

## ATLANTA AREA COUNCIL

### MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Individuals applying for registration and approval as Merit Badge Counselors must submit a completed BSA Adult Application including the “disclosure “ page, a completed BSA Form 34405 Merit Badge Counselor Information Form, and proof of current Youth Protection Training. This proof can be either a printed certificate from the MyScouting.org online training website, a copy of the MyScouting.org training validation page showing the applicants name and latest YPT completion date, or a copy of a completed and signed BSA training card.

Applicants associated with Units should enlist Unit support when filling out their application paperwork in order to eliminate or minimize errors or omissions on the application and forms. Applicants and Units should enlist the support of their District Advancement Committee if necessary for the same purpose.

The required paperwork must be submitted to the appropriate District Advancement Chair, or District MB Counselor designee.

Some Districts may require Counselor application paperwork to be submitted to the District Executive. Check with your District Advancement Committee or District Executive if uncertain where to submit the paperwork.

If Counselor paperwork is submitted at the Volunteer Service Center it will be routed to the appropriate District Advancement Committee which will delay and complicate the process.

The District Advancement Chair, MB Counselor Designee, District Executive, or Service Center Staff as appropriate, upon receiving Merit Badge Counselor Application paperwork will verify all paperwork is complete and accurate in accordance with Council and BSA requirements:

1. A complete signed Adult Leader Application. (see Appendix 1)
2. Signed Disclosure Form.
3. Proof of Youth Protection Training.
4. Form 34405 filled out completely. (see Appendix 2)

(note: Merit Badge qualification boxes must contain some explanation of qualifications. Please do not leave blank, use check marks, or just write “yes” in the boxes).

Submission of any paperwork which is incomplete, incorrect, or missing required information or documentation will not be accepted.

If an applicant’s paperwork is not accepted, the entire packet should be returned to the applicant. They should be advised on how to correct their application, and that they are not approved to serve as a Merit Badge Counselor until their application is resubmitted and accepted.

## APPLICATION PAPERWORK ACCEPTED BY THE DISTRICT ADVANCEMENT CHAIR

Whenever Counselor application paperwork is received by the District Advancement Chair or the District designee they should verify all paperwork is complete and accurate in accordance with Council and BSA requirements per the above checklist. The paperwork should then be promptly reviewed and processed following the outline below for “MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR APPLICATION REVIEW AND APPROVAL”.

## APPLICATION PAPERWORK ACCEPTED BY THE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE

Whenever Counselor application paperwork is received by the District Executive he/she should verify all paperwork is complete and accurate in accordance with Council and BSA requirements per the above checklist. The application paperwork should then be promptly transferred to the District Advancement Chair or District MB Counselor Designee.

If, by agreement within a particular District, the District Executive is responsible for processing Merit Badge Counselor Application paperwork, the DE should, after verifying all paperwork is complete and accurate in accordance with Council and BSA requirements per the above checklist, follow the process outlined below for “MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR APPLICATION REVIEW AND APPROVAL”.

## APPLICATION PAPERWORK ACCEPTED BY SERVICE CENTER STAFF

If Counselor application paperwork is submitted to the VSC, staff should verify all paperwork is complete and accurate in accordance with Council and BSA requirements per the above checklist. If the paperwork packet is accepted, applications should be stamped with a received date and put in the proper District folder for processing. The appropriate District Advancement Chair or MB Counselor designee will pick up the application(s) for review and approval by their Committee. Alternatively the District Executive may transfer the application packet to the District Advancement Chair or District MB Counselor Designee. Counselor application paperwork will not be mailed to District Volunteers. If Applications are not being picked up regularly, VSC staff will send a reminder email to the appropriate District Advancement Chair. (staff should be aware that some application packets may be submitted by individuals whose Adult Application has already been approved and signed by the District Chair).

If subsequent review or verification of the accepted Adult Application, Form 34405, or proof of YPT are unsatisfactory, the applicant will be notified, and should not act as a Merit Badge Counselor until any discrepancies are resolved.

## MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR APPLICATION REVIEW AND APPROVAL

### ADULT APPLICATION (see Appendix 1)

Review of the Adult application should confirm that it is filled out fully and correctly.

3 References must be provided in item # 5 and the District Advancement Committee (DE if applicable) must determine if the applicant's references are satisfactory. If the Applicant is already registered in another BSA Adult position that included satisfactory reference checks, checking references is not required. If references cannot be verified to be satisfactory, the applicant will be informed not to act as a Merit Badge Counselor or work with Youth until any discrepancies are resolved. All paperwork should be returned to the applicant.

All items in # 6 (background questions) should have been marked "no", and the applicant must have signed both the disclosure page and the application itself. If any background questions are marked "yes" the District Advancement Chair must coordinate with the District Executive before signing the application. Only the District Advancement Chair, not a designee, may sign the Adult Application as the "Scout Executive Designee". (if the DE is processing the application, they sign as designee). This signature goes in the bottom right hand box labeled "Approval for Council and District Scouters".

