

Information for Students

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Why "Do" Service-Learning?

Adapted from UC Boulder

By doing Service-Learning projects, students serve the community while they benefit themselves by learning about an organization and its work, gaining access to information and other resources, and gaining valuable practical experience.

Service-Learning Is A Way To...

- ...feel good about yourself because you're doing something with real purpose that helps others.
- ...meet new people and make contacts that may help you get jobs after college.
- ...satisfy your need to do something meaningful other than school work RIGHT NOW.
- ...expand your mind by encountering completely new circumstances that make you ask new questions about the world.
- ...experience how to work effectively with other people, in situations that require cooperative thinking and teamwork.
- ...learn from your experiences.
- ...get access to resources that can't be found at the College.
- ...learn what your education is worth.

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Did You Know That Service-Learning...

- ...has a positive impact on students' academic learning?
- ...improves students' ability to apply what they have learned in "the real world"?
- ...has a positive effect on student personal development such as sense of personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development?
- ...has a positive effect on interpersonal development and the ability to work well with others, leadership and communication skills?
- ...can facilitate cultural and racial understanding?
- ...can foster social responsibility and citizenship skills?
- ...contributes to career development?
- ...fosters stronger relationships with faculty?
- ...improves student satisfaction with college?
- ...has a positive impact on graduation rates?

(Taken from: What We Know about the Effects of Service-Learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions and Communities, 1993-2000: Third Edition by Eyler, Giles, Stenson, and Gray)

How do I get involved in service-learning at ESF?

Doing Service-Learning is easy. Yes, it's easy! All you have to do is take a course that incorporates Service-Learning, or suggest to your professors that you're interested in Service Learning and you'd like to do such a project for part of your class credit. HOW do students get involved in Service-Learning? They follow these easy steps:

1. Think about what kinds of service you would like to do.
 - What kind of time do you have to commit to Service-Learning? Most often Service-Learning projects require time outside of class.
 - Do you want more experience in an area you've already explored or do you want to try something completely new?
2. Take a look at the list of Service-Learning courses offered here at ESF. What's interesting? This site contains a list of [Service-Learning courses](#) here at ESF. Faculty contact information is listed for each course too.

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3. Register for the Service-Learning courses you'd like to take.
4. If a Service-Learning option is not available for a course that you think would offer the option, consult your professor. Have him or her call the [Program Coordinator for Community Service](#) (315-470-4909) for assistance with incorporating a service-learning project into his/her course.
5. [Contact](#) the Program Coordinator for Community Service (315-470-4909) yourself whenever you'd like!

How much time does a service-learning class take?

(adapted from Indiana University's Office of Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service-Learning)

There's no doubt about it; service-learning can require a couple of extra hours each week. Typically, you'll need to make a commitment to an organization, or work with your group on a project for an agency, or meet regularly with a student in a local school. Most agencies, however, work around your schedule, and many students continue their involvement after the class ends. **Note:** An interesting phenomenon about service is that once you dedicate the time to service, all kinds of things get easier. Your studies may come more easily, personal relationships become less stressful, and you're generally happier.

Do I get credit for going each week to a community-based organization?

(adapted from Indiana University's Office of Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service-Learning)

In service-learning, credit is given for the learning, just as in every other class. Service can provide a better understanding of what you're learning in class, and studies have shown that students in sections performing service score better on the same tests than students doing traditional studies. Some professors do keep track of your service hours and take points off if you miss, just as they would if you turned in a paper late.

What are the benefits for me of taking a service-learning class?

(adapted from Indiana University's Office of Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service-Learning)

The tangible benefits are greater connections to the local community, exposure to a wide variety of people, and real-world examples of what you're learning in class. You may also identify a career choice and gain experiences to put on a resume. Intangible benefits include learning more about yourself, learning things from the community that you can't learn in class, and interacting with people in ways not always possible in the classroom.

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What am I required to do to make this work?

(adapted from Indiana University's Office of Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service-Learning)

When you take a service-learning class, you need to commit to the community-based organization, ask questions about its mission, make connections between your service and your class studies, and give 100%. Professional behavior, such as calling in advance if there's a change in your schedule, is also expected. If you're willing to do whatever it takes to serve the community, you'll get more out of the experience and improve your course work.

What if I just want to volunteer occasionally, and not with a course?

(adapted from Indiana University's Office of Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service-Learning)

Then you should contact the [Program Coordinator for Community Service](#) (110 Bray, 315-470-4909). The Coordinator can connect you with local community agencies and/or student organizations that perform community service as part of their mission. ESF also has many annual events that can help connect you to volunteer projects, such as the Campus Day of Service.

"Don't take our word for it" - Student Testimonials

(credit: Beth Hensberry, Molly O'Keefe, Gizelle Stokes)

"Well, at ESF we get a lot of hands on experience and I was really into helping my community before I came to Syracuse, but the experience was enjoyable. The best part is the amount you learn, no text book can teach you what you can and should experience." Female, undergraduate, ESF

"I certainly benefited from this experience: it got me out of the college bubble and I had a really good time doing it." – Female, undergraduate, ESF

"My learning experiences were amazing. I learned how to be mature, how to deal with so much that I never thought I'd experience (positive and negative), how to handle stress, how to time manage, and privacy issues" Female, undergraduate, ESF

"Our projects have given me a strong work ethic" – Male, Grad Student, ESF