

# An Approach to Implementing Community Service Learning

## Arkansas Act 648 of 1993

### Connecting Students and Learning Through the Community



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# **SECTION I**

## **Introduction**

## **Introduction of Community Service Learning (CSL) in AR**

Community Service Learning (CSL) is an approach to teaching and learning in which students use academic knowledge and skills to address genuine community needs. It is more than just volunteering. Act 648 of 1993 was written to develop a spirit of civic engagement and volunteerism. It allows students in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) who have completed 75 hours of Community Service Learning (CSL) to earn one (1) academic credit toward graduation.

While service is important, it is the combination of linking service to learning that makes the experience valuable to students. Through CSL students take what they are learning in the classroom and apply that to improving their school and community. When this happens, the reflection of what was learned during the service experiences becomes critically important. Involving youth in service can, and should, be a win-win situation for everyone. Students may become better acquainted with the opportunities available for careers, challenges faced by those with special needs, and community resources necessary to address critical issues. Organizations that involve youth in service should get a fresh look at volunteerism and see their organizations from a new perspective.

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Communications & Community Engagement have collaborated to assist in the statewide implementation of Act 648. This guidebook is designed to assist districts and schools develop or reevaluate Community Service Learning (CSL) programs. Act 648 places much of the responsibility for developing and implementing a CSL program, as well as creating local policy for the CSL program, on the local school board, district and schools.

This guidebook is primarily for people who are responsible for assisting students interested in connecting learning with volunteer service in their community as a means of earning a high school credit. Those most affected will be administrators, teachers, and counselors of students in grades nine (9) through twelve (12).

## Benefits of Community Service Learning

Students may choose to earn credit for service in their community for a wide variety of reasons, all of which can be beneficial to the student, the community, and the school.

Students may use community service as a means of

- enhancing college and scholarships applications.
- choosing or discarding a career path.
- gaining experiences and skills for use on a resume.
- gaining entry-level experience in the job market.
- gaining an extra credit needed for graduation.

Students may learn to

- apply knowledge and skills from school subjects to the real world.
- utilize social skills, communication skills, and problem solving skills.
- understand the adult work environment.
- become civically engaged and gain self-esteem.
- appreciate diversity.

Nonprofit/community organizations may see an increase in

- community needs being met.
- organizational visibility and exposure.
- intergenerational experiences.
- devoted volunteers.

Schools may experience an improvement in

- communication with parents and students.
- mentoring and guiding students.
- experiential learning.
- partnerships with community members.

With a meaningful placement, everyone gains from this experience.

## Overview of Arkansas Act 648

Former Senator Charlie Cole Chaffin of Benton introduced Act 648 to the Arkansas General Assembly in the 1993 session. The legislation required secondary schools to implement a community service program for students in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) by the 1996-97 school year, or to file a waiver with the State Board of Education.

- The State Board of Education (SBE) is the authorized agent to promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of Act 648.
- By this act, a student who completes a minimum of seventy-five (75) clock hours of documented community service may receive a maximum of one (1) academic credit toward graduation. Community Service Learning hours may be certified by the school personnel supervising the service activity. A nonprofit/community organization, if approved by the local school board and SBE, can certify hours if the student is volunteering without school supervision.
- Local school boards are responsible for developing policies related to appropriate student volunteer activities and types of nonprofit/community organizations where students may serve.
- Nonprofit/community organizations may be approved as a student placement site through the completion of a site application submitted to the local school district for local board approval.
- Local school boards submit a list of locally approved nonprofit/ community organizations to the SBE twice a year for approval.
- A list of current nonprofit/community organizations approved by local school boards, submitted to the SBE, and approved by the SBE are on the Community Service Learning page of the ADE website. This list will be updated semi-annually.
- All eligible community service learning activities or programs **must include preparation, action, and reflection** components.
- Community service learning activities may take place as part of a class, school-sanctioned club/extracurricular activity, or independently. However, community service activities **must** benefit the community in some way. Service hours that are part of a project required for class, required as part of club membership (e.g., Key Club, FBLA, Student Council), or students serving as teacher/office aides **do not** meet the requirement for CSL credit.

## Helpful Definitions

**Community Organization:** An organization or agency in the community that may choose to be a site where students can volunteer and achieve hours of service. Examples of community organizations include state or local parks, neighborhoods, and 4-H clubs.

**Nonprofit:** A tax exempt 501(c) 3 organization dedicated to furthering a particular social cause or advocating for a shared point of view. Examples of nonprofit organizations include Make-a-Wish Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers and Sisters, and Salvation Army.

**CSL Site:** Nonprofit/community organization that receives local school board and SBE approval to certify CSL hours.

**Preparation:** The time students spend identifying needs in the community, determining a plan for service, and getting ready to perform the service are all necessary elements of CSL prior to the actual service.

