

Lorain County Community College Service Learning Program



Student Guide



“This experience indeed has influenced me to be more civically engaged in my community and personal life.”

-Fall 2011 Public Administration Service Learning Student

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www.lorainccc.edu/servicelearning

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WHAT IS SERVICE LEARNING?

LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S DEFINITION

Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates community service with academic instruction while focusing on critical thinking, reflection and civic responsibility. (*Adopted from the American Association of Community Colleges definition)

SERVICE LEARNING AT LCCC

Service Learning at LCCC began as a grassroots movement among faculty, students, staff and community partners who believe in the potential of civically engaged education to transform the lives of students and the Lorain County community. The program was founded in 2006 and funded by a grant through the American Association of Community Colleges. As of the spring 2012 semester, almost 2,000 students and 23 faculty members have engaged in service learning projects. Service Learning is expected to become more widely integrated across academic programs in the coming years.

FOUR KEY COMPONENTS OF ALL LCCC SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

- ☑ Must meet a **community need** and be connected to an organization (Nonprofit, School, or Governmental entities only. For-Profit Businesses do NOT qualify.)
- ☑ Must be connected to a specific course and address **Student Learning Outcomes** (course-specific/general).
- ☑ Must possess a guided **reflection** component providing students with opportunities to fully appreciate the community benefits provided, value of civic engagement, and the personal rewards of their service.
- ☑ Standard project information must be **reported** by the student online at: www.lorainccc.edu/servicelearningreport

SERVICE LEARNING IS A FORM OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Experiential Education is a "philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities." (*Association for Experiential Education*) Or simply, "Learning by Doing".

There are many forms of Experiential Education including (but not limited to) the following:

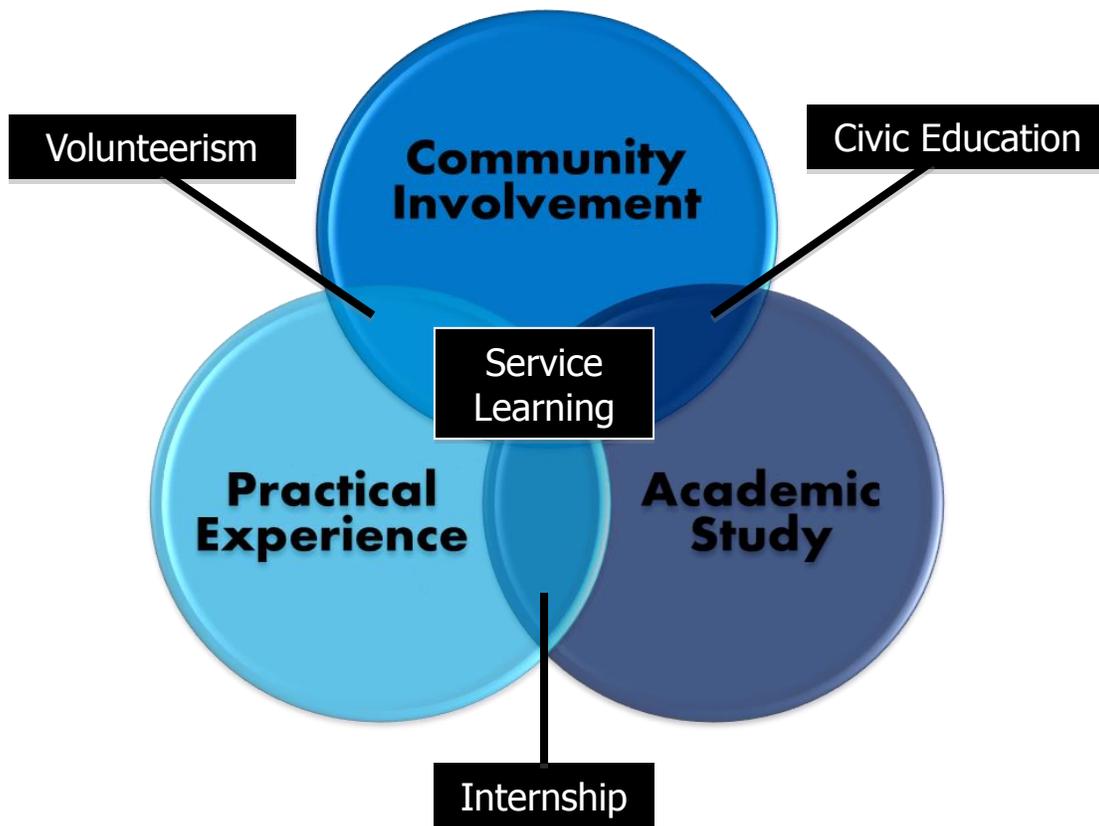
- *Service Learning*
- *Clinicals*
- *Science Labs*
- *Internships*
- *Practicums*
- *Community Service*
- *Co-ops*
- *Student Teaching*

