



MU Service-Learning Resource Guide:

How to Incorporate Service-Learning into Your Organization

Our Mission:

To provide opportunities and academic credit for experience-based learning to promote life long commitment to social responsibility and public service. Service-learning at MU strives to develop civic, corporate, and social responsibility while enhancing the students' personal growth and enriching the lives of persons within the community.

Welcome to Service-Learning

Service-Learning is the formal integration of community service into student instruction and learning. Service-learning, or curriculum-based service, connects students with the community in partnerships that provide effective and far-reaching assistance to those in need, as well as create valuable learning environments. Service is performed within the context of university course work, which supplies an informational and support structure for outreach activities. Service-learning thus addresses a unique synthesis of community, university, and student needs.

Through service to others, students learn valuable lessons in citizenship and are able to apply their classroom knowledge to real-life situations and opportunities. Service-learning programs are distinguished from other approaches to experiential education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the services. Reciprocity is a crucial part of our program, and we firmly believe the best partnerships are those where both the student and the organization benefit. Most importantly, students are able to serve individuals with real needs and help an organization carry out its mission.

"Be the change you wish to see in the world."—Gandhi

Service Learning at MU

The Office of Service-Learning at the University of Missouri is one of the largest and most successful service-learning programs in the country. Our office encourages undergraduate students to learn and develop through active participation in service experiences that are coordinated in collaboration with the University and community.

- Nearly 5,000 students participate in service-learning each year.
- Over 150 courses at MU include service-learning as part of their curriculum. Examples of service-learning courses include:
 - *MU Community Engagement Project*: Youth Mentoring & Public Health emphasis
 - *Teacher Development Program*: Service-Learning for Education Majors
 - *Animal Psychology*: Human Animal Companionship and Interaction focus
 - *Social Work*: Social Work and Welfare Issues, Social Work Practice emphasis
 - *Foreign Language*: Advanced Spanish Conversation
 - *Professional Development for Business*: Finance, Marketing, Management
 - *Human Development & Family Studies*: Families, Poverty, and Adolescent focus
- Departments across campus list service-learning as an academic requirement.
- We collaborate with nearly 250 community and partner agencies who take on service-learning students (including businesses, non-profits, and government offices).

Each semester, we establish partnerships between community agencies that address critical local needs. We also conduct on-going evaluations of community needs and student service experiences while monitoring students' progress and troubleshooting with local service partners. Our office also maintains [MU Serves](#), an online database designed to link students and student organizations with service opportunities in Mid-Missouri.

What Does the Office of Service-Learning Do?

Each semester, the Office of Service-Learning:

- Conducts on-going evaluation of community need;
- Works with community agencies to help incorporate service-learning into their programming;
- Compiles lists of placement sites where students might do their service;
- Assists faculty with design and implementation of service-learning courses;
- Assists students with their placements in meaningful and fulfilling service;
- Records all service-learning students and their placement sites;
- Monitors students' progress and problem solves;
- Advocates student needs at placement site;
- Helps faculty and community agencies evaluate their students' service;
- Helps students evaluate their placement sites...

How can the Office of Service-Learning Assist You?

The Office of Service-Learning is always interested in discussing new programs and partnerships, and our community partners who work with service-learning students benefit in several ways. Organizations are able to achieve their objectives and carry out their mission through the service and assistance our students provide. Students pledge a semester-long commitment to their partner agency and are often able to deliver the hands-on assistance agencies need. Agencies are also given the opportunity to increase students' awareness of social issues and community needs, an experience which often cultivates life-long volunteers. In exchange for mentoring and guiding our young people, community agencies gain an increased capacity to serve their community members. Becoming a service-learning partner means you are willing to work with students to ensure they have a safe service experience that engages them in meaningful, hands-on service activities that will enhance their learning.

How to Become an MU Service-Learning Community Partner:

1) Contact our office. Our Service Programs Coordinator will be happy to setup a meeting with you to discuss with you the possibility of serving as a partner agency. We ask that you have a general idea of how you might incorporate students into your various programs and activities. You can contact one of our Service Programs Coordinators by phone at (573) 882-0227 or by email at servicelearning@missouri.edu.

2) Create an MU Serves Profile. Once you have agreed to serve as a community partner, we will create a profile for you on MU Serves (<https://muserves.missouri.edu>). Your online profile will have information about your organization, including relevant program descriptions and contact information, which prospective service-learning students can view. Our office will create a login for you so you can access and update your profile as needed, including opportunity to promote upcoming events, special needs or projects.

3) Identify a supervisor who will oversee the student(s). Some community partners have a single individual oversee all service-learning students; others assign students to separate supervisors depending on the program and its needs. The supervisor will be responsible for overseeing the service-learning students and providing feedback.

4) Schedule agency orientation sessions. Our office will work with you in planning orientation sessions for service-learning students over the course of a few weeks after the start of our academic semester. By planning these orientations in advance, we can streamline the process to reduce the scheduling on your end.

5) Interview and orient the students. Each service-learning student who is placed with you is subject to your review and approval. Each community partner may evaluate each student individually to make sure they are a good match for the program and the program's expectations. If a student does not meet your needs or expectations, let us know and we will work with that student to place them elsewhere. Agency partners often have service-learning students complete background checks, application processes, and even interviews to ensure a well-suited match. Use whatever system works best for you.

6) Complete our online contract. Each service-learning student has an online contract that the site supervisor must complete through the MU Serves website. Each site supervisor should have a login, and will be able to view and edit the student contracts. The contract is our way of tracking our students and ensuring that they perform the service expected of them.

7) Complete Student Evaluations. Our office will prompt you twice during the semester to complete an evaluation via MU Serves for each of your service-learning students. Evaluations are made available midway through the service and at the conclusion of each semester.

Examples of Service-Learning Activities and Projects:

Typically, activities that enable students to interact with clients and help carry out the mission of your organization result in a successful service learning partnership. Students can:

- Tutor or mentor students in afterschool programs.
- Develop career and job skills with individuals returning to the workforce.
- Serve as a companion for senior citizens or individuals with disabilities.
- Distribute food to in-need families at a food pantry.
- Assist low-income families by connecting them with local resources or programs.
- Develop marketing and outreach tools for an agency.
- Plan a fundraiser or drive to meet a specific agency need.
- Serve as a classroom assistant for adult learners.
- Support sustainable living initiatives and nutritional education programs.
- Organize and plan events, initiatives and programming to raise awareness of social issues including but not limited to: public health, environment and sustainability issues, economic development, nutrition and wellness, health and wellbeing, basic needs, human rights, etc.

Please note that service learning is **not** job shadowing. We expect students to be engaged and contribute to the mission and activities of your organization, and job shadowing rarely allows for students to engage in helpful, meaningful service.

Please Contact Our Office for More Information

Our office is committed to serving the mid-Missouri community by helping our community partners incorporate student assistance into their programs and activities. Our goal is to help build a stronger community and, in turn, develop the next generation of volunteers, community leaders and problem solvers. Please let us know how we might be able to assist you in including service-learning students to help achieve your mission of service.