**Action:** The service done by the student through school programs or at nonprofit/community organizations. The hours must be certified by the school or by the local school board and the SBE approved nonprofit/community organizations when faculty are not supervising students.

**Reflection:** A conscious examination of what was learned or experienced during the community service learning activity. There should be a variety of ways students can reflect throughout their CSL programs and projects (e.g., journal entries, discussions, letters).

**Celebration:** A formal or informal method of recognizing the student's community service.

**Volunteer Service:** Volunteerism refers to people who choose, on their own, to perform some service to others without pay. Volunteer hours may count toward a CSL credit if those hours are at an approved nonprofit/community organization, documented by the nonprofit/community organization, reported to the designated school personnel, and there is preparation prior to and reflection afterwards.

**SECTION II**  
**Legislation, Liability, and Risk**  
**Management**



# Act 648 of 1993

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“To require by the 1996-97 school year the implementation of a community service program for secondary students.”

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:**

**SECTION 1.**

- (a)** Beginning with the 1996-97 school year, a student who has completed a minimum of seventy-five (75) clock hours of documented community service in grades nine (9) through twelve (12), as certified by the service agency or organization to the school, shall be eligible to receive one (1) academic credit that may be applied toward graduation.
- (b)** The community service shall be in programs or activities approved by the State Board of Education and the local school board and shall include preparation, action, and reflection components.
- (c)** A local school board may grant a waiver of this requirement with notice to the State Board of Education.
- (d)** The State Board of Education is hereby authorized to promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this act.

**SECTION 2.** Codification Clause

**SECTION 3.** Severability Clause

**SECTION 4.** Repeating Clause

Title 6 Education  
Subtitle 2. Elementary And Secondary Education Generally  
Chapter 16 Curriculum  
Subchapter 1 -- General Provisions  
A. C. A. § **6-16-120 (2017)**

**6-16-120. Academic credit for community service.**

- (a)** Beginning with the 1996-1997 school year, a student who has completed a minimum of seventy-five (75) clock hours of documented community service in grades nine through twelve (9-12), as certified by the service agency or organization to the school, shall be eligible to receive one (1) academic credit that may be applied toward graduation.
- (b)** The community service shall be in programs or activities approved by the State Board of Education and the local school district board of directors and shall include preparation, action, and reflection components.
- (c)** A local school district board of directors may grant a waiver of this requirement with notice to the state board.
- (d)** The state board is hereby authorized to promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this section.

**HISTORY:** Acts 1993, No. 648, 1.

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
RULES AND REGULATIONS  
GOVERNING THE ARKANSAS SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM**

1.0 REGULATORY AUTHORITY

1.01

1.02 These regulations shall be known as the Arkansas Department of Education Rules and Regulations Governing the Service Learning Program

1.03 These regulations are enacted pursuant to the State Board of Education’s authority under Ark. Code Ann. 6-16-120 (Repl. 1993).

2.0 PURPOSE

2.01 The purpose of these regulations is to establish the requirements for the Arkansas Service Learning Program.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.01 “Academic Credit” is credit awarded to a student in grades nine through twelve (9-12) after successfully completing a minimum of seventy-five (75) clock hours of documented community service.

3.02 “Community Service” is a program or activity approved by the state board of Education and the local school board, which includes the components preparation, action, and reflection.

3.03 “Certify” means that a service agency or organization has submitted to the school appropriate documentation that a student has successfully completed sufficient community service to be eligible for academic credit.

4.0 SERVICE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

4.01 In order for a student to be eligible for academic credit for community service, the agency or organization that will certify completion of such service shall be approved by the Arkansas State Board of Education and the local school board.

4.02 Documentation to certify community service shall be presented to the local school board in the manner and at such time as prescribed by the local board.

4.03 Documentation of community service and/or approval of an agency or organization by the State Board of Education to certify community service for academic credit shall be in a manner and at such time as prescribed by the State Board.

4.04 All public school districts are approved by the State Board of Education to certify community service so long as the community service is under the supervision of a certified employee of the district. If the community service is under the direction or supervision of an agency or organization, the agency or organization must be approved by the State Board of Education to certify community service prior to academic credit being granted for such service.

- 4.05 Upon notification to the State Board of Education, a school district may choose to waive participation in the community service program and the awarding of academic credit for community service.

### **ACT 390 OF 1987**

**“AN ACT TO PROVIDE THAT QUALIFIED VOLUNTEERS SHALL NOT BE CIVILLY LIABLE FOR PERSONAL INJURY OR PROPERTY DAMAGE RESULTING FROM ANY ACT OR OMISSION IN CARRYING OUT THEIR VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES”**

The Arkansas Volunteer Immunity Act includes the following definitions:

- “Qualified volunteer” means any person who, of free will, provides goods or services without financial compensation to or through any volunteer agency in connection with a volunteer program.
- “Volunteer Agency” means any volunteer program of all departments, institutions, and divisions of state government, community volunteer organization, or any not-for-profit corporation which has received a 501(c)3 designation from the US Internal Revenue Service, other than one established principally for the recreational benefit of its stockholders or members.
- “Volunteer Activity” means any activity within the scope of any project, program effort, or other regular activity sponsored by a volunteer agency with the intent to exact a charitable purpose, or confer other public benefit including, but not limited to, enhancement of the cultural, civic, religious, education, scientific or economic resources of the community.

