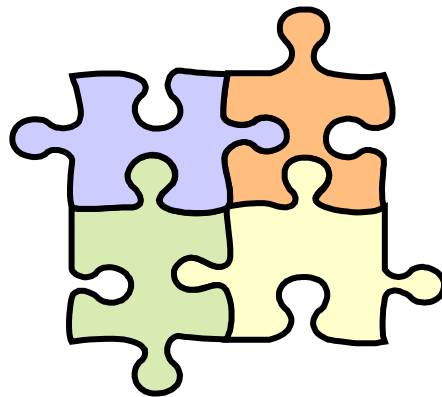


Miami University's

Office of  
Community Engagement  
& Service

Planning Service Learning  
Projects For Your  
Organization



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## **Welcome to the Office!**

Our office's mission is to be a catalyst for mutually beneficial campus and community partnerships.

The Office of Community Engagement & Service collaborates with local communities to develop and support sustainable opportunities for enhanced student learning through community engagement. We seek to foster a campus culture that guides students effectively through community-based experiences and encourages all who serve in our local communities to think critically, understand diverse contexts, reflect and then take purposeful action.

## **People to Know**

*Monica Ways*: Director of Community Engagement & Service

*Carol Bowles*: Program Associate

*Laura Smith*: Community Partnerships Coordinator

*Hailee Gibbons*: Youth Outreach Leader, Ohio Campus Compact  
AmeriCorps\*VISTA

*Megan Kuykendoll*: Latino Community Coordinator

## **Commonly Used Terms**

### **Community Engagement**

Community Engagement is a reciprocal, continuous learning process that builds sustainable partnerships among campuses and communities to facilitate change.

Community Engagement encompasses service learning, volunteerism, social advocacy and engaged scholarship.

### **Engaged Campus**

A college or university which emphasizes community engagement through its activities and its definition of scholarship. An engaged campus is involved in community relationships, community development, community empowerment, community discourse, and educational change.

## **Service Learning**

Service learning fuses scholarship and experience through reflection, to deepen course content and enhance civic responsibility.

## **Volunteerism**

The performance of formal service to benefit others or one's community without receiving any external rewards; such programs may or may not involve structured training and reflection.

## **Six Elements of Community Service**

### **Community Voice**

The voice and needs of the community are an integral part of developing effective service efforts. Service is not benevolent. It is inclusive.

### **Education**

Understanding local history and culture helps frame the service activity more broadly within the context of the community and events that have shaped it.

### **Orientation and Training**

Volunteers should be familiar with the mission and goals of the organization they are assisting. Training provides skills needed to produce effective service.

### **Meaningful Action**

The service activity should be necessary and valuable to the community.

### **Reflection**

Take time to discuss reactions, share stories, and explore feelings. Reflection provides an opportunity for people to learn from the experience and one another.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation gives direction for improvement, growth and change. Community service activities must be designed with the intent of creating long-term solutions, while ensuring independence, mutual education, dignity, and respect for all.

## **Tips for Planning & Leading Your Service Project**

### *1. Assess interest*

Because service projects involve a community agency's time and resources, it's especially important to plan a project that students are likely to attend. Staff should talk to residents before they begin the planning process. With what populations are they interested in working? When do they have free time? Do they require transportation? What are their goals? Do they want to do direct service, host a fundraiser, raise awareness, etc.?

### *2. What are your needs?*

Based on student response, staff should develop a general list of what they're looking for. Example: One-time service project for 10-15 people, preferably on a Saturday, working outdoors.

### *3. What's out there?*

Begin by calling the Office of Community Engagement & Service at 529-2961. We are committed to helping students plan meaningful, worthwhile service projects, so even if we aren't sponsoring an event that meets your needs we can provide the names and contact information for other agencies in the local area that we feel would be a good fit.

We also recommend signing up for our weekly service listserv, which contains updated information on service projects happening throughout Oxford, Hamilton, Middletown, and Cincinnati – go to [www.muohio.edu/servicelearning](http://www.muohio.edu/servicelearning), click on “service opportunities”, and follow the steps to sign up for “MU Volunteers Listserv.”

### *4. Be Flexible*

You might not be able to find a project that meets your criteria exactly. Service projects are a compromise between volunteer needs and the community's needs. If you know a particular project isn't right for your group, don't be shy about turning it down. On the other hand, try to be open to new experiences and community settings.

