

Resources for Scouts with Disabilities

Since the Boy Scouts began in 1910, they have welcomed participation from Scouts with disabilities. The Scouts have developed a number of accommodations, supports, and systems to ensure Scouts of all abilities are able to fully participate in the Scouting experience. This handout will review those options within the BSA program, as well as great resources for Scout-aged people with disabilities to explore beyond Scouting. You can find a local troop online at <https://beascout.scouting.org/>

Receiving Accommodations

If a Scout will have trouble completing a particular requirement for a merit badge as it is typically achieved, they can ask for an accommodation. A Scout can work with their National Capital Area Council representatives on needed accommodations and submit a written request to achieve a merit badge or rank in an alternative way. The goal is to provide a “similar learning experience” to what the typical merit badge paths provide. Here are some examples of accommodations that are often requested, but remember you can request different accommodations based upon disability related-needs.

Examples:

- Eagle Scouts can enroll beyond the typical capped age of 18 to complete their project if they need more time to fulfill Eagle Scout requirements
- A Scout can substitute related but alternative merit badges to complete a rank if their disability prevents them from fulfilling the standard merit badge requirements
- Maybe some specific examples? I know you mentioned people often ask for accommodations for a swimming merit badge.

Supports Along the Way

1. The National Scouts website has links to manuals and policies followed nationwide for Scouts with disabilities. <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/disabilities-awareness/>
2. The National Capital Area Council (NCAC) has committee members solely focused on ensuring the success of Scouts with disabilities. They can approve accommodation requests, troubleshoot special needs-related issues and help local troops succeed in including Scouts with the full range of abilities. <https://www.ncacbsa.org/advancement/special-needs-scouting/>
 - They also have a quick fact sheet on the basics for Scouts with special needs <http://www.ncacbsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
3. There is also an online handbook for Scout leaders on supporting their Scouts with disabilities <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf>

Life Outside of Scouts

The Arc of Northern Virginia is a Northern Virginia-based non-profit organization. One of the focuses of their work is providing free information and resources for people with developmental disabilities across the lifespan.

For Scouts all levels of school, they have a **Transition POINTS guide on Special Education**. It includes tips on navigating Special Education, writing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), preparing for the transition out of school, and navigating community resources. <https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/getting-special-education/>

The **Transition POINTS Guide on Securing a Future** focuses heavily on people ages 14-26 who are making the leap from childhood and school-based services to the adult world, including finding a job. <https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/securing-future-child-disability/>

The Arc of Northern Virginia also has a **YouTube channel** filled with videos to help people with developmental disabilities learn about Medicaid and Medicaid Waivers, Social Security, housing and more. <https://youtube.com/user/VideosatTheArcofNoVA>

The Arc of Northern Virginia offers an **online provider directory** to help people find needed services, as well as an **online resource library** with factsheets, quick tips, and resource guides.

Provider directory- <https://thearcofnova.org/directory/>

Resource library- <https://thearcofnova.org/programs-services/library/>

Lastly, you can **ask The Arc of Northern Virginia for assistance** with any questions you have at <http://thearcofnova.org/answers>