A qualified volunteer cannot be held vicariously liable for the negligence of another. A qualified volunteer also cannot be held liable for injury or damage sustained by anyone who is a participant in, recipient, consumer, or user of benefits of the volunteer services except:

1. Where the volunteer has insurance, in which case the liability is limited to the amount of coverage
2. Where the volunteer acts in bad faith or with gross negligence
3. Where the volunteer negligently operates a motor vehicle, in which the liability is limited to the amount of liability coverage carried
4. Where the volunteer is providing professional services which he is licensed to perform, in which case the liability is limited to the amount of liability coverage carried.

The Act does not limit the liability of any volunteer operating outside the scope of the volunteer program, nor does it limit the liability of any volunteer agency.

## **ACT 970 OF 1987**

**“AN ACT GRANTING LIMITED TORT IMMUNITY TO DIRECTORS OF NONPROFIT CORPORATIONS AND MEMBERS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AGENCIES, AUTHORITIES, AND OTHER GOVERNING BODIES OF ANY GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY.”**

This Act states that no board member of any governmental entity or nonprofit corporation shall be held personally liable for damages resulting from any negligent act or omission of another employee or board member of the nonprofit corporation or government entity. Athletic officials of any amateur contests shall also enjoy this protection. The protection from vicarious liability does not apply to board members of nonprofit corporations, which are licensed to serve alcohol. This Act does not apply to the nonprofit corporation itself.

## Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997

§543

Public Law: 105-19, (became law 06/18/97)

Sponsor: Sen. Coverdell (introduced 04/09/97)

Related Bill(s): §544

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### DIGEST:

(Revised as of 05/21/97) – Passed House, amended)

Volunteer Protection Act of 1997- States that the Act preempts inconsistent State law except when such law provides additional protection from liability relating to volunteers in the performance of services for a nonprofit organization or governmental entity. Makes this Act inapplicable to any civil action in a State court against a volunteer in which all parties are citizens of the State if such State enacts a statute declaring its election that this law not apply.

Exempts a volunteer of a nonprofit organization or governmental entity from liability for harm caused by an act or omission of the volunteer on behalf of such organization or entity if: (1) the volunteer was acting within the scope of his or her responsibilities at the time; (2) the volunteer was properly licensed or otherwise authorized for the activities or practice in the State in which the harm occurred; (3) the harm was not caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed; and (4) the harm was not cause by the volunteer operating a motor vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other vehicle for which the State requires the operator or owner to possess an operator's license or maintain insurance.

Specifies conditions of State laws limiting volunteer liability, which shall not be construed as inconsistent with this Act.

Prohibits the award of punitive damages against a volunteer unless the claimant establishes by clear and convincing evidence that the harm was proximately cause by an action of such volunteer which constitutes willful or criminal misconduct or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed.

Provides that the volunteer liability limitations of this Act shall not apply to any misconduct: (1) that constitutes a crime of violence, an act of intentional terrorism, or hate crime; (2) that involves a sexual offense or a violation of civil rights law; or (3) where the defendant was under the influence of intoxicating alcohol or any drug.

Makes each volunteer liable for noneconomic loss only in the amount allocated to such defendant in direct proportion to the percentage of responsibility for the harm for which that defendant is liable. Requires the trier of fact to determine such percentage of responsibility.

## Liability and Risk Management

When liability concerns are not handled properly, they can become an obstacle to CSL program implementation and to the support and safety of students involved. The issue of liability should encourage educators to develop more thoughtful, effective, and well-managed programs of community service learning. **It is the responsibility of the school district, the local school board, and nonprofit/community organizations to resolve the issue of liability according to local requirements and local district policy.**

The following suggestions center on pursuing proactive strategies:

- The most important point legally is to “not be found negligent.” Program administrators need to determine what policies, procedures, and safety measures need to be in place to avoid any appearance of negligence.
- It is imperative to determine the liable party for implementation of the CSL program. The more closely the program is tied to the school’s mission and is a model of teaching, the less complicated it may be to seek insurance coverage or to fit under existing school policies.
- The partnership with nonprofit/community organizations within a community is the district’s responsibility. Ensuring that each participating agency or organization has received approval from the local school board and SBE is a district responsibility. The integration of the CSL program with the school’s instructional program is also a district responsibility.
- The school district should provide equal opportunity for all students to participate in a CSL program once it has been adopted as part of the district’s instructional plan.

