

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning engages students in organized service activities related to course content through **guided reflection**; the service activities benefit the client or community and, in combination with reflection, enhance the academic curriculum of participating students.

In accordance with its **mission**, service-learning at USF promotes interaction with diverse communities and organizations, in order to help students and faculty develop the knowledge, skills, and sensitivities to be effective agents of **social change**. Service-learning is distinct from acts of charity because it is **reciprocal**; students, faculty, and community organizations teach and learn through their interactions. Teaching and learning are informed by the realities of the world, and service is informed by theoretical and conceptual understanding.

SERVICE-LEARNING OBJECTIVES...

...For Students:

- Apply classroom knowledge and skills in "real world" situations
- Learn about social issues through firsthand experience
- Become more socially responsible
- Become part of the larger community

...For the Community:

- Provide needed services *as determined by the community*
- Students go on to become advocates and influence policy

USF SERVICE-LEARNING GUIDELINES

1. Mandatory Participation

- The service-learning experience is mandatory; all students enrolled in the section must complete a service-learning activity
- The number of required hours for a service-learning activity is decided by the faculty and community partner, taking into consideration the student learning objectives and the partner organization's desired outcomes.

2. Academic Connections

- The service-learning connection to the academic discipline and/or content of the course is explicit: connections are clearly delineated in the course syllabus.
- Integration of service-learning activity is outcome driven.
- The service-learning assignment is explained in detail in the course syllabus, including its relationship to the USF Mission.

3. Value-Added Service

- The service activity involves reciprocity between the community and the university. In other words, faculty and/or students collaborate with the client or community to clearly identify the mutual benefit of learning for the student and the "value-added" service to client or community.
- An opportunity exists for the student to have meaningful exchanges with the client or community to explore the nature of an issue and/or challenge and its impact on the client or community.

4. Reflection

A systematic (e.g., ongoing and regular) process for reflection on service-learning experiences provides students with an opportunity to:

- Link theory and experience
- Evaluate the effects of service on the client or community
- Experience personal growth through participation in service-learning

5. Assessment

A systematic process for assessment of service-learning experience provides information on the following:

- The degree to which student learning outcomes were met
- The degree to which the students' service met the partner organization's expectations