



Questions for Considering Service-Learning

Use these questions to explore the potential role for service-learning for your agency.

Brainstorming & assessing the needs of your agency

Service-learning happens in different forms and at different scales across community partners. A top priority in service-learning is developing a partnership that contributes to an existing need at an agency, enabling the agency to meet their objectives while also giving students an opportunity to learn more about their community and the social issue or need your agency addresses. For this reason, all service-learning partnerships begin by examining how students could plug into your work, rather than how you could bend your work to fit students' needs. Here are questions to help you get started.

1. What are some needs of the agency that could be met by student **projects or research**?
 - a. The project could be taken on by a team of students (typically 4-5) or an entire class. What scope seems most appropriate for the project? Most manageable for your staff?
 - b. How many meetings would be preferable to check in with the team of students over the course of the semester?
 - c. Who would supervise these service-learners and be primary contact for the project?
2. What are some **direct service** activities in which IU students could participate that would meet a genuine need of your agency?
 - a. Are there pre-existing, standing opportunities they could plug into?
 - b. Is there a need to grow existing volunteer opportunities to create lasting, ongoing engagement with your agency?
 - c. Who would supervise these service-learners on site?
 - d. How many service-learning students could your agency accommodate in these activities each semester?
 - e. How many hours would you like for a service-learner to serve at your agency each week? Does your agency have a minimum hour requirement for service-learners or volunteers? What are the hours of operation in which direct service-learners would be working at your agency?
3. Would service-learners need to complete a background check?
 - a. Is there a cost? If so, who covers this cost?
4. What kind of orientation would you provide for these service-learners?
 - a. Who would provide this orientation? Where would it take place?
 - b. Is there a regularly scheduled time? If so, during what hours?
5. If the course instructor requests that an agency representative visit the class to introduce the agency and the project or to visit at the end of the semester to view final projects, who at your agency would likely be the contact?

Logistics planning & developing a strong statement of expectations

Service-learning partnerships function best when the faculty and community partner function as a team. A key step to this is developing a *Statement of Expectations*. The questions below will help think through logistics in preparation for working with faculty to create this statement, helping you reflect on how you intend to create a true partnership with the service-learning faculty member and how this partnership can be established, nurtured, and maintained.

1. What would you like the service-learning faculty member to know about your agency before sending students there? How would you impart this information to the faculty member?
2. How will you help the students to learn about your agency and the needs of the population your agency serves?
3. What is your capacity or interest level in serving as a co-educator?
 - a. This is an opportunity to share your expertise over the course of the semester, guiding how students learn about the social issue, need, or population you serve. Do you want to share particular readings with the students? Host reflection at your agency or join in in-class reflection? Offer guidance to faculty on course assignments that relate to service? Host educational workshops or sessions with service-learners?
 - b. This is not a requirement, but rather an opening. Your level of participation in co-education is entirely up to you based on agency's needs, interest, and capacity to dedicate additional staff or resources.
4. What expectations can faculty set with their students before they arrive on site to ensure they are prepared for service, dress appropriately, and maintain professionalism?
5. How would you plan to communicate with the faculty member about the students' performance? Will it be initial, periodic or on-going?
6. How do you help students be responsible and professional at your agency? How can faculty support this professionalism and students' engagement with your agency?
 - a. What will you do if the students are not professional or do not meet agency expectations? (For example, at what point would a student's ability to complete their service at your agency be terminated? How can this process be informed by the protocols governing existing volunteer and staff performance?)

The Service-Learning Program advocates for you to campus partners and can help answer these questions and create a Statement of Expectations for your partnerships. To discuss how service-learning could fit into your agency, contact the Program's Community Engagement Coordinator, Megan Betz (mebetz@indiana.edu).