Districts should critically evaluate CSL programs for risks and take action to prevent problems stemming from those risks. The risk management process includes the following steps:

1. Identify the risk for the program and service positions.
2. Measure the risk. Prioritize the identified risk in terms of likelihood of occurrence and magnitude of harm.
3. Select and implement methods to control the risk. Develop clearly defined policies and procedures. Include training for students and nonprofit/community organization personnel. Parents may be asked to sign additional permission forms and waive responsibility of the agency.
4. Finally, have a legal advisor for the school district or the nonprofit/community organization review the program for areas in which potential liability problems are likely to occur. Continually review and revise program policy and procedures to minimize risk.

## **Rights and Responsibilities for Volunteers**

### A Volunteer's Rights:

1. The right to feel safe
2. The right to feel valued
3. The right to leave
4. The right to information about your volunteer role
5. The right to negotiate your volunteer role

### A Volunteer's Responsibilities:

1. The responsibility to communicate your needs
2. The responsibility to follow through on your obligations
3. The responsibility to not promise what you can't deliver
4. The responsibility to honor the organization's investment in you
5. The responsibility to take care of yourself



# **SECTION III**

## **The Process**

## Approval Process for Nonprofit/Community Organizations

Any nonprofit/community organization that wishes to certify volunteer hours for students performing community service for school credit must become an approved site prior to working with student volunteers. The first step in site approval is for the school district CSL supervisor to work with the nonprofit/community organization to complete the form "Student Community Service Site Application (Act 648)". Next, the site applications are brought to the local school board (by district personnel) for approval. Then, they are submitted to the SBE for approval.

Sites are not required to be nonprofits, but they should be organizations that benefit the community or provide a service in some way. For profit businesses are not eligible to become community service learning sites.

Submission of local board approved nonprofit/community organization sites to the SBE will be done semi-annually on May 1 and November 1.

All sites should be contacted by the local school district or local school board to determine readiness and ability to utilize student volunteers effectively, to discuss expectations on the part of the district and site, and to determine how often and in what form documentation of service is expected. Ideally, a local school board and district personnel will want to ensure there is a description for all volunteer positions that benefit the community and

- adequate workspace
- adequate supervision and training of student volunteers

Schools are automatically approved CSL sites. However for students to receive hours for CSL the program/project must meet CSL requirements of preparation, action, and reflection. Students should be applying what they are learning and becoming civically engaged. **Teacher's aides, office aides, and sports managers do not meet the CSL requirements.** The following are some suggestions for CSL projects within a school district:

- Tutor younger children
- Beautify the school (build picnic tables for a courtyard, plant a garden, improve the playground, paint a mural)
- Start or expand a recycling program
- Begin a clothes closet or food pantry
- Design a webpage to showcase student volunteer activities
- Produce a bicycle safety film for an elementary school or red ribbon week program

## Preparation, Action, Reflection, and Celebration

### Preparation

Preparation lays the groundwork for learning to occur while performing community service. Since service is intended to meet a community need, preparation requires an awareness of community needs and ways in which students can address those needs through community service with a learning component.

Preparation includes students identifying a community need, researching how to address that need, and developing a plan of action. It may also include soliciting necessary support within the school community and building relationships with nonprofit/community organizations. District personnel and students should brainstorm possible barriers that could hinder implementation of a successful program/project.

Part of every preparation process is generating student excitement about the opportunity to participate in community service. Suggestions for ways in which to accomplish this include

- inviting a student or former student who has participated in CSL to speak,
- inviting a community member to speak to the class on related issues,
- inviting someone from a community-based organization to speak,
- organizing a field trip to service sites so students can see the setting first hand, or
- publicizing what last year's CSL students achieved.

### Action

Action is the service done by the student through school programs or at nonprofit/community organizations. **The hours must be certified by the school or SBE approved nonprofit/community organizations when faculty are not supervising students.** Districts and nonprofit/community organization sites should consider scheduling staff development to prepare staff for implementing CSL when appropriate or beginning a program or partnership.

Since community service may entail independent student work, it is important that districts, schools, students, and parents understand the responsibilities inherent in seeking academic credit under Act 648. All must understand that learning is basic to the process and that successful completion of the service hours requires evidence of learning. **The district sets forth the criteria in advance by which student learning will be judged so that earning of the academic credit can be verified.** A contract between the school, students, and parent/guardian can state the terms of the student's successful completion of the community service credit and thereby avoid misunderstanding. At the same time, all should be aware of the benefits inherent in program participation. If possible, schools can establish a "group conference" with all interested students, parents or guardians, and school personnel. The CSL supervisor may use this opportunity to explain the roles and responsibilities of students and parents and to stress

to parents the academic responsibility their children have to complete their volunteer service in a timely manner.