Service Learning can be distinguished from other forms of Experiential Education because the experience is always connected to specific course or general education outcomes, provides opportunities for reflection, and is designed to address established community needs.

Examples of the differences:

Service Learning is **not** volunteerism or community service since these forms of engagement may not be connected to a specific course or general education outcomes.

Service Learning is **not** an internship or co-op because these forms of engagement may not address and established community need.



PAST EXAMPLES OF SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS AT LCCC

- English students read and discuss books with local Girl Scout Troops on bullying.
- Ecology students plant a Butterfly Garden for the children of Blessing House.
- Allied Health and Nursing students organize a community health fair on campus.
- Marketing students create and implement a food drive collecting canned foods to donate to Second Harvest Food Bank.
- Physical Therapy students present a booth at the Family Fest and provide free Balance tests and provide literature on Falls and Osteoporosis.
- Sociology students mentor children at Big for a Day event with Big Brothers Big Sisters.
- Volunteer Management students develop a Volunteer Handbook for a local nonprofit organization.
- Social Welfare & Poverty students coordinate a Poverty Simulation to raise awareness of the plight of the poor.
- Web Development students create a website for a nonprofit organization.
- Physical Health Education students put on a Zumbathon to help Haiti Earthquake victims.
- Personal Finance students facilitate a Financial Literacy program for a Girl Scout troop.
- Dental Hygiene students volunteer in the on-campus Dentist office.
- Sustainable Agriculture students serve with The Oberlin Project to map local food intake and buying of local restaurants.

BENEFITS OF SERVICE LEARNING

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

As participants in service learning, students will have the opportunity to:

- Make meaning of theory and retain more relevant information.
- Experience real-life application of classroom knowledge.
- Be more engaged in the course material and look forward to participating in classroom discussions.
- Further develop their critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills.
- Improve their self-confidence when they discover how they can make a difference through active and meaningful community contributions.
- Explore possible careers and fields of interest.
- Gain work experience, make job contacts, and develop their resume.
- Learn about the complexities of social injustices and systemic problems.
- Learn about the importance of civic responsibility and become more active citizens.

LCCC Specific:

- Receive a Certificate of Completion and Service Learning Graduation Medallion to be worn at Graduation (see Certificate & Medallion Policy).
- Attend the Annual Service Learning Celebration held at the end of that academic year's spring semester.

BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Service learning projects can benefit non-profit community agencies and their clients by:

- Providing direct aid, human interaction, and personal empowerment to people in need.
- Contributing to community development and renewal through social action research and direct service work.
- Enhancing local non-profit agencies' abilities to deliver services to their clients and areas.
- Encouraging an educational partnership between the college and the non-profit community.
- Building a commitment to lifelong civic responsibility among Lorain County Community College students, faculty, and staff.

LCCC Specific:

- Receive a Certificate of Participation and are invited to attend the Annual Service Learning Celebration held at the end of that academic year's spring semester.

SERVICE LEARNING ALIGNS WITH LCCC'S MISSION

LCCC Students engaging in service learning projects benefits the college by:

- Providing students with Experiential Education opportunities in which students learn to apply course content in a "real world" setting.
- Having students more engaged and stay engaged in their education through completion.
- Improve College-Community relations.
- Encouraging students to become lifelong engaged members of the community.

