



## STUDENT GUIDE

### What is a Community Engaged Scholarship Course?

*Community Engaged Scholarship describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.*

*The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.*

*– Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*

Community engagement makes student learning more relevant and challenges students to use their knowledge and skills to address real, complex, community concerns. Assigned community engagement activities facilitate learning of course objectives, but also invite reflection on students' sense of purpose and civic responsibility.

Community Engaged Scholarship can be direct, involving in-person service individuals in the community, for example, tutoring a child, preparing earned-income tax credit forms for low-income clients, or assisting therapists who treat people with physical disabilities. Community Engaged Scholarship can also be indirect, in which students create projects or conduct research for organizations that serve the community. Examples include writing grants, conducting program evaluations, doing policy analysis, or developing an advocacy campaign strategy.

### How is a Community Engaged Scholarship course different from volunteering or an internship?

Community Engaged Scholarship deliberately links community partnerships to the intended educational outcomes of the course. Learning is assessed and measured through student reflections and other assignments—like essays, group discussions, projects, or portfolios. Volunteers may commit to addressing community needs, but their work does not have to be explicitly tied to one or more learning outcomes. Interns may be required to demonstrate mastery of learning through their work experiences, but their experiences may or may not be focused on meeting a need identified by the community.

### What other community service opportunities are there at GW?

The Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service provides far too many to list here! Visit <https://serve.gwu.edu> for more information.

Honey W. Nashman Center for  
Civic Engagement and Public Service

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## Student Checklist for Community Engaged Scholarship Courses

### Student Checklist: Planning Phase

- **Familiarize yourself with the goal of the service assignment in your course.**  
Review the objectives and requirements of your service assignment in the course syllabus. Be sure you understand the outcomes intended for your community partner and the learning outcomes for students.

- **Identify one or more Community Partners to work with.**  
Your instructor may provide a list of community partner organizations for you to choose from. These opportunities have been identified as good a fit for the course and likely represent a standing campus-community partnership your instructor would like to honor.

If your instructor indicates that you are responsible for finding an organization to work with, you will need to identify a few organizations that would be a fit for the course objectives. The Nashman Center provides information about local organizations and current service opportunities at <https://gwserver.givepulse.com/group/affiliates/128546>. Be certain you are clear about your instructors intentions for the partner and for your learning so you will be able to communicate the course objectives to your Community Partner when setting up your placement.

- **Contact the Community Partner.**  
We recommend that you call AND email the agency. Let the organization's volunteer coordinator know what kind of experience you're looking for and what you hope to learn from it. Listen carefully to understand what the agency most needs from you. **Allow time for this stage – get started as soon as possible.** You may need to contact multiple organizations before finding a fit for your course. A sample script is provided below.
- **Complete any necessary training or background checks.**  
Most agencies will require you to visit in person and complete volunteer paperwork. Some, particularly those involving direct contact with children or other special populations, may require additional steps such as a police background check, or special training.

**DC Public Schools (DCPS)** has specific requirements prior to service. Allow additional time to complete them.

#### Step one: TB Testing

GW's Colonial Health Center can provide TB testing. If this is a requirement for service with your community partner, the Nashman Center will cover the costs of the standard test.

1. Complete the Nashman Center's Online TB Test Form: <http://go.gwu.edu/tbtest>
2. Show your GWorld ID at the Nashman Center front desk (837 22<sup>nd</sup> St.) to receive a voucher to use at Colonial Health.
3. Visit Colonial Health for your test. No appointment is necessary, walk-in appointments are available during the times below.
  - Tuesdays: No appointment necessary, walk in between: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.
  - Wednesdays: No appointment necessary, walk in between: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.
  - Fridays: no appointment necessary, walk in between: 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

#### Step two: Visit the DCPS Fingerprinting Office (10th floor of 1200 First ST NE, Washington DC, 20002)

1. Complete the online clearance application (<https://octo.quickbase.com/db/bg37a864v>) **BEFORE** getting fingerprinted. If this application is not complete at the time of fingerprinting they will not proceed.
2. Bring a valid government issued ID, and printed copies of: A negative TB/PPD test result, ID (driver's license/passport), and your most updated physical and immunization records.
3. The office is open **Mon-Thurs: 8am to 5pm, and Friday: 8am to 3pm.** (Arrive at least 30 minutes before closing).

□ [Log-in to GWServes and Complete the Online Waiver and Release Agreement Form.](#)

If you will be travelling off-campus for service, complete this form before you begin service.

- To claim your GWServes account, go to <http://go.gwu.edu/GWServes> and click the Log In button on the upper right and use your GW Email and password to log in. ( If you are involved with service outside of class as an individual or with a student organization, event or additional community partners you can submit those hours on GWServes as well.)
- Once you are in your GWServes account, navigate to the course page to find the link to complete the Waiver and Release Agreement Form online.

### Student Checklist: Action Phase

It is important to remember that you are representing not only yourself, but also George Washington University. These guidelines are a minimum of how you can best do that.