Providing instructional time to guide students is important. Certified staff should have sufficient time to guide students in CSL, either through regularly scheduled classes or through individual conferences. Students may be assisted in researching available sites, selecting an appropriate site, jointly establishing criteria for a successful community service placement, conferring to verify success of student placement according to established criteria, and simultaneously choosing a means of reflection.

Students can brainstorm projects that would meet curricular objectives as well as be appropriate and interesting. These projects then form the basis of further exploration by students as part of their community service preparation. Students can share the results of research with classmates so that a variety of sites and related issues are addressed within a class setting. If a student is working independently, he/she may discuss research results with staff in conference settings.

The school should provide support to students in their efforts. If students identify, research, and analyze issues in conjunction with the focus of nonprofit/community organization sites, staff might

- provide materials such as local newspapers or books for student research into community problems and needs.
- accompany students on a “walk-around” of the school and/or community to observe needs.
- assist students as they develop a survey for classmates or residents about needs.
- arrange for students to attend a city or council meeting to hear about needs.

Sometimes training or orientation may be required for a volunteer service. Learning necessary skills can include necessary procedures used in the setting of the nonprofit/community service site. For instance, if a student serves in a nursing home, nonprofit staff can familiarize the student(s) with the special needs of its residents, activities they enjoy, and the parameters of student service at that site. This can occur in the school setting prior to the service as well as at the site.

## **Reflection**

Reflection is the conscious examination of what was learned or experienced during the community service learning activity. There should be a variety of ways students can reflect throughout their CSL programs and projects.

Students may need assistance with reflection depending on the skills they have developed in the classroom. Reflection questions may be answered in written format or in small group discussions.

### Basic Reflection Questions

These are somewhat specific and do not lend themselves to more creative expression of the CSL experience. Students should be challenged with more thoughtful probes several weeks into the program. Factual questions ask What? Who? Where?

1. What are four things that you smelled, saw, heard, or touched?
2. What was the course of events?
3. What people did you meet today? Describe them.
4. Describe the place of your community learning. Include aspects such as light, color, decoration, and /or ventilation.
5. What equipment did you use today?
6. How did you prepare for today? Describe or explain.
7. Name five things that are most memorable about today.
8. Describe some of your interactions with people in the community program.
9. How do people in the nonprofit/community organization appear to you?
10. Did you work by yourself, in groups? Describe the setting.
11. In two words describe the place.
12. Were there other volunteers? What work were they involved in today?
13. What was the best/worst thing that happened today? Why?

A second set of basic prompts goes beyond factual response in asking students to express an opinion about the community service learning program. The following examples illustrate such questions, which continue to direct student responses to a great degree.

1. How did you feel when you arrived; how did you feel when you left?
2. What made you feel that way at first; at what point did your feelings change?
3. What did you learn about yourself; what did you learn about your peers?
4. What did you learn about the population served?
5. What did you do today that you were particularly proud of?
6. How are you different/similar to other members of this group?
7. How did differences strengthen the group?
8. In what instances did being different help and hinder the group members?
9. How are you different/similar to members of the population served?
10. Who assumed the leadership roles during the activity; how did the group respond to the leader?
11. What would have happened if this group had been larger or smaller?
12. What would you do differently if you were starting the activity again with the same group?
13. What would you like to say to the group members?
14. If you were one of the people you served, what would you think of yourself?
15. What other needs do you think the people you served have?

*Adapted from Maryland Student Service Alliance.*

### **Open-Ended Reflection Prompts**

These prompts require more thoughtful and effortful responses from students. They may follow many paths in responding unlike the more directed questions set forth above.

1. What was hard or easy about this week/month? (Think about the people you serve, the topics you work with, your service activities; you can write about an ongoing problem or a particular incident.)
2. What is getting harder or easier about your CSL? Why?
3. What have you accomplished?
4. What have you learned?
5. What conclusions have you drawn?
6. What have you “given” of yourself to others this week?
7. What have others “given” of themselves to you; what have you learned because of it?
8. Describe a particularly difficult situation. How did you deal with it? Were you a “leader”? How would you approach it differently if it were to happen again?
9. How is this experience affecting you? Please explain your response.

*Adapted from Handbook for Continuous Improvement.*

### **The Structured Journal**

Structured journals provide feedback from participants about their service experiences in a way that offers valuable insights to the supervising teacher. Participants are asked to write in their journals on a regular basis (at least bi-weekly), responding to basic, open-ended questions posed by their supervisor to encourage reflection.

Structured journals help the supervisor and school to understand the impact of the program on participants (changing attitudes towards service, life, different types of people, etc.); to receive feedback on program activities; and to glean insights into project development that might not otherwise be observed. They also help participants get more out of their service experience by encouraging them to reflect on what they’ve learned about themselves and others. In turn, this will help them become better service providers and citizens by heightening their awareness of and sensitivity to service issues

### **Uses of the structured journal**

- To learn about issues participants are facing so these issues can be address
- To receive a first-person account of site activities and glean insights on what works well and what needs to be reworked
- To gain insight into relationships at sites and flag possible areas of conflict that need to be addressed
- To obtain “stories” to enhance reports, storyboards, etc.

