

Service Learning Checklist

Goals: Contact a service agency and complete service learning worksheet by Friday, February 11, 2005 (due IN CLASS).

1. Contact sites you are interested in and discuss possible opportunities for work. Remember that community agencies are busy places. Sometimes you'll have to leave two or three messages before the agency contact gets back to you. Don't give up! When you do reach the person, make sure it is a good time to talk. You may want to explain:
 - you are a student and are enrolled in this service-learning class
 - your interest in the particular organization and its purposes
 - the time you have available to volunteer
 - your past volunteer or community experience
 - particular skills (e.g., computer, research, crafts, sports, counseling) you have to offer
 - particular classes you have taken that may relate to issues the agency addresses
 - what your goals and reasons are for pursuing this work
 - you would like to set up an appointment to meet with them
 - you appreciate the time they are taking to work with you

Before you hang up (stop), make sure you confirm:

- the day and time of your meeting
 - where the agency is located and how to get there (by car, foot, bicycle, or bus)
 - and if you have made any agreements, what your responsibility will be.
2. Arrange a meeting/orientation with the organization or agency for which you wish to volunteer. When you visit the agency, be prepared to ask any questions you may have. Also, bring a resume if you have one; it may help agency staff quickly understand what you have to offer. Here are some questions you may want to ask:
 - Who are the people the agency serves?
 - What is the history of the agency?
 - Do they offer training to volunteers?
 - Who will be your supervisor? Will a supervisor always be present?
 - Are volunteers required to give a minimum time commitment?
 - What are some of the potential challenges you will face?
 - Are there written safety/health/legal policies that you should review?
 - What opportunities will there be for your responsibilities to evolve as you develop experiences?
 3. Schedule your service time with your site (e.g., typically 2 hours per week).
 4. When you have accepted a service-learning position, complete the Win/Win Agreement with the organization/agency and turn it into the Instructor.

5. Dress Appropriately! Clothing should always be neat and professional. After you made a decision about where you will serve, consult with your site supervisor(s) about their policies on appropriate attire.
6. Arrive on time and ready to work. It is important that you are consistent in your attendance and that you arrive at your scheduled day and time. You should identify a contact person at the site and obtain his/her phone number so that you can inform the person if you are unable to keep a scheduled visit.
7. Recognize your limits and realize that you do not have all the answers. Accept assignments that you know you can handle. If you are given something that you think you cannot handle, make sure you discuss the situation with your site supervisor and your service-learning coordinator and request other duties immediately. Use your time wisely and do not interfere with the performance of others.
 - Know what you are expected to do as a service learner at your community site.
 - Realize that you may not already know how to do what is expected of you.
 - Prepare yourself by asking questions. Seek out useful information about the agency and the project on which you will be working.
 - Think critically about the purpose of your service learning assignment and actively work toward generating a product that will serve the community or agency's need.
 - Work to understand the activity's relevance to your academic work.
 - Pay attention to how you wield and experience power. Learn and serve WITH people in the community. Be aware that people in the community have different priorities.
 - Adapt to the pace at your workplace! Learn that academic settings do not work by the academic calendar.
8. Establish a positive working relationship in the community. It is important to be non-critical and non-judgmental.
 - Work over time to create a consistent, stable, experience for the person(s) with whom you are working and yourself. Let the site supervisor and the individuals you work with know when you have to be absent.
 - Be positive and firm in your interactions. Set personal limits that are comfortable for you. Keep an open mind. Use positive reinforcement whenever possible.
 - Build a positive relationship with your site supervisor.
 - If you become concerned about any aspect of your project, let the site supervisor know of your concerns and seek his/her advice. But don't bother the supervisor about trivial matters that you can handle yourself.
9. Make sure you complete the reflection exercises on time.

10. Give your Instructor feedback about your progress and concerns throughout the semester. If you have any questions or concerns, please email or come to your Instructor's office hours.
11. The supervisor of your service site will complete an evaluation of your contributions and performance during your service-learning experience. You are to return the "Supervisor's Rating of Contribution to the Community Served" to your Instructor at midterm and the end of the semester.
12. Complete your service learning reflection paper and presentation by the appropriate due dates.