

# COMMUNITY PARTNER GUIDE for SERVICE LEARNING



*The Center for Service Learning*

[SERVICE.LEARNING@CHATTAHOOCHEETECH.EDU](mailto:SERVICE.LEARNING@CHATTAHOOCHEETECH.EDU)  
[WWW.CHATTAHOOCHEETECH.EDU/SERVICE-LEARNING/](http://WWW.CHATTAHOOCHEETECH.EDU/SERVICE-LEARNING/)

*“The most important thing an institution does is not to prepare a student  
for a career but for a life as a citizen.”*

*-Frank Newman*

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# What is Service Learning?

Service Learning is an instructional methodology that integrates **community service** with **academic instruction** as it focuses on **critical, reflective thinking** and **civic responsibility**. Service Learning programs involve students in organized community service that address local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community. Service Learning is related to but does not include cooperative education, practicum, or internship programs.

## **Service Learning is:**

- Different from volunteer efforts or community service. When students do community service they help to meet community needs through volunteering. In Service Learning, students go beyond this, by using the service experience as a foundation to examine themselves, their society, and their future.
- Based on a reciprocal relationship in which the service reinforces and strengthens the learning, and the learning reinforces and strengthens the service.
- Integrated into the academic curriculum so that students have structured opportunities to reflect critically on their experience. This reflection takes place through a mix of writing, reading, speaking, listening, and group discussions.
- An opportunity for students to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, dedicated citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

**-Margaret Mead**

## **What are the Differences between Service Learning, Volunteerism and Internships?**

### ***Service Learning***

A Service Learning course ensures that students not only participate in experiential education but also reflect upon what they are doing and evaluate what they are learning. Students earn college credit for the class when they meet the course requirements for the Service Learning requirement of the course.

### ***Volunteerism***

Volunteerism is non-paid service that is generally not connected to classroom instruction and academic course credit. It is merely the giving of service without an academic or structured educational component.

### ***Internships***

Internships emphasize workplace learning and job skill development, whereas Service Learning emphasizes the student contributing to the community as they use their internship site as a vehicle for achieving course learning outcomes.

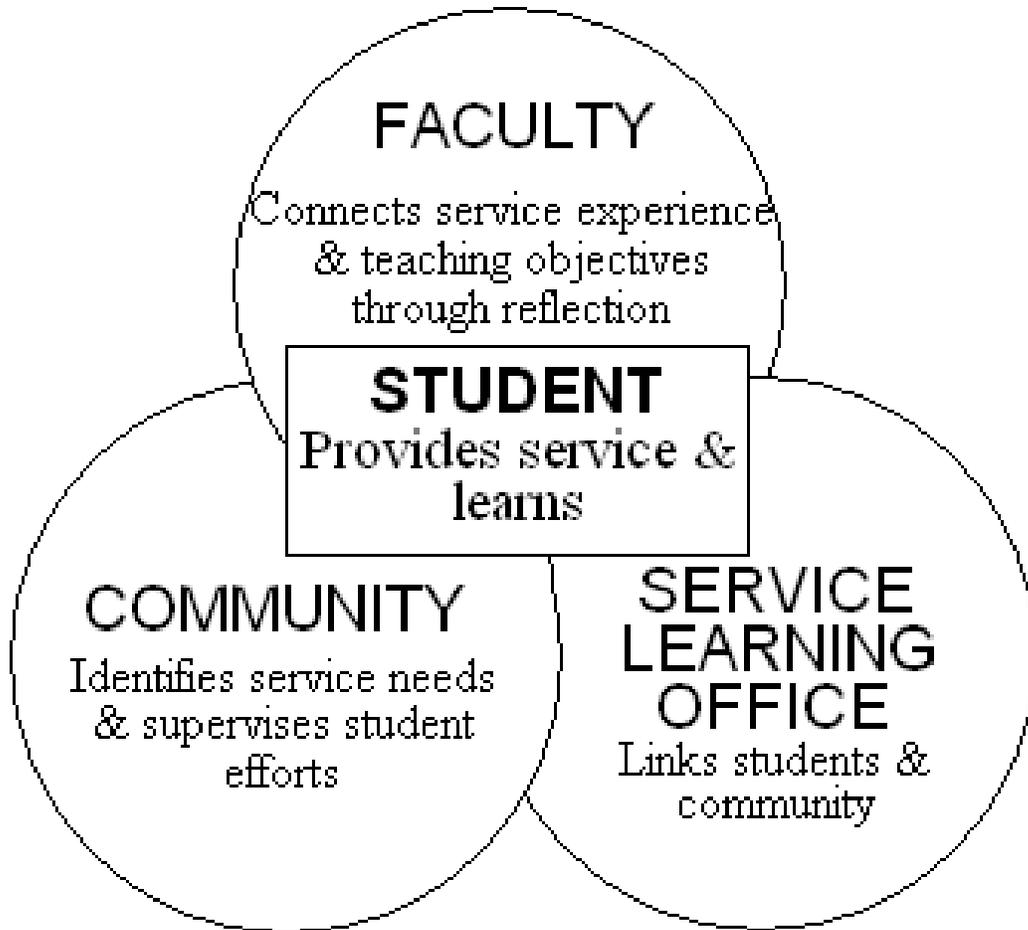
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## **Examples of Service Learning Activities**

- Math students tutor third graders in arithmetic.
- English students interview seniors and produce a memory book.
- Sociology students collect food and distribute to needy.
- Nursing students provide home health care to the elderly or disabled.
- Web design students design web sites for non-profit agencies.
- Accounting students prepare tax returns for seniors.

## Service Learning Roles

Service Learning programs are composed of the following groups:



# **Benefits of Service Learning**

There are many benefits for everyone involved in Service Learning, including students, colleges and community agencies.