### **Benefits of the structured journal**

- Heightens understanding of participants’ needs
- Enhances the participant’s learning experience

- Improves the ability of participants to express themselves on paper
- Provides participants with a personal record of their feelings/experiences during service
- Builds an extensive resume of descriptive information on your program, its impact, and its specific projects
- The process of thinking through the questions posed will teach participants to reflect on what they've learned and what they value.

### **Implementation tips for using structured journals**

- Have participants buy their own journal notebooks so they may make a personal investment and feel more of a commitment to writing in the notebooks.
- Discuss the usefulness of structured journals with participants. Get feedback on how they feel about writing in the journals, and if they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts with you. Also discuss how you will use the journal entries.
- Try using different approaches to see what generates the most open feedback (e.g., have one group respond to questions while another free-writes).
- Decide how often you want participants writing in journals. Be careful about asking students to write too frequently as they may burn out and pay less attention to what they are writing. Conversely, encourage them to write as frequently as they like and not to limit themselves solely to the questions you pose.
- Determine what you want to know about participants' experience:
  - Ask some questions repeatedly to monitor changes in attitude. For example, what was the best and worst thing about your service experiences this month? What did you learn about yourself and/or others this month?
  - Introduce new questions to spark reflection on a certain issue (e.g., you might ask participants involved with a homeless shelter such questions as what do you think are the causes of homelessness, how do you think we should address this
- Collect journals regularly, and return them promptly. You may want to add comments that encourage participants to expand further on a particular issue or to consider another perspective. Or leave the journals blank so as not to alter their entries. Talk to your participants, and ask them what they would like you to do.
- Always ask permission before sharing a participants writing with others.
- Ask participants to review their journals at the end of their term of service and to write a final entry (to be given to the program) on what they have seen, done, and felt over the past months. Have them reflect on what changes they have noticed in themselves and the effect they have had on others. Keep a binder of these final entries so that other participants can learn from their experiences.

Journals that are required, structured, and read by others may appear to be a personal intrusion and stifle participant honesty and enthusiasm. Before assigning journals, make sure your participants are willing to share their thoughts with you. Consider making journals voluntary or giving participants a choice of topics to write on (including whatever is on their minds). One problem with voluntary journals is that you may not hear from participants you most need to understand better -- those who are unhappy in the program. Also, if participants write on topics of their choice, it is difficult to spot changes in attitude, etc.

*From "Tools & Practices: Structured Journal," Corporation for National Service*

## **Activities for Reflection**

Reflection options other than written responses should be offered to students. The following are examples of student activities, which allow reflection on what they have learned.

- **Creative Writing.** Submit articles and poems to the school newspaper, literary arts magazine, or the local media. The articles should be reflective rather than narrative in content.
- **Discussion.** Use Pair-Share or another small group discussion strategy for students to talk about service experiences.
- **Stories, Books, Quotes.** Read and discuss stories or case studies related to the students' service experiences. Also, ask students to write a short story based on their experiences. Be sure the story shows a community need through the perspective of one or more characters in the story.
- **Guest Speaker.** Invite a community member to share his or her service experiences. Suggest that the speaker have a theme, such as "How Service Makes Us Better Citizens." Have students prepare questions to ask the guest speaker.
- **Class Work Assignments.** Reflect on service in regular assignments (weekly essays, research papers, oral presentations, etc.).
- **Art.** Express feelings about service through art. Be creative—draw, paint, etc.
- **Scrapbook.** Create a scrapbook about service experience. It could include pictures of service sites, newspaper articles, mementos of the service project and samples of students' writing (letters to the editor, essays, poems, etc.).
- **Music.** Listen to music lyrics to stimulate discussion. Ask students to lead this session – they know today's music!
- **Role Play.** Act out problem situations that may have occurred during the service project. Brainstorm solutions.
- **Mock Talk Show or City Council Meeting.** Create a scenario to discuss the issues students have chosen to address.
- **Video.** Tape students as they serve. Watch the video and discuss it in a group.
- **Dance.** Create a dance or physical expression of the service experience.

*From the National Association of Partners in Education, Inc.*

## **Celebration**

Celebration may take many forms, elaborate to simple. Essentially it is recognition of successful program completion in a manner that meets criteria established by the school and which contributes to personal growth of the students involved. The process of celebration recognizes the achievement of student participants in community service.



The most effective recognition moves beyond the perfunctory stage to systematic, planned recognition. Celebration can include acknowledgment at school assemblies, recognition in the local paper, or a display of reflection pieces within a school setting.

