

How Service Learning Works at Howard Community College

- What:** 15 to 20 classes a semester include an optional or required service learning assignment as part of their curricular course work.
- Who:** Students enrolled in these classes complete an average of 10 to 15 hours of volunteer work.
- When:** Service learning students take the first month of the semester (September or February) to set up their service placement and then complete their hours during the second and third months of the semester (October/November or March/April.)
- How:** During an in class orientation, service learning students are provided with an electronic directory of all of our community partners. Students get to choose the site they would like to volunteer with from a selected list of anywhere from five to seventy five different agencies. The list of approved sites for their course is determined by the instructor of the course and the director of service learning and is based on the course objectives. We have to make sure that the volunteer work that they will perform will help them learn about the courses' subject matter.

Once they choose a site, students contact the site to talk about volunteer opportunities and commit to a placement. If the volunteer coordinator and the student think the site is a good fit, the student will bring a HCC Placement Agreement to the volunteer coordinator and ask them to sign it. The Placement Agreement acts as a formal "promise" between the student, organization and the course instructor. This way all members involved know the kind of the service the student will be performing at the site they have selected.

Hours: Every time a student volunteers at a site, they will bring an HCC Hours Log with them. When they complete a volunteer shift, they will record their hours and ask their supervisor at the site to initial the form verifying that they completed those hours.

Safety: To ensure the safety of our students and reduce liability concerns for our community partners, all of our service learning students sign a waiver agreeing to assume all risks associated with the service they participate in. In addition, all community partners must complete a HCC Partnership Agreement that promises to provide our students with meaningful service and adequate instruction/supervision at the volunteer work site.

Work: We ask all of our community partners to provide meaningful service opportunities for our students that allow our students to directly impact your organization. In addition, we do not allow our students to participate in any administrative, computer or fundraising work. Students can volunteer at a fundraising event, but they cannot fundraise directly. Essentially, our students need to walk away from their experience having significant knowledge about your organization, the services it provides and the population it serves.