



Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago

CONDUCTING A SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

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Conducting a Service Learning Project

Overview

Service learning is a process in which students learn and develop important skills by participating in a service experience that meets the actual needs of others.

One important way to do a service for another is to provide him or her with valuable knowledge and information. Each year as part of the Illinois Youth Summit, high school students select issues for study and action that affect the lives of many young Americans. Through researching these issues, students gain knowledge that are essential for them and their community to understand about these issues.

The tools in this unit are designed to help high school students select, plan, and implement a service project devoted to an issue that they select in order to educate themselves and members of their community.



Objectives

- < Introduce service learning
- < Provide suggestions for service learning project activities
- < Provide tools for planning and implementing a service learning project

Materials

- A: Selecting a Service Learning Project
- B: Tool: Action Planning for Service Learning Project
- C: Tool: Service Learning Project Planning Form
- D: Evaluation: Service Learning Project Reflection Log

A: Selecting a Service Learning Project

Important issues that affect the lives of young Americans are in the headlines and in school hallways. Once you have selected an issue for your service project, research and study it in order to be able to help others in your community understand it as well.

There are a variety of effective strategies you may use to teach others. When choosing which method to use, consider the age group you are working with, the amount of time you have, the number of people you will be presenting to, your own talents and skills, the type of information you are relating, and what exactly you want to accomplish.

Listed below are some suggested methods for sharing what you have learned with others. You may use one of these, a combination of more than one, or develop a strategy of your own.

Suggested Service Project Models

- § Develop a presentation for other high school students or younger students at a school in your community to educate them about your focus issue. Involve younger students in role-playing activities or interactive games that help them learn and understand the issue.
- § Create a website devoted to a focus issue. Publish articles and link to relevant resources. Allow students in your school to submit related facts, poems, stories, and advice.
- § Invite professors, experts in the field and policymakers for a roundtable discussion on a focus issue. Invite students from other classes to participate as well.
- § Create a newsletter or pamphlet devoted to the issue you have selected. Distribute it in your school and community. Share it with others through workshops at other schools.
- § Organize an after-school debate on an issue. Invite experts in the field with opposing views to take part. Allow students and others who attend to ask questions to the experts.
- § Create a live or videotape presentation where students research and portray important current or historical figures, à la "You Are There" or "Meeting of Minds," and share their views on one of the issues.
- § Create and role-play a scene or scenes to teach others about your focus issue. Perform the scene for other students at your school.
- § Develop a radio or public access television presentation or discussion on a focus issue.
- § Videotape any of the projects suggested above and use it as a teaching tool in your school or other schools.

Internet Resources for Service Learning Project

Corporation for National and Community Service
<http://www.cns.gov>

National Service-Learning Cooperative Clearinghouse
<http://www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu>

National Youth Leadership Council
<http://www.nylc.org>

B: Tool: Action Planning for Service Learning Project

Keep a planning notebook to help your group stay organized. Use the following questions and the planning form to guide your planning and implementation.

Date project must be completed by: _____

1. What issue(s) will you be teaching/informing others about?
2. Who is your audience? Consider the age and size of your audience.
3. How much time will you have to complete the project?
4. At the completion of this project, what do you want your audience to know and understand about the issue(s)?
5. What strategy will you use to teach your audience about the issue(s)? (See worksheet 5A for suggested teaching methods.)
6. What will you need to do to complete the project successfully? Consider people you will need to contact, and any skills, transportation, materials and money you will need. Where and how will you get these?
7. What obstacles are you likely to face in implementing your project? How do you plan to overcome them?
8. Using the planning form, put the activities in order of completion, determine what resources you need for each, assign a person to be in charge of each activity, and assign a date by which each activity is to be completed.
9. How will you evaluate the success of the project?

C: Tool: Service Learning Project Planning Form

Task	Date to Be Completed	Resources Needed	How to Get Them	Who Will Work on This Task?

D: Evaluation: Service Learning Project Reflection Log

Project focus issue(s) _____

Date project was completed _____

Now that you have completed your service learning project, take some time to reflect on your experience.

1. Describe the project you completed:
2. Specifically, what went well?
3. Specifically, what did not go well?
4. What did your audience gain from this experience? How do you know?
5. What would you do differently next time?
6. How did your group work together in the project?
7. What did you learn about yourself from this experience?