

Why Service-Learning and What is My Role?

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Your role in service-learning is to provide the best possible service so that everyone benefits. Research shows that service-learning benefits the recipient of the service, and is one of the best things students can do to maximize their academic, personal and professional (career) skills. If you want to learn more about the research proven benefits of service-learning, you can visit <http://www.fresnostate.edu/facultysl/two/resources.shtml> to read a brief review of some of the relevant research.

Of course you will be representing both yourself and the university. To make the best impression, begin by planning ahead:

- 1) Make sure you have accurate directions to the site.
- 2) Arrive prepared in appropriate attire for your activity.
- 3) Spend the time necessary to understand the course goals, objectives, and requirements. At the same time, be sure you know the agency's policies, procedures and expectations.

It is a good idea to read up on the organization where you will do your service-learning hours prior to your first day of service. Our partners are very appreciative when students are prepared by understanding a little about the organization and the community it serves. Typically, the agency website can be a great source for learning more about the place and the people who you will be serving.

Do your best to observe the activities around you and learn what is expected. When appropriate be sure to ask questions to clarify expectations, procedures and/or activities. Communicate with your site coordinator and/or instructor whenever you have questions or concerns.

Respect the environment and the community benefit organization's staff members. While it is not always clear why things are done in a certain manner, you need to respect the rules and procedures as outlined to you. If you have ideas for improving processes or activities ask your instructor the best way to present such ideas. Remember, there are people who are impacted by your service and they are relying on **you!**

The following guidelines are provided as reminders for students.

Guidelines and Reminders

1. Your partner agency should provide you with orientation and training that covers your duties and agency policy and procedure.
2. When in doubt, always ask for guidance from your site supervisor or instructor.
3. When appropriate, offer ideas or suggestions for improving your service, but understand that agencies have a reason for the things they do and the way they do them. Keep in mind, they've been doing this work for a long time and may actually know a thing or two about what they are doing. So, don't be offended if they don't implement your suggestions.
4. Be sure to log your service hours and activities in accordance with agency procedures and/or your instructor's requirements. You should sign-in and sign-out each time you serve!
5. Do not report to your service site under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
6. Keep an appropriate relationship with those you serve.
7. Do not exchange money or personal belongings and limit the type of personnel information like your address, phone number or birthdate that you might share.
8. Do not get into a car with or provide a ride to any client.
9. Avoid any type of discriminatory, derogatory or sexual remarks or behavior.
10. Respect confidences entrusted to you and follow all confidentiality policies of the agency.
11. Always be on time. If you are going to be late, or are unable to serve on the day scheduled, call ahead of time to notify the appropriate people at the CBO.

Make sure your service-learning experience is a success! Download Student's Guide To Successful Service-Learning at http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/cesl/documents/students_guide_to_successful_service-learning_updated.pdf.

Remember, the Learning Plan is an extremely important document. The Plan covers the most important student and agency responsibilities. It should be reviewed, signed by the student, signed by the site supervisor and submitted to your instructor before you begin your hours. For more information on the Learning Plan, please review Module 3: How to Get Started at <http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/cesl/students/service-learning/get-started.html>.