Also, if organizing a time when students can all get together proves to be too difficult, consider planning a week-long food drive or fundraising campaign for a particular agency. Direct service is just one way in which your residents can become involved in the community.

### *5. Honor your commitment*

There's often a discrepancy between how many students say they will show up and how many actually do. However, please make a direct, honest effort to hold students accountable and honor your group's commitment. Some people have said that food (i.e. juice and donuts for a Saturday morning event) is an effective incentive. Others have said that email reminders are not enough; the day before the event they make it a point to personally remind everyone who signed-up.

### *6. Make time for reflection*

Engaging students in reflection doesn't have to be complicated – it can be as simple as discussing the project during the car ride back to campus. Community service can be an intense experience. Students may see, hear, or be exposed to things that are inspiring, upsetting, or challenging to their ideas and values. Guided reflection gives participants a chance to verbally process the experience in a comfortable, non-judgmental atmosphere.

## **Enhancing the Service Experience**

These guidelines will help you have a safer and more effective volunteer experience:

### Be aware of your environment.

Remember you are a helper, a learner, and a visitor. The organization with which you work has specific ways of interacting and getting things done. Be aware of the culture of the agency or school and act appropriately. Don't assume you know how to do things or know more than the people who are there every day. Respect is the key.

### Find out about the agency's history.

The more you know about what the organization does and the clientele it serves the more effective your efforts will be.

### Establish a contact person.

Know who will be working on the project with you and a phone number to reach them. This person should also be available to answer any questions you may have.

### Follow a work ethic.

Remember your agreement to serve is a commitment to the agency/organization. You will establish relationships with the clientele and they will look forward to seeing you. Agency/organization staff will value the service you provide and count on your help. If the service site is expecting you at a certain time, be prompt and ready to work. If you are going to be late or are unable to attend, be sure to contact the service site as soon as possible. Consider carefully the reason you might have for missing your meeting.

### Follow the organization's policies and procedures.

Be familiar with the specifics of your job. Gain a clear understanding of any rules you need to follow. Also ask about any liability of which you need to be aware.

### Understand the need for confidentiality.

Becoming personally involved with the agency clientele is a rewarding experience, but remember you may be dealing with sensitive information that is not to leave the agency or school. If there is any question as to whether you should share information...DO NOT! Speak with the contact person about their confidentiality policy. Additionally, do not feel pressured to share personal information with them.

### Dress appropriately and sensibly.

Blending in with the community doesn't mean dressing poorly, it implies dressing smart; that is, dressing to be neat, clean, and safe. Wear clothing that affords you comfort, flexibility, and agility while presenting a professional demeanor.

### Use common sense

- Give the phone number of your agency/organization and a schedule of your hours to a roommate, friend, or relative. (The phone number should only be used for emergencies, not for personal calls at your service site.)
- Be aware of your instincts. Trust your gut feeling!
- Work in pairs, if possible.
- Stay informed of issues affecting the area in which you serve.
- Do not give your home address or telephone number.
- Take extra precautions when going to sites at night.

- Never use alcohol or drugs on site or be influenced by such substances while on site grounds. Please respect the smoking policy of the agency/organization.
- Don't expect to know all of the answers. It is okay to admit that you don't know something. If faced with a question you are not familiar with, try to get the answers or direct someone to the proper person who can provide the answer.
- Don't hesitate to report an incident that makes you uncomfortable.
- Be aware of sexual harassment policies and what forms sexual harassment can take. It refers to personally offensive behavior that debilitates morale. Unsolicited and unwelcome sexual advances, either verbal or physical, are considered sexual harassment. Be clear about what is and what is not considered appropriate behavior.
- Report any discriminatory practices on the part of the site.

\*These tips are a modified version of those published by George Mason University Center for Service and Leadership, Fairfax, Virginia

### **Volunteer Code of Ethics**

1. Volunteer in a spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to meet and talk with the local people.
2. Be aware of the feelings of other people, thus preventing what might be offensive behavior. Remember this especially with photography.
3. Cultivate the habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing.
4. Realize that people in the community you visit often have time concepts and thought patterns different from your own. Not inferior, just different.
5. Discover the enrichment that comes from seeing another way of life.
6. Acquaint yourself with local customs. Respect local customs; people will be happy to help you.
7. Cultivate the habit of asking questions instead of knowing all the answers.
8. Remember that you may be one of many volunteers. Do not expect special privileges.
9. Make no promises to local people unless you are certain you can fulfill them.