GETTING STARTED

FOLLOW SPECIFIC COURSE/PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS

Service Learning is used in a wide variety of different courses, disciplines, and programs at LCCC. Each experience must achieve the 4 Key Components explained earlier, however each course/professor may achieve these differently with their own instructions.

Always refer to your professor's specific instructions in completing service learning projects in their course.

(Found in the syllabus or project description)

Examples of possible course components:

- The service learning project is required vs. optional
- Timesheets, approval forms, or other forms of agreement/communication between you and the community partner
- The professor identifies the project/community partner vs. students identify their own
- Reflection paper, journal, presentation, video, blog posts, or other forms of standard assessment of student learning

BEFORE BEGINNING THE PROJECT...

Before beginning your service learning project, it is best to do the following:

- Get Oriented** Listen to your professor explain the service learning project and all of the components, read the syllabus or project description of the service learning project, and watch the online Service Learning Student Orientation video.
Web link: www.lorainccc.edu/servicelearningorientation
- Understand** all that is required of you for the project including any forms, timesheets, papers, project reports, presentations, deadlines, Hold Harmless Agreements etc.
All LCCC Service Learners must:
 - Complete the Service Learning Student Project Report online upon completion of your project. www.lorainccc.edu/servicelearningreport
- Learn** about the community partner you will be working with to understand their programs and needs. This will help you be more knowledgeable when speaking with the contact person.

MAKING CONTACT WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Before contacting the organization...

- Understand your instructor's expectations. Some projects may involve a few meetings with your community partner just to define the goals of the Service Learning project. Other experiences are already set-up and in-place and simply require a quick phone call to get started.
- Service learning projects meet an *actual community need*, NOT what you perceive their need to be. Unless the need has already been clearly defined by your instructor, start with asking the organization about their needs and then connect your skills, knowledge, and project requirements to address the need.

Make contact with the organization

- Depending on your specific course, you may have the contact information already from your professor or need to establish your own.
Make first contact as soon as possible; it takes time to make a connection. Remember your community partners are often very busy and we must be respectful of their time. Service learning “binges” are strongly discouraged; do not wait last minute to complete your hours.

When speaking to the organization’s contact...

- Explain you are a Lorain County Community College student from the _____ class with a service learning requirement of ___ hours. Explain the course objectives which are written in your syllabus and project details.
Note: Some organizations may have prior knowledge of service learning and partner with the college, some may need an explanation.
- Ask about the organization’s volunteer policies, application and orientation requirements.
Note: Some organizations require students to complete volunteer applications, background checks, TB tests, physicals, etc. before they begin service.
- Let them know *now* of your availability and the best days/times to contact you.
Note: Organization hours of operation are not always flexible. Identify if your availability is compatible. If there is no room for flexibility (for you or them) seek guidance from your professor; that organization might not be the right fit for you.
- Take and keep notes from the conversation.

When leaving a voicemail or e-mail...

- State your name, phone number, and time you are calling. Speak slowly if on the phone.
- Explain why you are contacting them (e.g., returning their call, asking about opportunities, asking a question).
- Let them know the best time to call or e-mail you back (e.g., I can be reached on Mondays after 1; or I check my e-mail every day at lunch time).
- Slowly repeat your phone number at the end of your message.

Not receiving a response?

- Make sure you’ve given them at least 48 hours
- Make sure you’ve followed the above guidance on making contact
- If you’ve followed these suggestions and are still not receiving a response, discuss the situation with your professor.



LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 Service Learning Program
 Assumption of Risk and Agreement to Hold Harmless



I understand that participating in the Service Learning Program may expose me to physical activity and work in a locale(s) not under the control of the College. Because of the dangers and risks of participating in the Service Learning Program activities, I recognize the importance of following the Instructor and Community Partner instructions regarding techniques, training, rules, other safety standards, and to obey such instructions. I fully understand and agree that certain elements of a service learning project may be physically and emotionally demanding, and that by serving in a locale(s) not under the control of College, there are risks of accidental or other physical or emotional injury. These risks may include, but are not limited to, loss or damage to personal property injury or death due to (1) travel to and from off-campus locations (2) the condition of facilities which are not under the control and maintenance of College, and/or (3) potential criminal activity in the area of the off-campus location, among others.