- **Be professional.** Treat your service as you would treat paid employment. Perform the duties and responsibilities assigned to you in a complete and professional manner as if you were an employee. If you are going to be late or are unable to attend please call your contact person as soon as possible.
- **Be punctual.** Arrive on time. Tardiness is unprofessional and inconvenient to the site supervisor. Set a schedule with your supervisor for your service and stick to it. If you have to make changes, communicate well in advance with your supervisor.
- **Transportation** The best and most economical way to travel to your site is likely not via Uber. In our surveys, students note that Metro and buses are cheaper, often quicker and easily access most service sites.
- **Follow a work ethic.** Remember your agreement to serve is a commitment to the community partner. You will establish relationships with the community partner's clients and they will look forward to seeing you. Community partner staff will value the service you provide and count on your help.
- **Maintain confidentiality** of clients and employees at your community site. If you ever have questions about what information can and cannot be shared, ask about the policy.
- **Be presentable.** Clothing should be neat, professional and appropriate for the duties required. Ask whether the organization has a specific dress code and meet it.
- **Communicate.** Ask questions if you aren't clear about how to do your tasks. If you have any concerns, communicate them before the situation becomes unmanageable.
- **Be personal.** Within the bounds of appropriateness, get to know the people around you (staff, other volunteers, clients of the organization).
- **Be observant and mindful** of how you can link your service experience to your course topics. Do ask questions of those around you in order to learn, but exercise empathy and respect in how you ask them. Avoid giving the impression that you are negatively judging another's experience.

As you serve, **keep track** of your service hours and report them to your instructor and community partner by submitting them on the GWServes platform. Additional details on reporting your hours are below.

### Student Checklist: Follow-Up Phase

□ [Complete course assignments, weaving together your service-learning with your academic learning.](#)

It is helpful to think of your service with the community as being more similar to a text than an assignment. You do not receive points or grades for reading your textbook or for completing service hours, but for completing exams or papers that demonstrate what you have learned from them. Reflection activities and course assignments will be assigned by your instructor to help meet the objectives of your particular course.

□ [Consider your eligibility for a service award](#)

You may be eligible for the President's Volunteer Service Award or a GW Commencement Cord:  
<https://serve.gwu.edu/service-awards-and-recognition>

## Contacting your Community Partner

### Common Questions

#### Who do I talk to?

When calling an agency, always ask to speak with the contact person identified by your instructor or ask for the Volunteer Coordinator. If that person no longer works at the organization, ask to speak with a person who manages volunteer requests.

#### When should I call?

Always try to call the contact person during the times they have identified as the best time to reach them. If you must leave a message, identify yourself, why you are calling, your phone number and the best time the contact person can reach you. Always call during working hours. Be persistent in your efforts, as non-profit agencies may be very busy providing services to the community! You might have to make SEVERAL attempts before you are able to reach your contact.

#### Should I try email instead?

Partners may respond quicker to email. If you haven't heard back from your contact by phone, follow up with an email. But do NOT send only an email.

#### What do I say?

Hi. My name is, and I am a student at George Washington University. As part of my involvement in a (name of course) course, I have been asked to complete a service-learning project. As part of this project, my instructor wants me to learn: (give the main learning objective of the project). I would need to complete (number of hours/visits required) by (state your deadline). I would like to know if you have any service-learning opportunities where I might be able to help your organization while also meeting my project's requirements.

#### What do I ask?

What will I be doing? What times can I come? Where will I be working? Will I be trained? How do I get there? What should I wear? When can I start?

#### What do we discuss at my first meeting on-site?

- Collect the information needed to report your placement to your instructor (e.g. contact person's name, title, email, and phone).
- Communicate your learning objectives. Do the activities help you meet your objectives?
- Determine a schedule.
- Find out when your orientation and training will be (if applicable).
- Complete required paperwork for the agency.
- Confirm your next steps (when do you start, who do you meet, where do you go, etc.).
- Stay in touch! Communication is key!

## Risk Management Tips

These guidelines will help you have a safer and more effective experience as a volunteer.

**Establish a contact person and/or site supervisor.** Know who will be working on the project with you and a phone number to reach them. Be prompt to your scheduled time and ready to work.

**Be aware of your environment.** The organization with which you are working has specific ways of interacting and getting things done. Be aware of these expectations and act appropriately. Do not assume you know more than the people who are there every day.

**Follow the organizations policies and procedures.** Be familiar with the specifics of your job. Gain a clear understanding of any rules you need to follow and take any training you might receive seriously. Also ask about any liability of which you need to be aware.

**Understand the need for confidentiality.** Becoming personally involved with the agency clientele is a rewarding experience, but remember that you may be dealing with sensitive information that is not to leave the organization. Speak with your site supervisor about their confidentiality policy. Do not feel pressured to share your own personal information with clients.

**Dress appropriately and sensibly.** Dress neatly, modestly, cleanly, and safely and do your best to blend in with the community. Wear clothing that affords you comfort, flexibility and is appropriate for the conditions you will be working under. When in doubt, ask your site supervisor.

**Avoid carrying expensive personal items.** Items such as expensive electronics, flashy jewelry and designer clothing can cause you to be identified as an outsider. There also may not be a place for you to store your personal items as you serve.

