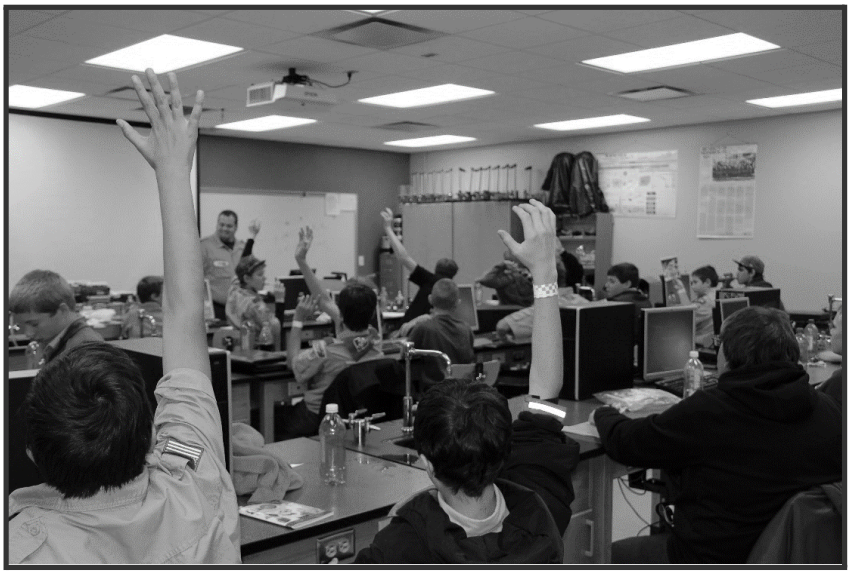


River Valley

Merit Badge College



Leader Guide

2026

Greetings Scout Leaders!

On behalf of the River Valley District of the Winnebago Council of Scouting America, we are excited to welcome you to our 2026 Merit Badge College (MBC) located at Hawkeye Community College in Waterloo, Iowa.

We have sought out highly qualified merit badge counselors from our area, to offer your Scout(s) an opportunity to foster their interest in a wide variety of topics. Our hope is that your Scouts' participation will elicit personal growth and possibly blossom a new lifelong interest, a hobby or even a future occupational interest.

Merit badge college is NOT school nor should it be compared to the classroom environment. It is a volunteer run, inclusive event to generate excitement and motivation for Scouts to earn their merit badges to progress in their Scouting journey.

We hope that you and your Scouts will enjoy the day, and we look forward to working with you.

In Scouting,

Whitney Jensen

Interim River Valley District Executive

Kimberly Mashek

River Valley District Chair

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General Information

Date
November 7, 2026 (All Day- Check-in starts at 7AM)

Location
Hawkeye Community College Campus
1501 E Orange Rd, Waterloo, IA 50701.
See campus map for building location.

Cost
$18.00 per Scout helps cover the cost of Hawkeye Community College, an event patch, administrative and facility costs for the day. Additional patches cost $3. Lunch not included in cost.

Some merit badge sessions may require extra fees; those fees will be listed during online registration and also in the prerequisite listing details.

Registration
Registration is available online through the council website at https://mycouncil.winnebagocouncil.org/Event/6824.

Each unit **will be required to register *at least* two adults** to be present for the entire MBC to provide Two Deep leadership at all sessions, provide Troop supervision during breaks and lunch, but also to fill in as necessary for Safeguarding Youth (SYT) (see "Safeguarding Youth").

Check-In
Check-in will take place in Tama Hall starting at 7AM. When checking in:

- Present completed Health Forms A&B for each Scout **and** onsite Adult
- Leaders will sign-up for SYT shift if not previously completed during registration
- One leader will be given a packet with information for the day that includes maps, menus, schedules and location.

Schedule

Note: *Be aware that some sessions may run longer or shorter than the timeslots listed. Please advise your Scout(s) to return to Tama Hall Auditorium if a session dismisses early.*



If leaving before 4PM check out at the information desk.

7:00AM-7:50AM	Check-In/Registration in Tama Hall
8:00AM-8:20AM	Opening with Flag Ceremony
8:30AM-11:30AM	Morning Sessions
11:00AM-1:00PM	Lunch
1:00PM-4:00PM	Afternoon Sessions
4:00 PM	Closing with Flag Ceremony

Lunch

Lunch is not provided but we have invited Food Trucks to park outside Tama Hall during lunchtime. For planning and monetary purposes, menus for the invited Food Trucks can be found at the end of this guide. Scouts and leaders may also bring a sack lunch, if preferred.

Food and/or drink is **NOT** allowed in the Auditorium but can be consumed in the classrooms, lobby area of Tama Hall or outside, weather permitting.

Note: Sack lunches *are required* for merit badge sessions happening off-site. This will be noted in the prerequisite requirements.

Participant Responsibilities

Be Prepared



- Field (Class A) Uniform – Scouts MUST be in their Field Uniform
- Water bottle / something to drink, Snack is optional
- Completed Health Forms A&B
- Drawstring bag or backpack to hold the above items
- Pen/pencil
- Merit Badge pre-requisites, documents, evidence of completion
- Sack lunch or money for Food Truck options (menus at end of the guide) Those with off-site merit badges **will need** a sack lunch
- https://www.scouting.org/skills/merit-badges/all/ for digital copies of Merit Badge Pamphlet
- USScouts.org (http://usscouts.org/mb/worksheets/list.asp) merit badge worksheets with session prerequisites completed *(Please compare any US Scouts worksheets with the current Merit Badge Book for proper version)*

Be Obedient

We make no guarantees that Scouts will walk away from the day's events with completed Merit Badges. Sessions are in place not to 'teach' the merit badges, but to facilitate merit badge completion.

