

# Office of Service-Learning and Community Action

## Benefits of Service-Learning

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### Community Partner

- Specific products that students produce (for example, resource guides, or data analyses)
- Human capital and personnel cost savings
- Respect for perspectives and experiences
- Increase knowledge, creativity, and enthusiasm students contribute to a project
- Increase visibility and more effectively reach goals
- Access to people (administrators, staff, faculty) who can serve on boards of community organizations or participate meaningfully on community planning, advocacy and service coalitions, task forces, and collaborations
- New ideas/approaches to an issue by looking at issues with a different perspective
- Opportunity to educate students on social justice and community issues
- Expand resource base and grant opportunities
- Allows for personal and professional development

### Students

- Enhance learning and connect theory to practice
- Enhance critical thinking skills as service applies course concepts and theory to real world problem-solving situations
- Enhance moral/ethical development
- Increase leadership and conflict resolution skills
- Explore other majors and career opportunities
- Foster civic responsibility and encourage life-long commitment to service
- Gain an understanding of social and political issues facing society and the local community
- Observe and experience diversity (socio-economic, race, religion etc.)
- Learn new skills and tools
- Enhance employability
- Improve self-efficacy
- Make a difference in the community!

### Professors

- Reinvigorates a course
- Enhances collaboration and creates active learning
- Provides research/publishing opportunities
- Creates relationships in the community; allows for personal community connections to develop
- Allows for professional development
- Gives a chance for improved relations with students
- Strengthen a student's understanding by allowing students to reflect and learn from critical experiences which will bring different perspectives to class discussion, creating the potential for a more engaging and diverse learning environment
- Apply disciplinary expertise to public domain

## Effective Service-Learning Provides

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Orientation & Training	Meaningful Service	Reflection	Demonstration of Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explains mission, goals, philosophy, and history of the community partner</li> <li>• Addresses skills needed to perform the service itself</li> <li>• Expresses needs of those served, including social context in which they live</li> <li>• Develops problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Gives guidelines for safety and confidentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses genuine community issues as defined by community</li> <li>• Community partner, professors, and students all help organize service</li> <li>• Community partners and professors state clear purpose and goals</li> <li>• Service engages and challenges students</li> <li>• Service values diversity</li> <li>• Partners evaluate the program and work continually to improve it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes place before, during and after service</li> <li>• Requires students to apply classroom learning</li> <li>• Synthesizes service with curriculum</li> <li>• Includes description, analysis of the situation and possible future actions</li> <li>• Explores situations which arise during service</li> <li>• Examines root causes and possible solutions for challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students receive concrete feedback from site supervisors, teachers and possibly from people served</li> <li>• Students are required to report on connections between service and curriculum and other lessons learned</li> <li>• Student outcomes and/or products are shared with community in useful and timely way</li> <li>• Students and community partner receive acknowledgment appropriate to the level of their contribution</li> </ul>

Adapted from: Cairn, Rich. Partner Power and Service-Learning. *Manual for Community-Based Organizations to Work with Schools*. ServeMinnesota!, 2003.