

## **Faculty Guidelines for Reciprocal Community Partner Relationships**

The Center for Service and Learning provides support to faculty choosing to teach through service. We recognize that higher impact service-learning generally occurs when instructors develop relationships with community organizations and collaboratively design projects that meet mutual needs. However, depending upon the course model, the number of students and/or course sections, or the instructor's experience with community based pedagogies, it may sometimes be more practical for the CSL to recruit service-learning projects from partner organizations designed to meet specific learning outcomes outlined by the instructor.

The CSL has an expansive community partner program and strives to build and foster reciprocal relationships with community organizations addressing a wide range of issues. In order to ensure the best outcomes for all parties, we have adopted the following principles and guidelines for courses who utilize service-learning projects obtained from community partner organizations by the CSL.

***The benefits of working together collaboratively need to outweigh the resources, costs and time put into the collaboration.***

***Students and faculty need to recognize the investment that the Community Organizations are making in the partnership in terms of staff time, money and/or other resources.***

We ask that you agree to the following guidelines:

1. Provide clear learning objectives to the CSL which will be shared with community organizations.
2. Establish a realistic benchmark of service to be completed (this number will vary by course but should be clearly communicated). Hold students accountable for meeting this benchmark. *Service-learning should always be evaluated on the learning and not the service, however, setting a realistic benchmark helps students and partners to set practical goals about what can be accomplished.*
3. Hold students accountable for conducting an initial meeting with their assigned community organizations to discuss mutual expectations. This ensures that everyone has realistic expectations from the start.
  - a. The CSL can provide [service-learning contracts](#) which can be completed electronically and guide both parties through a thorough goal setting conversation that addresses learning outcomes and community partner needs (*if*

*this tool is chosen, copies will be automatically sent to the student, partner and instructor).*

- b. Best outcomes occur when partners are invited to a regular class session to complete the contract with the students, get an overview of your course and have the opportunity to meet students on campus. This is not always possible but is a good consideration.
4. If you have concerns about a project (related to learning outcomes, communications practices, etc.) share these concerns with the CSL as early as possible. The CSL will help you and your students navigate this in conjunction *with* the community partner. It is equally important to meet your students' learning outcomes as it is to meet the community organization's needs. **Projects should not be cancelled without first trying to mitigate concerns. If a project does need to be cancelled, it is essential that the community partner and the CSL are aware of this.**
5. Be open to problem solving with the community partner organizations as needed and treat community partner staff with the same respect you would your university colleagues.
6. Take community partner feedback into account when assessing student work.
  - a. The CSL has [evaluations](#) that you may use if they meet your needs.