

Service-Learning 101

Benefits of Service-Learning

- ◆ *Integrates classroom theory with practical experience*
- ◆ *Enhances leadership skills*
- ◆ *Encourages active community commitment*
- ◆ *Increases awareness of social justice issues*

Service-Learning is a teaching strategy implemented to get students to transform classroom learning into active participation in the community. At CSB/SJU, one of the goals of service-learning is to have students engage in meaningful service and reflection to enhance their academic learning. Participating in a service-learning project can benefit you as much as the community partner you are encountering.

Before you begin...



Once you have made a commitment to an organization, it is important to remember the level of dedication necessary for a successful service-learning project.

It is important to remember that a service-learning project is not simply putting in your hours for class credit. In order for it to be a successful service-learning project, you must be fully engaged and immersed in the project. Do not attempt to get all your hours in during the last few weeks of the semester. Consistency is key!

What is expected of me?

- Commitment to a community partner within the first three weeks of the semester.
- Consistent attendance at the site, including good communication with your supervisor.
- Documentation of your site visits, for yourself and if required, in public folder postings for your professor and the service-learning staff.
- Reflection is a key component of service-learning, and it is necessary for a successful project. You will be required to engage in reflection either inside or outside of the classroom. Reflection may also take the form of written assignment(s).
- You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner. You are representing yourself and CSB/SJU. All email and phone communication should be respectful. Dress appropriately.

Getting Started

After reviewing the list of community partners and their descriptions, it is time to prioritize which community organizations you are interested in working with. While making the decision, it is important to consider your own personal interests as well as the community partner. Consider whether or not you think you will make an impact with the community partner and if you think the project will challenge you. Scheduling and time constraints also factor in!

Completing your project...

- After receiving confirmation of your site location, contact the community partner with whom you will be working and explain that you are doing your service-learning project with them. Be sure to set up an orientation time if necessary. Sometimes it is difficult to connect with your community partner – be persistent!
- Let your community partner supervisor know your schedule.
- Be accountable, have an open-mind, expect uncertainty!
- Confidentiality is a very important issue. During reflection it is important to talk about experiences, but please use discretion with your reflection and do not include names of individuals that you work with.
- When working with vulnerable populations, chances are you may encounter some new experiences. If any issue comes up that confuses or concerns you, do not hesitate to tell your supervisor. It is their job, not yours, to resolve any issues. Report any concerns regarding neglect, abuse, or harm to your supervisor immediately.
- Occasionally a student requests to switch placements. Students must contact the Service-Learning office and complete the necessary paperwork in order to process this request.

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