. Help walk the dogs at the animal shelter
40. Perform janitorial duties for your chartered organization
41. Repaint fences at government or nonprofit buildings
42. Adopt a Highway or road and take care of it
43. Take part in a litter cleanup project
44. Help beautify city hall
45. Clean up and/or help inventory a cemetery
46. Clean up and beautify the local community center, campground, park, river or school parking lot
47. Clear brush from a fire-prone area
48. Improve a town walking trail
49. Pick up trash at the chartered organization before or after a meeting (not just the trash you left — check out the entire facility)
50. Clean up the shoreline
51. Help package medical supplies to be sent to developing countries
52. Assist with a blood drive
53. Distribute organ donor cards
54. Pass out anti-drug literature
55. Provide the first-aid station at a district or council event
56. Create and distribute first-aid kits to residents in need
57. Help children make bicycle safety kits
58. Make welcome-home kits for victims of a disaster
59. Make bandanas, pillows or other items for cancer patients
60. Serve as "victims" for a local first-responders training event
61. Adopt a military troop and send them birthday cards and other holiday cards
62. Become pen pal with someone serving overseas
63. Create video histories of veterans and share the edited results with their families
64. Organize a movie night at a VA medical center.
65. Send calling cards to servicemen and servicewomen overseas
66. Assist in training search and rescue dogs
67. Clean and refill bird feeders at the local Audubon Society

68. Collect aluminum cans and donate the proceeds to a local charity
69. Construct duck houses, owl boxes or birdhouses
70. Build an education sandbox for a local nature center
71. Build a fence around air conditioners at a local establishment
72. Conduct a CPR training event
73. Build a handicap ramp at a community location
74. As a Boy Scout troop or Venturer crew, offer to cater a pack's blue and gold banquet
75. Run a basketball tournament
76. Volunteer at the Special Olympics — water station, handing out medals, etc.
77. Construct a soccer field: lines, goals, benches
78. Construct bat and helmet racks for your school's baseball/softball teams
79. Build a horseshoe pit at the local park
80. Host a dodgeball tournament and donate the proceeds
81. Refurbish the press box at a local ballfield
82. Serve as volunteer referees or umpires at a sports tournament
83. Staff a local run or marathon
84. Repair and paint bleachers
85. Plant trees
86. Hand out voting reminders in the community
87. Call residents and encourage them to register to vote
88. Conduct a winter coat drive and clean and distribute the coats
89. Set up and help run a website or Facebook page for your chartered organization or a local nonprofit
90. Perform at a local charity talent show
91. Collect unused makeup, perfume and cosmetics for a center for abused women
92. Create a poison awareness campaign
93. Paint over graffiti (but first check with your city/town government)
94. Sponsor a TV blackout event to encourage families to spend time outside
95. Host a free camping clinic where you share basic camping skills with residents
96. Plant, tend and harvest a vegetable garden and donate what you grow
97. Organize a pet show, with a portion of the proceeds going to the winning dogs and the rest going to a local charity
98. Design placemats for Meals on Wheels recipients
99. Rake leaves for elderly neighbors or your chartered organization
100. Lead a game of bingo at a nursing home
101. Hold a bike safety rally, where you teach bike skills and inspect the bikes

On being compensated for work

A Scouting friend wrote me to ask whether a pack, troop, team, post, ship or crew can count hours served if the unit is paid for the work.

"It's my understanding since we are being compensated, the Scouts can't receive service hours and neither can the troop," he wrote.

I checked with the expert: Mike Lo Vecchio of the BSA. He writes: "Being compensated for work is not service hours. Service hours are considered to be uncompensated work being done as a service/courtesy."

Favorite Projects (ranked by visitors)

1. Pull Tabs for Ronald McDonald House

2. Webelos Legacy
3. Bat Houses
4. US Flag Retirement Ceremony
5. Bird Houses
6. Book Drive
7. Wood Duck Houses
8. Church Grounds Renovation and Spring Cleaning
9. School Projects
10. Bar-b-que for Church
11. Bus Stop Shelters
12. Recent Eagle Scouts
13. Trail Construction
14. Build Homes with Habitat for Humanity
15. Blood Drive
16. Bicycle Projects – Repair, Rebuild and donate, Teach others to ride safely,
17. Charge Smoke Detectors
18. Adopt a Fire Hydrant
19. Recreation Projects
20. Bird Watching Blind
21. Brochure Stand
22. Arboretum Improvement
23. Gym Wall Graphics
24. Placing US flags on Veteran’s Graves on Memorial Day

Boy Scouts Advancement Requirements for Service Project

Boy Scout:

- **Tenderfoot Requirement 7b:** Participate in a total of one hour of service in one or more service projects approved by your Scoutmaster. Explain how your service to others relates to the Scout slogan and Scout motto.
- **Second Class Requirement 8e:** Participate in two hours of service through one or more service projects approved by your Scoutmaster. Explain how your service to others relates to the Scout Oath.
- **First Class Requirement 9d:** Participate in three hours of service through one or more service projects approved by your Scoutmaster. The project(s) must not be the same service project(s) used for Tenderfoot requirement 7b and Second Class requirement 8e. Explain how your service to others relates to the Scout Law.
- **Star Requirement 4:** While a First Class Scout, participate in six hours of service through one or more service projects approved by your Scoutmaster.
- **Life Requirement 4:** While a Star Scout, participate in six hours of service through one or more service projects approved by your Scoutmaster. At least 3 hours of this service must be conservation related.
- **Eagle Requirement 5:** While a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, any school, or your community. (The project must benefit an organization other than the Boy Scouts of America.) A project proposal must be approved by the organization benefiting from the effort, your Scoutmaster and unit committee, and the council or district before you start. You must use the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, BSA publication No. 512-927, in meeting this requirement. (To learn more about the Eagle Scout service project, see the Guide to Advancement, topics 9.0.2.0 through 9.0.2.15.)