10. Reflect daily on your experiences; seek to deepen your understanding. What enriches you may rob or violate others.

\*Adapted from material published by Witness for Peace

## **Filling Out the Paperwork**

### Service Project Planning Worksheet and MOU

Keep yourself organized by filling out this worksheet and MOU, found in Section III: Appendix, page 14. This will help you plan as well as remind you what needs done before the date of your project. Be sure to keep an up-to-date list of your volunteers and their contact information, especially email addresses and phone numbers. Please send us a copy of the worksheet and MOU after your project. We are always very interested in your work, so please let us know how it went!

### Transportation

How are you getting to the site? Our office or Miami University's Motor Pool can help with transportation. Please check our website for details and instructions on how to reserve a car or be reimbursed for using Motor Pool. It is always important to plan transportation early! If in doubt, give us a call. Remember, we can only reimburse you if we know about your project ahead of time.

### The Agency

Sometimes agencies like to keep their own records of who is volunteering. It is important for you to ask the agency ahead of time if your volunteers will need to fill anything out before they begin working. Is it possible you can get the forms early and have everything filled out before you get there?

## **Reflection, reflection, reflection!**

Guiding a successful reflection with your residents is one of the most important things you will do! It is important they talk about their experiences in a way that makes them feel comfortable, but also encourages them to think critically. Fostering active engagement and holding discussions will allow your residents to process their experiences and get the most out of their service projects. Try using one of the models found in Section III: Appendix, page 13.

## **What's Next?**

This booklet is just the beginning of how to get your residents involved in service learning. The Office of Community Engagement & Service is here to help make sure you and your residents have fun, safe, and meaningful service learning experiences. Please contact us if you have any questions or need help getting started on a project.

Visit our office, give us a call, or send us an email for more information on different service projects and local agencies. We will work with you to help make your service a success!

Carol Bowles

[Bowlesce@muohio.edu](mailto:Bowlesce@muohio.edu)

513-529-2961

Contact regarding transportation and the Volunteer Fair.

Laura Smith

[SmithLK1@muohio.edu](mailto:SmithLK1@muohio.edu)

513-529-2961

Contact regarding all service trips, office-sponsored initiatives (Empower, Service Guides, etc.) and community agencies.

Hailee Gibbons

[Gibbonhm@muohio.edu](mailto:Gibbonhm@muohio.edu)

513-529-1425

Contact regarding Pledge-A-Meal, America Reads, and Adopt-a-School.

Megan Kuykendoll

[TaylorMK@muohio.edu](mailto:TaylorMK@muohio.edu)

513-529-8373

Contact regarding community agencies working with the Latino community.

Monica Ways

[MaysMP@muohio.edu](mailto:MaysMP@muohio.edu)

513-529-2961

Contact with any questions about the philosophy of the office, office sponsored programs, and agency partnerships.

## **Section II: Advising Students**

### **Advising Students on Available Service Opportunities**

Even if you are not planning a service learning project, you can still help others become engaged in the local community. Students become involved in service projects for a variety of reasons – to gain professional experience, to fulfill a class requirement, to explore social issues, or to experience communities beyond Miami University. While students may have the motivation to become engaged in the community, they sometimes lack direction in the where and how of getting involved.

There are numerous opportunities for both first-year and upper-class students to become involved in service projects on their own or in groups. In addition to projects being run through our office, we can also help place students in our partnering agencies and MU offices. Please feel free to contact us if you or your residents have any questions.

## **Section III: Appendix**

### **Service Opportunities**

#### *Examples of Successful Past Projects*

- Volunteering every week with the **Animal Adoption Foundation** in Hamilton
- Organizing a group of 10 students to volunteer with the **Over-the – Rhine Community Housing Network** one Saturday each month
- Planning a benefit auction for the **Family Resource Center** in Oxford
- Assisting clients at **ServeCity**, a choice food pantry in Hamilton
- Organizing a Saturday clean-up at **Living Water Ministry** in Hamilton
- Assisting with the annual **Great American Clean-Up Day** in Cincinnati
- Serving food and playing bingo with residents at **Drop-Inn**, a homeless shelter in Cincinnati

#### *Agencies to Contact*

##### One-time Opportunities:

- New Life Mission: Hamilton
  - Can accommodate groups of 5-7
  - Help prepare and serve a meal, work in the food pantry, or various other tasks
- Over-the-Rhine Community Housing Network
  - Groups of 10
  - Help renovate, clean, or rebuild neighborhood housing