The Adult Application contains personal information which must be safeguarded while in the possession of District volunteers. The application must not be retained any longer than is necessary for review and it should be submitted to the service Center along with the proof of current YPT for registration as soon as it has been approved.

#### MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR INFORMATION FORM (34405)

The District Advancement Committee reviews the "Merit Badge Counselor Information Form" (34405). A new form released in February 2013 was sent to all District Advancement Chairs and should be used whenever possible. This form is also available online.

If the applicant's MB Counselor Information form 34405 indicates he is qualified to serve as a Counselor for all of the Badges applied for, including any specific restrictions and certification requirements found in the "Guide To Advancement 2013" (or subsequent BSA publications defining Counselor requirements), the Chair or District designee should fill in the "Council Approval" box. Also the Chair or Designee signs just above the box to verify the information in the box. The applicant will be considered approved for all Badges applied for.

If, for any reason, the District representative does not approve an applicant for one or more of the Badges applied for, the applicant should be contacted for additional information or clarification, and any questions relating to the Form should be resolved.

If the applicant still does not meet the BSA requirements found in the "Guide To Advancement 2013" (or subsequent BSA publications defining Counselor requirements), the District representative should advise the applicant of his status, ensuring a clear understanding of which Badges are approved (if any) and which Badges are not approved.

The District Representative should then clearly indicate on the Form 34405 which Badges are approved and which Badges are not approved.

A COPY of the signed form 34405 must then be submitted to the AAC VSC to facilitate entry into Scoutnet, and the original should be retained by the District. A copy may be scanned and emailed to the VSC ONLY if it is sent to a specific staff member's email who has agreed to accept, process and acknowledge receipt of the form. Service Center Staff will make the appropriate entries and/or changes to the applicant's Counselor record in Scoutnet.

For new Counselor applicants the Information Form "34405" does not have to be submitted at the same time as the Adult Application if resolving the badges applied for would delay the Adult application submission. However the Form 34405 cannot be submitted for new Counselors unless preceded or accompanied by the Adult application.

The District Advancement Committee should notify the Merit Badge Counselor applicant, and their associated Unit if any, when they are approved, and take the opportunity to thank them for volunteering their time and talents.

## APPENDIX 1 – ADULT APPLICATION

### Atlanta Area Council

#### Filling out the Adult Application Form for Merit Badge Counselor Position.

The BSA Adult application must be used. Fillable pdf copies, scanned or copied applications are not acceptable.

**Front Cover** : Please read the Front cover of the Application

**Inside Front Cover** : Please read the red box at the top inside the front cover, and the instructions at the bottom left of the page. Merit Badge Counselors are “District Scouters” for the purpose of registration, and do NOT pay a fee to register. Most Troops/Crews have someone who collects and submits Counselor Applications, and they can assist you with the application.

The required paperwork must be submitted to the appropriate District Advancement Chair, or District MB Counselor designee.

Some Districts may require Counselor application paperwork to be submitted to the District Executive. Check with your District Advancement Committee or District Executive if uncertain where to submit the paperwork.

If Counselor paperwork is submitted at the Volunteer Service Center it will be routed to the appropriate District Advancement Committee which will delay and complicate the process.

**Fourth Page** : The “Disclosure / Authorization Form”.

Read through the “Notice to Applicant...” and “Applicant’s Acknowledgement.....” sections.

At the bottom of the page please fill in your name, then sign and date. This signature is required to authorize a background check, and the Application will be returned if your signature is missing.

**Adult Application** : This is the page where all of your information is filled in. Press hard as you are making 3 copies.

First Section : Unit Scouters can be blank since Merit Badge Counselor is a District or Council level position. If you are associated with a Troop or Crew the number is helpful in case we need to contact you through your unit.

The “Council / district position” is Merit Badge Counselor or “MBC”.

Fill in your District Name. If you don't know that name, ask someone in your Unit or the person who contacted you about becoming a Counselor, or leave blank.

“Expire Date” and “Transfer From” lines leave blank.

Second Section : Name, address etc. Please fill in as much of the Application as possible.

Fill in name, address, and at least one phone number (required).

If you are already registered in another position please note your BSA ID number above your last name. If you do not know your BSA ID # write in your District, Unit type and number and position you are registered in.

You must have completed Boy Scout Youth Protection Training, and a copy of your current completion Certificate must accompany the Application.

Date of birth is required.

Drivers License number and State are requested. Gender and ethnicity are optional.

Social Security Number is required. (The Social Security number is only on the Council page and does not copy onto the other pages).

If an applicant does not have a Social Security Number (non – citizen) or cannot provide their SSN due to personal circumstances, they may still apply to become a Counselor. Advise the District Advancement Chair of the situation and the Chair will arrange a meeting with Council Staff to determine how the applicant will be accommodated.

Occupation or some description of what you do is helpful.

Employer or “none” is helpful, as is your Business address or location of Employer if any, or NA.

The position Code is 42 for MBC.

The position is always Merit Badge Counselor or just MBC, and not any other position you may have in Scouting.

