

Service Learning Procedure - Student

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

TIMELINE

Step #1 – Introduction

Instructor introduces the Service Learning option during the **first week** of the semester.

Week 1

Step #2 – Forms

If you will be participating in the Service Learning experience, the instructor will provide you with a packet that contains all the necessary forms and requirements:

- 1) Form B (1): Service Learning Procedure - Student
- 2) Form B (2): Why Service Learning? And, Benefits of Service Learning
- 3) Form C (1): Service Learning Research
- 4) Form C (2): Service Learning Reflection
- 5) Form D (1): Student Service Learning Contract
- 6) Form D (2): Service Learning Time Sheet
- 7) Form E: Service Learning Evaluation by Agency Supervisor
- 8) Form F: Service Learning Assessment Rubric
- 9) Form G: Service Learning Survey – Student

Follow directions carefully and provide all information requested.

Week 3

Step #3 – Site Selection

The VMC Service Learning website page (www.villa.edu/academics/service-learning/) will list approved agencies for service. Select from this list, then contact the person listed to make an appointment to finalize your contract. Turn in the contract (Form D) to your instructor which will indicate your intention to participate in the service learning experience. This must be done by the **third week** of the semester so you will have enough time to complete the service. Your course instructor or agency supervisor can require more than the college **minimum of 10-15 hours of actual service, which does not include the time required for possible orientation, travel time, research, or reflection.** Form D will be returned to you to complete and resubmit at the end of the service experience.

Week 3

Step #4 – Research

Begin the Preparation/Research phase of your service learning experience by carefully and accurately completing the Service Learning Research form.

Week 4

at the latest

Step #5 – Service Learning Experience

Engage in your service exhibiting a positive and mature attitude. Remember that you are representing yourself and the college. This experience, while fulfilling a graduation requirement and furthering the college mission, can also be of value to you as a resume builder and provide references to future employers. Your employer will be impressed that you completed service at a not-for-profit organization. Earning a reference letter from an agency supervisor will also set you apart from many other potential applicants. It is essential that you show up on-time for all of your scheduled dates at your agency. Be sure to fill in the time sheet each time you are at the agency.

Week 13

Step #6 – Completion

When you have completed your service commitment, you are then to respond to the Service Learning Reflection. This is the crucial step where you take your service experience and apply it to the content of the course you are doing the service through. You will have the opportunity to take theories, concepts or abstract ideas from the course and apply them to the real world. This step helps you, among other things, to develop your critical thinking and writing skills, both critical skills that all employers require of their most successful employees. Be sure to thoroughly address all the questions on this form.

Week 14

Step #7 – Submit Documentation

When you have completed Step #6 you are ready to turn in your work to your instructor. Be sure all applicable forms are signed (see the list of required documentation on Form D). Your instructor will determine, based on his/her evaluation of your work, if you will receive the service learning credit for that course.

Optional Step #8 – Alternate Reflection

Your instructor may require that you present your findings and discuss your service learning experience with your class. You may also be invited to share your experiences at college-wide events or conferences.

Why Service Learning?

Service Learning benefits everyone involved and is a **requirement for graduation**.

Students will complete at least 2 experiences through courses that incorporate a component of service.

Service Learning Mission Statement

The mission of the service learning component at Villa Maria College is to incorporate direct community service within the academic experience at the college, thus enhancing the rigorous and enriching educational experience. Through service, the student is given the opportunity to live out the Catholic/Franciscan ideals of the college and put into practice the core values of respect for human dignity, compassion, transformation, solidarity with the poor and justice and peace.

Service Learning Vision Statement

Villa Maria College students will be transformed by meaningful service learning experiences to become men and women who promote a more just society and empower others to do the same. Students will be able to reflect upon and express how the reciprocal relationships between academics and service learning experiences have helped them not only better understand course content but also become more aware of the needs of others.

Benefits of Service Learning

Research clearly demonstrates that Service Learning has many benefits to students on many different levels. Consider some of the following as talking points in your research and reflection.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

- Enhances students' understanding of academic curriculum by providing opportunities to take abstract, theoretical or general concepts and apply them to actual, real-life situations.
- Increases students' motivation toward school and aids in retention.
- Increases students' ability to analyze and synthesize complex information thus improving critical thinking, communication and other general skills.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Broadens students' career awareness and options.
- Enhances students' understanding of workforce ethics.
- Enhances students' preparation for the workforce.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Broadens students' leadership qualities and skills.
- Enhances students' self-esteem.
- Enhances students' self-knowledge.
- Enhances students' resiliency.
- Empowers and transforms students.

SOCIAL AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Builds camaraderie among students.
- Improves students' abilities to work in teams and/or work with others.
- Dispels students' preconceived stereotypes.
- Improves students' pro-social behaviors and development of a professional public persona.

DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

- Broadens students' understanding of government and its procedures.
- Enhances students' participation in the community.
- Enhances students' citizenship and sense of social responsibility.
- Enhances students' awareness and understanding of social issues.

ETHICAL/MORAL/MISSION AWARENESS AND DEVELOPMENT

- Exposes students to new points of views and perspectives.
- Changes students' ethical judgments and provides new frameworks for ethical decision-making.
- Enhances students' abilities to make independent decisions regarding moral issues.
- Concretely promotes the college mission, putting principles into action.