### Use common sense:

- Be aware of your instincts. Be sensitive to your own needs and limitations.
- Maintain an appropriate level of interaction with the staff and clients at the site and don't counsel clients unless you are trained to do so. Do not borrow from or lend money to clients or staff.
- Don't expect to know all the answers. If faced with a question you are not familiar with try to get the answers or direct someone to the proper person that can provide an answer.
- Stay informed of issues affecting the area in which you serve.
- Take extra special precautions when going to sites at night.
- Do not give out your home address or telephone number to the organization's clients.
- If you feel uncomfortable, don't hesitate to report it to your site supervisor, your instructor, or the Nashman Center staff.
- Don't leave visible items unattended while you are volunteering.
- Work and travel in pairs, if possible.
- Give the phone number of your agency and your schedule to a roommate or friend.
- Never use alcohol or drugs on site. Please respect the smoking policy of the agency.

### In the event of an emergency, either On-site or in Transit

- 1) For some emergencies your first call may be 911
- 2) Contact your site supervisor/contact person and follow the organization's protocol
- 3) Call the University Police Department (UPD): 202-994-6111
- 4) Call Amy Cohen, Nashman Center Executive Director: W#202-994-9890 C# 703-850-5708

## Gender-Based Harassment On-site or within the GWU Community

Be aware of gender-based harassment policies and what forms it can take. It is unsolicited and unwelcome sexual advances, either verbal or physical. It refers to behavior which is not welcome, personally offensive, and which debilitates morale. GW students' desire to develop authentic, trusting relationships with community agency staff and clients exists within boundaries of mutual respect. These relationships must be free from intimidating behavior, disrespectful comments, or unwanted flirting.

The George Washington University is committed to maintaining a positive environment free of any form of harassment and works to create a campus culture that fosters respect for all members of the community. If you have any concerns about gender-based harassment occurring in relationship to your service:

1. Notify your contact at the community organization (if the incident(s) occurred at the service site).
2. Notify Amy Cohen, the Nashman Center Executive Director if the incident(s) occurred on-campus: W#202-994-9890 C# 703-850-5708. Please note she has a responsibility to report incidents to GWU's Title IX office.

Title IX protects *any* person from sex-based discrimination, regardless of their real or perceived sex, gender identity, and/or gender expression. Female, male, and gender non-conforming students, faculty, and staff are protected from any sex-based discrimination, harassment or violence.

The Title IX office at George Washington University monitors overall compliance with Title IX requirements, implements campus wide sexual harassment/violence prevention and response programming, and ensures equitable access to University resources.

For more information about our efforts to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and violence, please visit <http://haven.gwu.edu/title-ix-office>

To report an incident: <https://haven.gwu.edu>

If you wish to remain anonymous please call the Sexual Assault Response Consultative Team (202) 994- 7222.



## Service Hours: What to Count and Using GWServes to Report Them

Tracking the hours you spend working with organizations and community partners documents your contribution for future record, in particular when done consistently over a long period of time. It also helps GW assess our value to the community. However, certain projects can be more difficult to track than others. Please use the list below as a guide, but always ask your instructors or a Nashman Center staff member if in doubt.

You will use the GWServes platform to track your hours. Signing up requires that you claim your account. To do this, go to <http://go.gwu.edu/GWServes> and use your GW email address and log in. After you claim your account, you can join your class, report hours, and communicate with community partners. Your instructor can see the hours and impact you report on the GWServes platform, and your community partner can verify your service on the GWServes platform (if requested).

To submit service hours on GWServes, navigate to your Community Partner's page and click the green "Add Impacts" button. There is a chance you may not be able to find your community partner the first time you try to add an impact. If so, use the "Add Impacts" button on your own GWServes "dashboard" and enter the name of the Community Partner when requested. This will notify the Nashman Center staff to reach out to the organization and create a GWServes page for them.

When submitting hours, we recommend using the "reflection" section to enter a brief description of what you did. This helps everyone involved (faculty, community partners, the Nashman Center) to understand your impact beyond just "service hours." Typical entries might include, "provided homework help with four children," "presented a workshop," or "conducted interviews."

If you need help setting up your account or have questions, there are short videos online here <https://gwserves.givepulse.com/group/documents/159231> that can help you navigate the system and maximize what you can do with your account.

### DO record time spent:

- Performing any activity assigned to you by a community partner
- Creating products as directed by a community partner, e.g. grants, brochures, websites
- Performing activities directly related to the outcome of your service project, like making fliers for a fundraiser you are helping to plan
- Planning, doing research, or preparing for activities when necessary to complete assigned tasks
- Undergoing training or orientation activities hosted by a community partner or related organization, e.g. CPR training by the Red Cross for an assisted living center
- Meeting with a community partner to discuss your assigned activities

### DO NOT record hours for the following activities:

- Traveling to/from a service site, unless with clients or the organization as part of a related activity, e.g. a tour that is part of an orientation, or supervising school children on a bus to the service site
- Contacting community organizations when arranging an initial partnership
- Reflection activities, assigned or otherwise, e.g. journaling, blogging