



# Service-Learning

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How do I learn more about Service-Learning and the GivePulse Database?**

- Visit the MCC Service-Learning website at [www.middlesex.mass.edu/servicelearning](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/servicelearning).
- You can find a GivePulse User Guide under the Student Resources section.

### **What is the process to sign up for Service-Learning ?**

- You need to talk with your professor about the types of agencies/schools that are appropriate and connected with your course learning outcomes.
- Service-Learning staff does not assign students to agencies. It is your responsibility to look up sites in the GivePulse database and find one that matches your course requirements. The Service-Learning staff is happy to meet with you to navigate the database, if you are having difficulty finding a site.
- Once you have found a site, you must complete the Service-Learning Contract and submit it by the deadline.

### **What if I am having trouble finding a site?**

- Email the Service-Learning Office at [civiclearning@middlesex.mass.edu](mailto:civiclearning@middlesex.mass.edu) and make sure to include your name, the course you are taking and details. Do not wait until the last minute and expect an immediate response.
- The Service-Learning staff works with over 100 students and responds to email within a reasonable time. Service-Learning staff will also be available by appointment to meet individually with students to review the process and help with finding a site.

### **When should I begin looking for a site?**

- As soon as you can! It takes time to find a site and contact a staff member. Community partners may not respond to you immediately.
- If Service-Learning is a requirement for your course, you should find a site as soon as possible. You will compromise your grade if you do not complete the requirement.
- You need to give time to get CORI approved (Criminal background check), which can take multiple weeks.
- Many sites won't accept students past the S-L contract deadline since you will not be able to complete your course requirements.
- Do not expect to find a site if you wait until the last minute. It is your responsibility to investigate and select a site. If assistance is needed, the S-L office is a resource.

### **What is the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) form?**

- This criminal background check MUST be completed when working with children, senior citizens, or any vulnerable population.
- MCC does not CORI students or provide the paperwork. This is completed by the sites.
- Even if you have already been CORI approved at another location, each site has their own CORI to complete. There is no universal CORI.
- You DO NOT pay for the CORI. The site where you are serving covers the fee.
- Please note that any misdemeanor charges (i.e. disorderly conduct, theft, vandalism, etc.) will show up on your CORI. It is in your best interest to be honest if you have had any charges. Sites have the right not to accept you based on CORI details.



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### **How do I email/call sites?**

- As a representative of MCC, please be professional and courteous when emailing community partners. If you are rude, a site will not respond to you. This is not the first impression you want to make.
- Words not to use: call me ASAP; I will fail if you don't respond; get back to me soon.
- See the sample email below to help write your email:

*Good afternoon / morning (include the person's name, if you know it):*

*My name is Jane Smith and I am currently taking an Intro to Sociology course at Middlesex Community College. The purpose of this course is to explore issues facing communities, how societies develop, and how individuals interact with one another.*

*It is a requirement in this course to engage in a Service-Learning project at a community agency. I am very passionate about hunger and homelessness issues and would like to serve at your site. I need to complete a total of 22 hours this semester. I would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about Service-Learning opportunities that are available at your agency.*

*I look forward to hearing from you and can be reached via email or on my cell (xxx) 222-3333.*

*The best time to reach me is.....*

*Thank you for your time,*

*Jane*

### **How many hours do I need to complete?**

- 22 hours for one class (2.5 – 3 hours a week if you begin by the contract deadline)
- 36 hours for two classes (3.5 – 4 hours a week if you begin by the contract deadline)
- 44 hours for three classes (4.5 – 5 hours a week if you begin by the contract deadline)

### **How do I log my hours?**

- You log your hours in the GivePulse database. There is a GivePulse Guide on the Service-Learning website with instructions. If you would like to meet with Service-Learning staff to review the process, you can email [civiclearning@middlesex.mass.edu](mailto:civiclearning@middlesex.mass.edu) to request a meeting.

### **What are some important guidelines for working with community partners?**

- Before signing up with a site, set up a meeting with the site supervisor to discuss your course objectives, the mission of the organization, complete the Service-Learning Contract, and complete any agency paper work. You should go into the meeting knowing exactly what you want to accomplish during your service.
- Set up a schedule with your site supervisor to ensure weekly consistency throughout the semester. For example, serving every Tuesday from 3pm-6pm for 10 weeks.
- Consistency is crucial for building relationships with staff and those you are serving. This is especially important when working with children.

If you have any questions, you may contact the Service-Learning Office at [civiclearning@middlesex.mass.edu](mailto:civiclearning@middlesex.mass.edu) or 978-656-3462. The Service-Learning Office is located on the Lowell Campus in the Cowan Center, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cubicle 21 or 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 407.