Celebration or recognition succeeds best when it is matched to the person and to the achievement. It should also be timely and specific. Celebration can be a collaborative effort with the nonprofit/community organization site.

## Curriculum Connections through CSL

Community service learning can be linked to any curriculum area and can support student learning expectations set forth in the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks. The following list contains a few subject areas and skills that can be applied through community service learning.

<b>Science</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Language Arts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Real-world applications</li> <li>› Rational and creative thinking</li> <li>› Environmental applications</li> <li>› Aging process</li> <li>› Pollution</li> <li>› Genetics/ disabilities</li> <li>› Public health/ health regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Political, historic, and economic connections</li> <li>● Civic engagement</li> <li>● Social awareness</li> <li>● Political awareness</li> <li>● Diversity issues</li> <li>● Cultural sensitivity</li> <li>● Critical thinking and problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Real-world applications</li> <li>● Express and interpret mathematical ideas</li> <li>● Measuring</li> <li>● Estimating</li> <li>● Problem solving</li> <li>● Budgeting</li> <li>● Calculating</li> <li>● Graphing</li> <li>● Surveying</li> <li>● Analyzing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research</li> <li>● Writing</li> <li>● Formal speaking</li> <li>● Informal speaking</li> <li>● Reading</li> <li>● Communication skills</li> <li>● Critical thinking</li> <li>● Effective listening</li> <li>● Language appreciation</li> </ul>
<b>Career/Technical Education</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Music &amp; Fine Arts</b>	<b>Family Consumer Science</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Application of trade skills</li> <li>› Work ethics</li> <li>› Appropriate behavior</li> <li>› Personal appearance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Self-concept</li> <li>● Interpersonal relationships</li> <li>● Substance abuse</li> <li>● Food and nutrition</li> <li>● Disease</li> <li>● Safe living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appreciation</li> <li>● Historical, cultural, and social context</li> <li>● Aesthetic judgments and decision making</li> <li>● Active expression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Food and nutrition</li> <li>● Interpersonal relationships</li> <li>● Child development</li> <li>● Concept of family</li> </ul>

*Adapted from the Maryland Student Service Alliance*

Volunteer activities fall into three main categories, direct service, indirect service, and advocacy. Each type of volunteer activity can connect to student learning.

**Direct Service- serving directly with a service population**

*Tutoring, mentoring, visiting the elderly, distributing food, etc.*

Students learn to:

- Be responsible for their own actions
- Be dependable
- Make a difference in another person's life
- Solve problems
- Care for another person
- Focus on the needs of others, and place personal issues in context
- Get along with people different from themselves

**Indirect Service- serving behind the scenes to better a community problem**

*Drives, collections, fund-raisers, organizing an environmental clean-up, etc.*

Students learn to:

- Work as a team and cooperate
- Play different roles in a group
- Take pride in an accomplishment
- Organize people to get a job done
- Involve others (recruit them to help)
- Perform project specific or job specific skills
- Value working with others to solve problems

**Advocacy- bringing awareness to a cause or problem**

*Lobbying, speaking, performing, etc.*

Students learn to:

- Persevere
- Articulate a concern and suggest solutions
- Work with adults
- Persuade people to act in a new way
- Understand relationships among issues
- Appreciate the duties and privileges of citizenship
- Appreciate the political process
- Recognize that one person can make a difference.

## Learning Leadership through Service

One of the key values of involving young people in service is that it teaches them basic leadership skills. By matching service projects with the leadership level of youth, you can build skills and abilities that will translate into other areas of life. This chart shows how different types of projects can teach youth leadership skills at different levels. The first stages of leadership tend to be more appropriate for upper elementary and junior high-age youth.

<b>Leadership Level</b>	<b>Characteristics of Appropriate Tasks</b>	<b>Sample Service Projects</b>	<b>Leadership Skills Youth Might Learn</b>
1. Beginning	Close supervision Clearly defined tasks Limited options for exercising judgment	Tutor with supervision Lead children's classes with established curriculum Lead recreation in a nursing home	Meeting schedules and keeping commitments Seeing the importance of service Understanding the needs in a community
2. Intermediate	Less direct supervision Some opportunity of independent judgment	Gather and assess information on community needs Do publicity and recruiting for projects	Applying knowledge to a situation Building confidence in personal skills Building problem solving skills Understanding the needs from the resident's viewpoint
3. Experienced	Independent Judgment Some supervisory responsibility	Do peer counseling Organize specific projects	Building problem solving skills Learning the importance of self-initiative Enabling people to help themselves Developing interpersonal and analytical skills
4. Project	Advisory and Supervisory responsibilities Independent about applying policy	Develop project based on community need	Translating goals into reality Understanding relationship between individual and institution
5. Program	High leadership and management responsibility Goal and budget setting with others	Develop and administer a service-learning program	Gaining confidence in functioning autonomously Inspiring value of service-learning to others

*Adapted from the Lutheran Brotherhood's RespecTeen and the Maryland Student Service Alliance Handbook.*

# Section IV

## Sample Forms

The forms in this section are examples. Districts should feel free to create their own forms.