## ***Students***

- Gain a better understanding of course material.
- Explore possible careers.
- Develop new skills and enhance existing skills.
- Have a variety of personal growth and development opportunities.
- Experience improved self-esteem and personal satisfaction.
- Develop enhanced critical thinking skills.
- Experience real-life application of classroom knowledge.
- Meet new people, make new friends, and develop job contacts.
- Develop an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

## ***Colleges***

- Improve student satisfaction and retention.
- Better prepare students for work and transfer to other educational institutions.
- Improve college relations.
- Develop a stronger motivational base of instruction and learning.
- Enhance learning opportunities.
- Develop a broader conception of their educational role.
- Increase public service delivery.
- Reorient the educational process to meet real human needs.

## ***Community Agencies***

- Improve college-community relations.
- Increase access to human, financial, and material resources.
- Augment service delivery.
- Increase human resources for problem solving.
- Gain more contributions to meet human needs.
- Increase their future civic support and commitment.
- Expand the roles of student supervisors.

# **Responsibilities & Expectations** **of Community Partners**

*Service Learning sites should be willing to:*

1. Arrange a site visit by a representative from the Chattahoochee Technical College Career Center office to discuss Service Learning opportunities.
2. Attend one Service Learning workshop for Community Partners each year.
3. Complete Chattahoochee Technical College's *Memorandum of Understanding* and then return the form to the Service Learning Office. This form will serve as the acceptance of your agency as a Community Partner for the CTC Service Learning Program.
4. Fill out a *Service Learning Opportunities* form that includes your agency's name and specific Service Learning opportunities for students.
5. Interview and select Service Learning students according to student abilities, interests, and past experience.
6. Authorize the placement by signing the *Service Learning Student Placement Confirmation* form. The student will be responsible for turning the form in to the Service Learning Office.
7. Provide the Service Learning student with appropriate orientation, training, supervision, support and recognition.
8. Report any concerns to the Service Learning Office.
9. Sign the students' time logs and agreement forms.
10. Complete Community Partner evaluations at the end of each quarter.

## Keys to Success as a Community Partner

- **Remember, Service Learners are STUDENTS, not volunteers.** Keep in mind that Service Learning students want to help meet community needs, but they also are using the experience as a basis for understanding their college course. Students are receiving academic credit for learning through their service efforts.
- **Plan ahead.** Complete a needs assessment with staff members to allow you to more effectively use Service Learning students to meet the needs of your agency. Are there tasks that you are your staff are now doing that could be divided up and given to a student? Is there a project that you've always wanted to do but never had any time to organize? Positions that carry some degree of responsibility and involve client contact are ideal. Do not be afraid to give the student a chance to show that he/she can handle the responsibility.
- **Be selective.** Be aware that some students may not match your needs. **YOU will make that final selection of Service Learning students placed at your agency.** If a student's qualifications and motivations are not harmonious with your needs, it is your right and obligation to reject this student.
- **Provide orientation and training.** Students require orientation to your agency, staff, and clients. Familiarize them with the mission and philosophy of your agency as well as the community issues your agency is trying to address.
- **Be realistic with your expectations for students.** Remember that students must complete their Service Learning projects with the quarter. Please adapt accordingly.
- **Say Thanks!** Like everyone, students want to be welcomed and appreciated. There are many forms of recognition. It can be as simple as a letter or some other acknowledgement of a job well done. Students also need to see how their work is important to your agency's mission.

## Guidelines for Effective Orientation

Once the placement is agreed upon, a specific assignment is determined, and the Service Learning Student Placement Confirmation form is completed, the Service Learning student should be provided with a thorough orientation. The orientation should make the student feel accepted and clarify his or her role, responsibilities, and expectations.

*A general orientation should include:*

- A tour of the facility.
- An introduction to the staff.
- A review of the rules, regulations, confidentiality policies, dress code, and timekeeping requirements. (Note: In addition to any timekeeping records your agency may have, students will generally have their own logs which will need to be signed by their supervisors.)
- A discussion of the Service Learning student's role in the agency, including specific tasks and responsibilities. Please acquaint the student with any agency procedures for notifying the agency if the student has to miss a scheduled day.
- An explanation of any jargon or language used by the staff.



# **Chattahoochee Technical College**

## **Memorandum of Understanding**

Thank you for entering into a partnership with the Chattahoochee Technical College service-learning program. Through this partnership, you are helping to provide CTC students with valuable educational opportunities while you are also gaining qualified and reliable volunteers. You are also promoting civic responsibility and a renewed commitment to community. The following agreement will outline the expectation and responsibilities of each involved party within the partnership, thereby encouraging a successful relationship between your agency and Chattahoochee Technical College.

The community agency agrees to:

- Provide the necessary orientation, training, and supervision of students
- Clearly define the skills needed for and the expectations, responsibilities, and requirements of each service-learning assignment
- Communicate with the CTC service-learning staff the availability of positions, evaluation of students, and other agency concerns
- Maintain a safe and appropriate work environment

Chattahoochee Technical College agrees to:

- Train agency supervisors with regards to student needs and capabilities
- Support the agency with educational workshops, qualified volunteers, and other available resources as necessary
- Give direct consultation for identifying appropriate tasks for students
- Provide ongoing follow-up and support to the agency

Service Learning students agree to:

- Be professional, respectful, and compliant of agency policies, standards, and regulations
- Notify the agency supervisor of the service-learning course objectives
- Dress appropriately for the service-learning position
- Submit an updated record of service on time to CTC
- Contact the agency supervisor if unable to attend due to illness or emergency
- Demonstrate preparation for service

*The agency shall not unlawfully discriminate, either in the provision of services or in employment, against any person on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin or disability. The agency shall comply with all applicable laws relating to non-discrimination.*

**Name of Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CTC Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_