

Volunteer Guidelines

The Center for Student Involvement (CSI) at the University of Houston is providing the following as a series of guidelines to help you think about and plan your service. Developing an understanding of service is an ongoing process that we engage with as we encounter new questions and situations. If you would like some additional guidance or have questions about a specific type of service, please contact the Center for Student Involvement at csi@uh.edu.

The following are definitions utilized by CSI in the context of community service:

- **Community Service** is broadly defined as time spent contributing uncompensated effort with the intention of addressing a genuine *community need* in association with a *Community Partner*.
- **Community Need** is defined as a social or environmental issue generally recognized as having a significant negative impact on a community.
- **Community Partner** is defined as a public, nonprofit, or volunteer organization with a stated mission to address one or more identified community needs, and that has specific expertise for addressing issues related to that need. A Community Partner may also be a for-profit organization awarded public funding to address a specific community need (such as a section 8 housing community, or a private hospital, hospice, or nursing home that accepts public funding).

The following are examples of uncompensated effort that **may be logged** as Community Service:

- Volunteering supervised by and coordinated with a Community Partner. This may include special event volunteering, coaching, tutoring, mentoring, camp counseling, child care, senior care, fundraising activities, presentations and performances, attendance at board meetings, setting up and taking down events.
- Service hours undertaken with a faith based organization, as long as direct service is offered to the general population with no faith requirement. Examples include building houses with Habitat for Humanity, or guiding a church youth group as they work at a soup kitchen open to the public.
- Volunteering as a mentor with a university office program, where the purpose of mentoring is ensuring the students success of the mentees. These hours include all in person interactions with mentees, and time facilitating activities for the program.
- Time spent completing required training for a specific volunteer activity. For example, required confidentiality training and orientation or on-boarding with a community partner.
- Volunteer firefighters or uncompensated first responders may log $\frac{1}{4}$ of their shift hours and 100% of their actual time on a response.
- Citizenship activities, such as voter registration drives or tutoring for citizenship courses
- Providing support services to students with disabilities
- Pro bono professional services to non-profit organizations or community residents

The Center for Student Involvement reserves the right to determine that an activity not defined in this document does not qualify as a volunteer activity.

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The following are examples of uncompensated effort that **may NOT be logged** as Community Service:

- Any effort for which the student is paid or receives other significant compensation.
- Driving time to and from volunteer experiences and travel, leisure, and sleep time on a service trip.
- Time spent in service learning classrooms or doing class work that will be turned in for credit.
- Shadowing experiences or self-improvement experiences. Examples include leadership courses, job shadowing, and in class preparation for service learning projects.
- Internal service to a student organization or time spent in general student club or organization activities without a community partner, fundraisers for the student organization, tabling, and meetings.
- Service to an immediate family members that has not been coordinated in some way through a Community Partner does not constitute community service.
- Faith based service persuading a specific faith.

Benefits of Tracking Volunteer Hours

Keep track of your volunteering hours online through Get Involved by logging them with your Student Organization or with the Center for Student Involvement

Students that log hours can:

- Use their Get Involved service hour log as a tool to build a resume and keep track of volunteer experience
- Qualify to receive the President's Service Award at the annual Campus Leaders Ceremony
- Be on an annual list of students who receive the President's Service award through the Center for Student Involvement that is published online.
- Show the positive impact that UH students are making on the community!

Approving Volunteer Hours

- *For Student Organizations:* One of the top three officers in your organization must "approve" your hours.
- *For Center for Student Involvement:* Civic Engagement staff will "approve" all hours logged under CSI.

****All hours submitted by applicants, under CSI or under a Student Organization, for the President's Service Award may be verified by CSI Staff.****

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