



Service Learning Project

“Never doubt what a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can do to change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Meade, Anthropologist

The Requirement:

The completion of a service learning project is required to graduate from the High Lakes Youth Leadership Program. A project can be completed individually, with a partner or can be completed on the Service Learning Day as part of the program.

The Purpose:

A service learning project demonstrates one’s ability to hone, learn and implement leadership skills through project management and taking responsibility, while giving back to the community.

Choosing a Project:

Your project must present an opportunity for planning, development and leadership. It may be for a school, a community organization, religious institution, or non-profit organization. You are responsible for raising necessary funds for the project (if funds are needed). A project must be a stand-alone project and not part of an ongoing project or community fundraiser. A project can include construction, remodeling, beautification, conservation, or a presentation of an event with a worthwhile purpose. The project must present a challenge that requires leadership, but also something that you can do with unskilled helpers, and within a reasonable period of time.

A project proposal must be submitted to the lead leadership coach for approval if the project will be completed outside of the Service Learning Day as part of the program.

Restrictions:

- A project cannot be done for a commercial business.
- The project must be completed by November 1st.
- Dual credit will not be given for a project that is part of another organization the student is involved in.

What is Service Learning?

“A method of teaching through which people learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences.” - *Alliance for Service-Learning in Education*

According to the Search Institute, there are two basic components to service-learning:

“**Service** – Young people that engage in activities that meet the needs of others and the community...”

“**Learning** – The experiences of serving others are used as an opportunity for self-reflection and learning.”

The Service Learning Process – It includes important steps for project planning and implementation.

When planning a project:

1. **Conduct a needs assessment.** Strive to identify projects that will satisfy community needs and meet educational goals.
2. **Detail goals and objectives.** Define in measurable terms; hours to be served, task to be completed, knowledge gained, values honed, etc...
3. **Plan for fun and fulfillment.** Plan ways for participants to benefit from and enjoy their contribution to the group and work.
4. **Identify collaborators and resources.** Identify experts, youth organizations, community service organizations, etc. who are interested in helping achieve project goals. Seek physical resources like meeting space, transportation, and tools required for project completion.

When implementing a project:

1. **Encourage teamwork.** Engage all participants in activities that cultivate cooperation and group process skills.
2. **Build a focus mission.** Work with the group to define a strong sense of purpose for the service project.
3. **Gather background knowledge.** Connect with resource experts. Research the need and feasibility of potential service projects.
4. **Develop a plan of action.** Once a project is selected, engage the whole group in the development of the work plan and task lists that map its successful completion.
5. **Complete the service project.** Work as a group to complete service goals.
6. **Celebrate the success.** Commemorate and enjoy the lessons learned and community needs fulfilled.

