

## What is Service-Learning?

Service-learning is a learning application that fosters civic responsibility through meaningful service to the community. Service-learning enables students to connect what is being learned in the classroom with practical experience with the community. Not only does this give students a different insight into their lives but challenges their perspective of the world around them and how they fit into it, which provides relevant learning experiences and shape students to succeed in the 21st century.

## The Process

Research shows that service-learning experiences result in positive academic, civic, and social-emotional outcomes. In high quality service-learning practice, the standards and indicators are met throughout the implementation process, which includes five components:

1. Identify
2. Planning
3. Action
4. Reflection
5. Present/Reason

## Benefits of Service-Learning

Service-learning can improve academic and social outcomes for students by providing them with opportunities to apply academic knowledge to real-world issues. Research has also demonstrated that service-learning can have a positive impact on:

- Academic and civic engagement
- School and classroom climate
- Hands-on learning that connects skills and knowledge
- Accommodation of different learning styles
- Interaction with people of diverse cultures and lifestyles
- Increased sense of self-efficacy, analytical skills, and social development
- Prepares students to be competitive in the job market

## Service Learning: Federal Definition

What is Service-Learning?

Service-learning combines service to the community with student learning in a way that improves both the student and the community. According to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993: (23) SERVICE-LEARNING– The term 'service-learning' means a method–

A) under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that–

- (i) is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;
- (ii) is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community; and
- (iii) helps foster civic responsibility; and

(B) that–

- (i) is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; and
- (ii) provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience.

## Service Learning: Project Ideas

### Health and wellness focus

- Establish a project that aims to provide elderly members of the community with companionship
- Learn and create a program around good nutrition and its importance to the community

### Community service focus

- Survey your school or neighborhood to find out what people think the issues are that need to be addressed. Publish and present the results
- Hold a clothing drive and deliver items to homeless shelters or communities in need

### Environmental focus

- Fundraise for money to plant trees or gardens in the community that will feed people. Create community gardens to help feed those in need
- Research the need to reduce litter inside and outside your school or other public areas and propose a solution and action campaign

**Safety focus**

- Create a public service announcement (PSA) on a safety issue
- Create a play that teaches young children how to stay safe at home while their parents are away and perform this in schools in your community

**Art focus**

- Have students host a holiday art class, create art with community partners
- Use recycling to produce products to generate an income for a partner

**Inclusion focus**

- Make maps of your community for newcomers and highlight useful resources
- Make posters or collages that promote tolerance and understanding of difference. Post them in your school
- Set up a buddy system at your school for kids with special needs

**Internal school focus**

- Design and paint a mural for the outside of your school to inspire learning
- Create a student-run conference on a concept such as poverty, diversity, equity, sustainability to build understanding of global and local issues. Have booths, breakout sessions and speakers

**Literacy focus**

- Develop booklets on cultures within your school or community. Give them to the library, partners and the Chamber of Commerce
- Help teach literacy to younger students in homework help classes

**Creative focus**

- Write a children's reading book, then read and give away books to children in hospitals and community partners
- Design and decorate duvets, pillows and blankets, knit hats, gloves for homeless children in the winter

**Sports focus**

- Create a tournament for partners, students, community to participate for a cause
- Organize a fun run/walk for awareness

**Technology focus**

- Create a website for a community partner with a PSA blog for advocacy of a cause
- Utilize social media for various causes and bring awareness to an issue such as pollution, human rights or the extinction of animals