Eagle Scout, if applicable, is helpful.

Email Address is required if available to facilitate annual renewal.

Bottom Section : Sign and Date the Application. An original signature is Required . Faxed , scanned / emailed or digitally signed copies are not accepted.

No Fee is required. Do Not check the “Boy’s Life” box or you will be charged the pro-rated amount and the magazine will be sent to the applicant’s address.

Most Counselors are associated with a Scouting Unit but that affiliation is not required. MBC is a District or Council position so Committee Chair and Chartered Org. Rep. signatures are NOT required, though your Unit may require them for administrative purposes. This is why, even if you are a registered Scout Leader in some other capacity, another Adult Application is required for the MBC Position.

Right Hand Side : The Items 1 through 6 on the right side of the Application Page are important. Numbers 1 through 4 are helpful and should have some information filled in if possible.

Items 5 and 6 are required and the Application will be returned if either is left blank. Three references are required.

When the Application is finished you may remove the “Applicant Copy” if desired. Only the “Council Copy” and the “Disclosure Page” need to be turned in for approval unless it is desired to have a record of Council approval signatures on the Unit, Charter Org. and Applicant copies.

A “Merit Badge Counselor Information” form (BSA form 34405) must accompany the Adult Application along with the previously mentioned current Youth Protection Training completion Certificate.

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## **APPENDIX 2 – MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR INFORMATION FORM 34405**

### **Atlanta Area Council**

#### **Filling Out the Merit Badge Counselor Information Form**

#### **BSA Form #34405**

Fill out this Form: when applying to become a Merit Badge Counselor,

when adding or removing Badges for an existing Counselor,

when a Counselor no longer wishes to serve and would like their name removed from the Counselor List.

A person may apply to be a Counselor for as many Badges at one time as they are qualified for, but list only 8 badges on each form. Each Form must be filled out completely and signed even if multiple forms are submitted together.

Please read the back of the application form “Instructions For Merit Badge Counselors” before applying, to become familiar with the Merit Badge Program and the role of a Counselor.

The Personal Information section at the top: requires at least Name, Address, 1 phone number, and an email address if available. Please use the same full first and last names as used on the Adult Application to avoid confusion. Counselor updates and annual re-registration are usually conducted via email. If no email address is available mark the “do not have email” box.

Please write your District name and Unit number (if you are associated with a Unit) on the Form. This is very important in managing and renewing the MB Counselor list. If you do not know your District please ask a Unit Leader or the person you submit the Form to for assistance. If you know that you are not affiliated with a District, (for instance registered at the Council level) please mark that box.

If you are already registered as a Counselor, or in any other BSA position, please also write your BSA ID number on the Form. This number may be found on your BSA ID card, obtained from your Unit Chairperson, or from your Council Service Center.

Please read the requirements to qualify as a Counselor and the Counselor agreement section that follows the Personal information section. When you sign the form you are agreeing to the requirements of this section.

For Each Merit Badge Applied for :

Please use the correct title for the Badge you are applying for, and familiarize yourself with the Badge requirements. You may find this at

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges.aspx>

Clearly mark “A” to indicate adding the badge, or “D” to indicate dropping an existing badge.

Provide a description of qualifications, experience, training, etc. in the space provided for each badge applied for. Badges applied for without some qualification or with unrelated qualifications cannot be approved. If space is insufficient please add a separate sheet describing your qualifications.

Refer to the back of the form “Special Qualifications and Guidelines for Merit Badge Counselors” and the “Guide to Advancement” publication 33088 for special training and/or certification requirements applicable to counseling certain Merit Badges.

Under “Complete the Following”, please mark each applicable box.

To have your name removed from the Merit Badge Counselor list and your MB Counselor registration “expired” clearly mark the box “I no longer wish to serve as a merit badge counselor”.

Please include your most recent Youth Protection Training date. Applications or changes cannot be approved if the applicants YPT has expired or cannot be verified.

It will be assumed that a Counselor is prepared to work with all Scouts unless the “wish to work only with” boxes are marked differently.

Sign and Date the form. Original, signed Forms, and digitally signed forms are accepted.

Scanned Forms may be emailed to the District Advancement Chair or Merit badge Designee provided they are clearly legible. Each Form submitted must be fully completed and signed.

For new Counselors the current version of the BSA Adult Application Form with position code 42 and “Merit Badge Counselor” in the “Scouting position” box must be submitted along with the Merit Badge Counselor Information Sheet and a copy of a current Youth Protection completion Certificate. The Adult Application for a Merit Badge Counselor Position only needs to be submitted once unless registration has lapsed due to non-renewal.

The required paperwork must be submitted to the appropriate District Advancement Chair, or District MB Counselor designee.

Some Districts may require Counselor application paperwork to be submitted to the District Executive. Check with your District Advancement Committee or District Executive if uncertain where to submit the paperwork.

If Counselor paperwork is submitted at the Volunteer Service Center it will be routed to the appropriate District Advancement Committee which will delay and complicate the process.

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