Scouts are expected to have done the following **in advance** of attending their merit badge sessions:

- Obtained and read the merit badge book
- Completed the prerequisites listed online; and filled out the appropriate section(s) of the merit badge worksheet to contribute to in- session discussions
- Scouts may be given only partial credit or not allowed to participate due to lack of preparation. It is the Scout's responsibility to obtain the Counselor's contact information for future completion.

Our goal is to have the Scouts work to the best of their ability to complete their Merit Badges. When guiding your Scout during the selection process, **consider the Scout's age and abilities**. Some badges require more scouting experience and a higher level of maturity for success. Remind Scouts that even if they earned a partial, they have until the age of 18 to complete.

Be Courteous

- Cell phones and other personal electronics are **optional** for Scouts to bring. Unless instructed by the merit badge counselor for your Scout to use their phone, your scout may NOT call/text/browse/play games/etc. during a session.
- **Leave No Trace applies**. Neither Merit Badge College Staff nor Hawkeye Community College Staff are your personal maids. **Please clean up after yourselves**. You will find trash and recycling receptacles all over campus, please use them.

Safeguarding Youth and Two Deep Leadership

As always, the safety of our Scouts is paramount. **We ask Troop Leaders to provide two leaders.** At registration, your Troop will be which sessions your leaders would prefer. We do not guarantee that you will get your preferred session.

With respect to communication with leaders, remind your Scouts to **always** cc/include a parent or Scout Leader in all interactions. Read more in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

Drop-in Merit Badge Option

Not all merit badges can be successfully completed inside a workshop environment, such as music or personal fitness. For these, we will be providing merit badge counselors to verify and sign off on merit badges that may have been started or completed outside of the merit badge college. Due to the format of our software, these merit badges are available for online registration and will be assigned a shortened session time, like during lunch. Scouts who register for drop-in will need to stop at the check-in desk to receive information on where and when to meet their merit badge counselor.

Scouts should bring evidence of their completed work with them to show the on-site Merit Badge Counselor. Evidence may include completed merit badge worksheet, photo or video documentation of activities, and/or letter from adult supervisor verifying participation in activity.

Scouts BSA Test Lab Merit Badges

The Scouts BSA Test Lab is an exciting way to help in the development of fun and interesting new topics unique to the Scouts BSA program. The requirements for each badge have the look and feel of merit badges, but instead of a printed pamphlet, you will find links to digital resources to help you complete the requirements.

After completion of all requirements with an adult volunteer, the Scout must complete a short survey which will lead to a certificate of completion. If enough surveys show Scouts enjoyed these potential new badges, Scouting America hopes to introduce them as official merit badges in the future.

If a Scout completes a Test Lab badge and it becomes an official merit badge, the Scout will be credited with having earned that badge!

Post Event Information

Please give us a week to 10 days to coordinate with our merit badge counselors to upload completion reports into our online tracking system, ***which is not Scoutbook.*** This gives us time to verify results and check for accuracy.

Blue Cards/Completion Records
Progress reports, completion records / online Blue Cards will be available to view and download from the My Council web portal. Retrieval of these records must be done by a leader who has access to the Unit's My Council Account which is part of the Winnebago Council website (https://mycouncil.winnebagocouncil.org/).

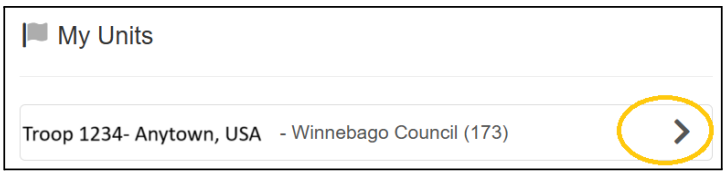
To do this:

1. Log in to MyCouncil in the upper righthand corner from the Winnebago Council website.

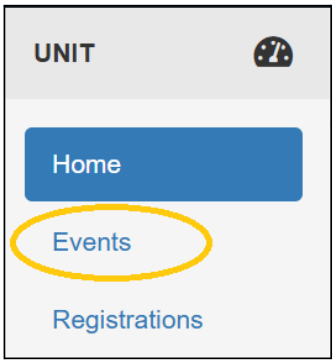




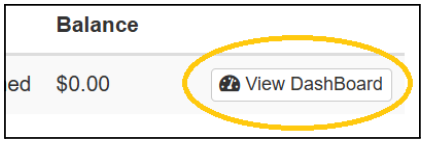
2. Select your Unit by clicking on the arrow after your unit information on the right.



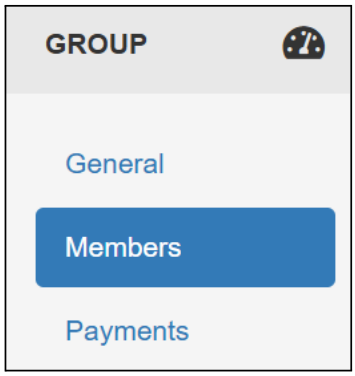
3. On the lefthand side menu, click on “Events”



4. Select River Valley Merit Badge College and then click on “View Dashboard”



5. From the lefthand menu of the Dashboard page, click on “Members”



6. In the upper righthand corner of the Members listing, click the dropdown that says “You Can”



7. Choose “Download Completion Records” from the dropdown menu