I fully understand that I have a responsibility for my own safety as well as the safety of my fellow students and the community members I serve. For my own safe participation, I agree to call to the attention of the Instructor and Community Partner any situation which I perceive to be a potential danger to me or my fellow students. I also agree to advise the Instructor and Community Partner at any point when I question my ability to participate in my service learning activity. I understand I am obligated to follow the rules and regulations set down by the Instructor and Community Partner for my safety and the safety of others.

The expected student conduct for all on and off-campus credit and non-credit classes is in accordance with the Campus Code of Conduct as published in the LCCC Catalog, and I understand that my responsibilities/behaviors are expected to comply. This includes the expected conduct in all classes prohibiting children, tobacco, unruly behavior, and profanity in class.

I am in good health and able to undertake the Service Learning Program course work that may include strenuous physical activities. I have read the statement of hazards and risks above to which I will voluntarily and knowingly expose myself by participating in Service Learning Program course activities.

I hereby, on behalf of myself, my heirs, estate, executor, administrator, assignees, and for all members of my family, assume all risks associated with participation, and agree to hold harmless Lorain County Community College, its employees, agents, representatives, teachers, community partners, and other personnel, for any and all liability, actions, causes of action, debts, claims or demands of any kind and nature whatsoever which may arise by, or in connection with my participation in any activities related to service learning.

I have read & understand the Assumption of Risk and Agreement to Hold Harmless Statement & agree to follow the policies & procedures outlined above.

SIGN: _____

Signature: *If under 18 must be signed by parent or legal guardian*

Date

Student's Name: _____ **Student Number:** _____

(Please Print)

Address: _____

City: _____ **State/Zip:** _____ **Phone:** (_____) _____

In case of an emergency, please contact...

Name: _____ **Phone:** (_____) _____

Relation: _____

DURING SERVICE

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHILE SERVING

- Individual experiences cause everyone to view the world in a different light. Be open to new experiences and maintain an open mind to the people with whom you will be working.
- Expect a little uncertainty at first. As the semester progresses, you will become more comfortable in your role.
- Have fun!
- Step outside your comfort zone and challenge yourself. Sometimes we learn as much from what we don't like, as from what we do.
- Don't be afraid to add your own talents or skills to enhance your project. It will be more beneficial for both you and your partner.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A VOLUNTEER

Rights

- To receive orientation, training and ongoing supervision (when necessary) for the job expected.
- To be treated as a co-worker.
- To be assigned specific and appropriate tasks.
- To know as much as possible about the community partner.
- To pursue leadership roles.
- To voice opinions and have ideas included in the planning of programs.
- To do meaningful and satisfying work.
- To be evaluated and to receive letters of recommendation based on service completed.

Responsibilities and Commitment

- To treat your service learning assignment like a job:
 - **Be on time!** Set a schedule and stick to it. Tardiness & "no show" is unacceptable.
 - Call your supervisor as soon as possible if you can't attend and arrange to make up the missed hours.
 - Remember that you may be terminated from your site if you fail to call or show up.
- To represent the Lorain County Community College and your service site in a professional and appropriate manner
 - Dress appropriately
 - Avoid gossip
 - Use appropriate language
 - Follow through with commitments (time, tasks, etc.)
- To be open and honest at your site from the beginning.
- To participate in evaluation when asked to do so.
- To share thoughts and feelings with staff, including making your learning objectives clear to the people with whom you'll be working.
- To keep confidentiality (while at the site, in discussions with friends, etc.)
- To be effective advocates for change when it is needed.
- To enter into service with enthusiasm and commitment.
- To seek advice when in doubt.
- To inform the agency if you drop the class or stop doing your service for any reason.

