

TIPS TO ENGAGING COLLEGE STUDENTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/REVITALIZATION INITIATIVES

- Many colleges are re-examining how they engage their students in order to make the most impact in the community. Try to familiarize yourself with the direction they may be taking community service.
- There are typically two types of community engagement at a college, SERVICE-LEARNING and CO-CURRICULAR SERVICE. Depending on the organizational structure, these can be located in the same office or in two separate parts of the college.
 - **SERVICE-LEARNING:** Community service associated with a course. Students taking a course are required to engage in some form of community service. Their engagement endeavors are connected to course material and a way for the students to learn and apply the concepts from the course.
 - **CO-CURRICULAR SERVICE:** Community service not associated with a course. This is service that is done in the students own time by their own accord, often referred to simply as volunteering. Often this is done through student organizations, leadership programs, ongoing service programs, or one-time service projects.
- Most colleges work on a semester basis. Plan ahead and connect with someone at the college in enough time before the semester starts.
- Not all colleges have a volunteer corps. So they cannot always send you volunteers as soon as you want or need them. Many colleges already have core programming with committed community partners already set up.
- Student organizations are a great resource. Many organize service projects and experiences for their members. Try to find organizations that may have a similar mission to yours or be within a discipline relevant to the assistance you need. A list of student organizations is typically located on the school's website.
- Develop a few ways to engage the students. Projects, internships, regular volunteer hours, one-time events, etc.
- Students are not always around during the breaks and not always attentive to communication around finals time. Look up the academic calendar located on the school's website.
- Other departments who might be involved in engaging students: Career Services, Student Activities, Leadership Programming, Residence Life.
- Numerous ways to advertise on campus. Listservs, websites, databases, mass email communications.

Key Points:

1. **Students are not just free labor**
2. **Make sure to communicate what the students will get out of the experience**
3. **Build in ways to educate the students about your organization and the work that you do**
4. **While community service is a means to educate students, remember that you can learn a lot from them too**
5. **Keep in mind that college students are students first. Community service often works best if the students are able to serve in areas within their discipline and that utilize their skills and interests.**

Websites:

- Campus Compact: <http://www.compact.org/>
- Association of American Colleges and Universities: <http://www.aacu.org/resources/civicengagement/index.cfm>
- Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement: <http://www.civicyouth.org/>
- National Survey of Student Engagement: <http://nsse.iub.edu/>