It is suggested that the district/school policy on CSL contain any procedures and permission forms that need to be completed by students, parents, and nonprofit/community organization sites.

Districts may want to consider how they will document student hours of service (form, electronically).

The CSL site application can be found on the Community Service Learning page of the ADE website at <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/learning-services/curriculum-and-instruction/community-service-learning>.

## Community Service Site Evaluation Form

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

### Rating of Experience at Site

Please evaluate the following components of the above named site using the indicated scale. Additional comments about the site are useful.

#### Rating Scale

4-Excellent    3-Very Good    2-Average    1-Fair    0-Unsatisfactory    NA-Not Applicable

COMPONENTS	RATING	COMMENT
Responsibilities Outlined	_____	_____
Training Provided	_____	_____
Supervisor(s) Willing To Give Guidance	_____	_____
Safety Issues Addressed	_____	_____
Student Treated With Courtesy by Staff	_____	_____
Tasks Assigned Were Personally Rewarding	_____	_____

If you have the opportunity to assist this agency/company/ organization in the future by providing volunteer service, would you? Why or why not?

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What change(s) in the treatment of student volunteers would you recommend to this agency/company/organization?

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Event participated in or position held at this service site: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT EDUCATIONAL VOLUNTEER APPLICATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of availability for community service: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date and time)

**\*Person to notify in case of emergency:**

(Parent)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(Other)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Doctor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to work with: \_\_\_ Children \_\_\_ Teenagers \_\_\_ Adults \_\_\_ Elderly

Special Interests:

- |                       |                           |                         |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| ___ Computers         | ___ Sign Language         | ___ Graphics/Design     |
| ___ Animals           | ___ Elderly               | ___ Public Relations    |
| ___ Art/Music         | ___ Disabled              | ___ Recreation/Sports   |
| ___ Human Services    | ___ Education/Literacy    | ___ Skilled Labor       |
| ___ Boards/Committees | ___ Environment           | ___ Fundraising/ Events |
| ___ Bilingual Skills  | ___ Other (specify) _____ |                         |

Previous Work Experience/Special Training (i.e., nurse aid, CPR, water safety):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any physical restrictions that limit your ability to volunteer:

\_\_\_\_\_

Things I do best: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Things I would like to learn: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why I want to volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If additional space is needed to answer the above question, please use the back of the form.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE LETTER OF AGREEMENT

I. PARTICIPANTS

- a. Students
- b. Parents
- c. Local School
- d. Volunteer Site

II. GOAL:

Through participation in meaningful community service, \_\_\_\_\_ will develop leadership skills, and community awareness that will prepare him or her for active citizen participation while earning academic credits

III. LENGTH OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

\_\_\_\_\_ will provide seventy-five (75) hours of community service during his or her 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> year of academic study. These hours may be served at more than one volunteer site.

IV. COMMITMENT/ RESPONSIBILITY-STUDENT:

- Attends orientation.
- Reports to volunteer agency on time.
- Works only in assigned areas.
- Engages only in volunteer assignments that supervisor approves.
- Completes the Community Service Plan that includes preparation, action, and reflection.
- Complies with school and volunteer site conduct standards and requirements.
- Safety of the student is a joint responsibility of the student and the volunteer site.
- Keeps confidential any privileged information learned on the job.

V. COMMITMENT/ RESPONSIBILITY-PARENT:

- Gives permission for his/her youth to participate in the community service program sponsored by this school.
- Understand that transportation needs are the responsibility of the parents or the student.
- In the event of a medical emergency, I approve the following:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Take my child to the nearest hospital
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Take my child to \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor

VI. COMMITMENT/ RESPONSIBILITY-SCHOOL:



- Provides diverse community service-learning opportunities from which the student may choose.
- Is responsible for screening the agencies/ or organizations and their volunteer opportunities to determine appropriate placement for each student.
- Reviews and verifies completion of community service plan.
- Provides one (1) academic credit that may be applied toward graduation upon completion by student of seventy-five (75) hours of documented community service in grades 9 through 12, as outlined on Arkansas Legislative Act 648 of 1993.
- Designates person(s) to monitor the student community service program for Act 648 as applies to each student participant.
- Assesses the effectiveness of program annually.

VII. COMMITMENT/ RESPONSIBILITY- VOLUNTEER SITE

- Provides student with orientation, training, and written job descriptions.
- Provides adequate supervision for student as needed according to student’s age and abilities.
- Safety of the student is a joint responsibility of the student and the volunteer site.

Signatures:

_____	_____
Student	Date
_____	_____
Parent	Date
_____	_____
School Supervisor	Date
_____	_____
Volunteer Site Coordinator	Date