(Adapted for LCCC from the University of Cincinnati Clermont's "Service Learning Student Handbook")

SAFE SERVICE TIPS

Guiding Principles to Reduce Risk In Service Learning

The following guiding principles are considered best practices throughout the field and apply to all the parties involved in service learning experiences: service learning staff, faculty members, community organizations and service learning students. Since each service learning course is different, these guidelines are not intended to be all encompassing, however apply to most situations. The intent of these guidelines is not to prohibit service learning experiences, but rather, to provide best practices that allow for safe and positive service environments where the risk and liability have been minimized.

DO participate in orientation for your service learning experience.

DO inquire about policies, procedures, and etiquette (including appropriate dress) specific to your service site

DO make sure you know whom to contact at the site and at the college in case of an emergency.

DO make sure you know how to exit your service site in case of an emergency.

DO ask for help from your supervisor or another staff member at your service site when in doubt.

DO show respect for your service site, its staff, and its clients.

DO know that if you are having trouble at your service site, you can speak with your faculty member about it.

DO avoid the responsibility of being in charge of money

DO avoid the responsibility of opening or closing the community agency for the day

DO avoid one-on-one situations that isolate you from a supervised area of activity.

DON'T report to your service site under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

DON'T give (or loan) a client money, other personal belongings, phone number, or address.

DON'T make promises or commitments to a client that you cannot keep.

DON'T give a client or community-based organization representative a ride in a personal vehicle.

DON'T tolerate verbal exchange of a sexual nature or engage in behavior that might be perceived as sexual with a client or community organization representative.

DON'T tolerate verbal exchange or engage in behavior that might be perceived as discriminating against an individual on the basis of their race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or ability.

DON'T engage in any type of business with clients during the term of your service.

DON'T enter into personal relationships with a client or community organization representative during the term of your service.

DON'T wear excessive or expensive jewelry, or leave your personal belongings in an unsafe location.

(From California State University and South Seattle Community College. Adapted for LCCC)

SERVICE SITE CONCERNS?

If you experience any difficulties with your service site, feel uncomfortable, or unsafe, please know those who are here to support you through your service.

1st Contact: Organization Site Supervisor

2nd Contact: Course Instructor

3rd Contact: Service Learning Office

Always begin with your site supervisor however if you cannot make contact or the situation involves them, please contact your Professor. Likewise, if you cannot contact your professor, please contact the Service Learning Office in Career Services which is located on the 1st floor of the LCCC Library Building or call 440-366-4076.

STUDENT PROJECT REPORT

Student Project Reporting is one of the 4 Key Components of Service Learning at LCCC and **REQUIRED** by all students to be considered as official service learning students. The purpose of these reports is to track student project information such as types of projects, community partners, number of hours, tasks accomplished, and serves as the final confirmation that a student actually completed the project.

If the project report is not submitted, you will NOT receive a certificate, graduation medallion, or be designated as an LCCC service learner.

How To Complete Your Project Report

1. *Before your project begins*, we suggest viewing the online project report form to become aware of what you will be asked to report.
2. *After the completion of your project*, complete the online form and be sure to click submit.

Note:

- The online report form is available all semester. Only complete the form **AFTER** you've completed your project.
- See your course syllabus or project description for the form **deadline** as determined by your professor.

How to Access the online Report Form?

www.lorainccc.edu/servicelearningreport

or

Visit www.lorainccc.edu/servicelearning and click on the blue ribbon.

CERTIFICATE & MEDALLION POLICY

One of the key components of Service Learning is to “*reflect and celebrate*” and with this in mind, the LCCC Service Learning program is proud to provide *Certificates of Completion* and *Graduation Medallions* for LCCC Service Learning (SL) students upon successful completion of a SL project. The program policies and procedures for certificates and medallions are as follows.

Important Note: In order for a student to be considered an official SL student in the college’s PeopleSoft system and receive the below awards, the correct actions **MUST** be completed. (Including the submission of a *SL course roster* by SL faculty members and *SL Student Online Project Report Form*.)