- **ServeCity: Hamilton**
  - Can accommodate groups of various sizes
  - Work in the choice food pantry assisting shoppers and stocking shelves; prepare and serve meals for clients staying at the CHOSEN shelter
- **ReStore: Hamilton**
  - Can accommodate groups of various sizes
  - ReStore is a facility that sells new and used building materials, with the proceeds going to Habitat for Humanity; need help organizing, unloading, and moving shipments of materials
- **Oxford Community Choice Pantry**
  - Can accommodate groups of 5-6
  - Help with various tasks, such as stocking the shelves of the pantry, assisting shoppers, etc.
- **Animal Adoption Foundation**
  - Can accommodate groups of various sizes
  - Socialize with the animals, walk the dogs, and clean kennels

**Ongoing Opportunities: requires commitment for the entire semester**

- **Adopt-A-School:**
  - Tutoring children at area schools
- **Family Resource Center:**
  - Help with various tasks, such as sorting clothes and food, stocking the shelves of the pantry, etc.

Please contact us if you would like further information about any of the agencies listed above. We will be happy to help you contact an agency and plan a service project.

Our office staff also guides structured opportunities for hands-on community-based learning. Please contact Laura Smith directly if you are interested in learning more about Empower, Service Guides or Pledge-a-Meal.



# Service Project Planning Worksheet

The Office of Community Engagement & Service

Name of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates        Begin: \_\_\_\_\_ End: \_\_\_\_\_

Times        Begin: \_\_\_\_\_ End: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

Site Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Planned Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Will you be providing food? What is the estimated cost? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Do you need transportation? For how many people? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the planned reflection activities? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

How will you promote this opportunity? \_\_\_\_\_

---

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## Volunteer Tracking

	Name	Contact Info	Confirmed?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

## Transportation

	Sedan (5)	Minivan (7)	8-Pass Van	12-Pass	Personal
# Needed					

**Please return a copy of this worksheet to the Office of  
Community Engagement & Service!  
Thanks!**



**Background Check**

The Organization will cover the cost of background checks for volunteers when required, unless other arrangements have been made.

**Nature of Service Activity**

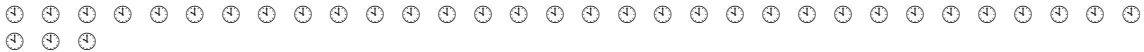
The Organization is responsible for ensuring that all service activities are monitored and that all service activity is in compliance with all state and federal laws.

**Harassment and Discrimination**

Miami University Policy and Information Manual (MUPIM) 3.6B states that Miami University prohibits harassment and discrimination by or against all persons on University property, including University employees and students as well as visitors, contractors, and other third parties. This policy also covers students and employees pursuing University-related work or study away from campus.

**Service Plan Details**

- Proposed date of plan review:
- Proposed date of plan finalization:
- Proposed start date:
- Proposed end date:



**I have read this form and agree to the items listed above.**

Miami University Point-of-Contact signature Organization Point-of-Contact signature

Phone Phone

Date Date

*Disclaimer: All Miami volunteers provide literal translation services only. Under no circumstances do Miami volunteers interpret content, either written or oral.*

*Please attach Service Plan documentation to signed copy of Memorandum of Understanding.*

**Miami University  
Office of Community Engagement & Service  
Memorandum of Understanding  
Service Plan Guide**

Organization Point of Contact Name:
Miami University Point of Contact Name:
Anticipated Project Start Date:
Anticipated Project End Date:
Number of Miami University students to be engaged:

**Project Details**

Please describe the project details including overall goals, needs, and day(s) and time(s) of the week that service will take place.

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---

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**Please list Volunteer/Student Responsibilities/Tasks**

- 
- 
- 
- 

**Please list Resources/Tools agency will provide to insure service is productive**

- 
- 
- 
- 

**Desired Outcomes**

Please list the desired outcome(s) you hope to achieve through this collaboration. Include the learning objectives for students and the organizational benefit that will result.

- 
- 
- 

Please use additional pages as needed

**Disclaimer: All Miami volunteers provide literal translation services only. Under no circumstances do Miami volunteers interpret content, either written or oral.**

*We appreciate your willingness to collaborate with Miami University to develop projects that allow students to engage in meaningful service.*