Certificates of Completion

Every SL student will receive a *Certificate of Completion* upon successful completion of a Service Learning Project each semester.

Method of Distribution

- *Fall & Summer Semesters* - Faculty will receive the certificates of completion for their students before the final week of classes via interoffice mail.
- *Spring Semesters* - Faculty will have a chance to distribute their certificates at the End of the Year Celebration. If faculty/student is unable to attend and receive their certificate at the celebration, the certificates will be sent to faculty after the celebration via interoffice mail.

Graduation Medallions

Every SL student is eligible to receive a *Service Learning Graduation Medallion* to be worn at graduation. LCCC students must apply for graduation to receive their medallion; unless they are a UP/Transfer student.

Method of Distribution

- *Those who ARE walking at graduation at LCCC* – Will receive their medallion via their cap and gown packet available at the bookstore.
- *Those who applied for graduation and are NOT walking* - Can pick up their medallion from the LCCC Career Services Office located in the Mike Bass Library, first floor.
- *Graduating University Partnership/Transfer students* – Must pick up their medallion from the LCCC Career Services Office located in the Mike Bass Library, first floor.

*Any questions or concerns with this policy or procedures please contact Career Services
366-4076*



AFTER SERVICE

PUT IT ON YOUR RESUME

You just completed a service learning project... Now translate that experience on to your resume for future employers to see. Today employers are seeking candidates with experience, “soft skills”, and those engaged in their communities. By showing your engagement on a resume, it will help you stand out among other applicants. LCCC’s Career Services provides resume writing assistance online (www.lorainccc.edu/careers) and in-person by appointment (440)336-4076. Below are some sample sections for service learning experiences:

Examples:

Volunteer Tutor, ABC School, Elyria, OH

- Tutored culturally and economically diverse middle school students one-on-one in basic math and reading

Volunteer, United Way, Lorain, OH

- Collaborated with staff and leadership to plan programming events
- Communicated news and events to the community

If your volunteer or service to the community is relevant to your desired career goals you can list it with your other work experiences. However, if it is not relevant to the job or field you are targeting, it’s a good idea to have a separate “Volunteer Experience” section for the experiences.

STAYING ENGAGED!

Why stop your service at the end of the semester/project? You’ve now had a taste of the impact one person can have upon the community and lives of others, why not continue?

At Your Service Site

Many students state at the end of their projects they plan on continuing their service in the community and even at their specific community partner. Volunteering at your previous service site is very beneficial for both you and the community organization since you now have been oriented to the organization, know their employees, and know their needs.

In Your Professional Field

As you learned through service learning, volunteering is not always a one-way street and should be mutually beneficial for both parties. Consider the impact for both you and your organization if you were to volunteer at a higher level. Almost anyone can volunteer serving lunch at a homeless shelter, but not everyone can create a website, give a health screening, or teach a science lesson. Take the skills and talents you have acquired throughout your life experiences including those you’ve learned at LCCC and give back. You will be able to further develop your skills and make yourself more marketable for future employers.

On Campus

There are many avenues of staying engaged on the LCCC campus including campus clubs and other campus activities that engage students in volunteering. There is also a new peer-mentoring program called Connect2Complete where students take a “Civic Engagement through Leadership” course and then mentor their fellow classmates who are taking developmental education courses. For more information on this opportunity please visit: www.lorainccc.edu/c2c

Another Service Learning Course

Just complete one service learning course? Why not take another! LCCC has other courses that include service learning projects. The best way of identifying these courses/professors, is to go to the Service Learning website, www.lorainccc.edu/servicelearning and click on “Faculty Profiles”. Here you will find a listing of professors according to their teaching discipline who have integrated service learning into their classroom.

Remember, service learning is always connected to a specific course and the professor chooses to use it in their curriculum or not. It is up to each professor when or if they would like to offer a service learning project though. Professors on the Faculty Profile pages have been known to teach with service learning and would be inclined to provide projects to students.

We also encourage you to approach your current professors and ask them if they would be interested in teaching with service learning in the future or during that course. They may be able to integrate a project that semester for you.