



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Chief Academic Officer

DCPS Community Service Guide

SY 2011–2012

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Introduction

In 1992, the District of Columbia Board of Education recognized the importance of instilling in students an ethic of service and an appreciation for giving back to the community. The District of Columbia was one of the first large urban school districts in the country to include community service as a graduation requirement. The Board of Education also recognized that academic learning is more meaningful when it can be applied to real life situations. DC Municipal Regulation 2203.2 requires “100 hours of volunteer community service” and provides that “requirements shall be established by the Superintendent [Chancellor].” This guide details those requirements.

All students must complete at least 100 hours of community service in order to obtain a high school diploma from DCPS. There is no maximum.

The requirements laid out in this guide must be implemented in the 2011–2012 school year unless otherwise noted. Community service performed before the start of the 2011–2012 school year is not subject to the requirements laid out in this guide. Beginning with the 2011–2012 school year, all community service hours must be completed through a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization or a federal, state or local government agency. All community service hours completed after the beginning of the 2011–2012 will be subject to this requirement.

In order to ensure school oversight of the fulfillment of this requirement, each DCPS high school must identify a community service coordinator (Coordinator). The Coordinator is responsible for compliance with, and maintenance of, all documentation related to community service requirements for their respective school. This includes, but is not limited to, the verification of all community service activities and ensuring that the appropriate community service documentation is maintained in students’ cumulative folders. Each school must also identify someone responsible for entering community service information into the student information system (DC STARS).

This document provides guidance around the community service requirement, including roles and responsibilities, forms and additional guidance. Please email questions to the Office of College and Career Readiness at occr@dc.gov.

Guidelines for Requirement

In order to count towards the graduation requirement, community service hours:

- 1) May not result in monetary compensation
- 2) May not be granted during the school day without prior notification and written approval from the Principal. Any written approval given by the Principal must be included in the student's cumulative folder. Any hours accrued prior to notification and approval will not be applied toward the graduation requirement. Community service hours should be completed outside of school hours with exceptions granted on a very limited basis
- 3) Must be completed under the supervision of an adult at the agency, group or organization. This on-site supervisor must be identified and is responsible for verifying the student hours and providing on-site supervision for the service activities. The on-site supervisor may not be the student's parent or close relative
- 4) Must accrue no earlier than the start of high school.
- 5) Must be properly documented (see p.7) in each graduating student's cumulative folder and entered into DC STARS in order for a student to graduate
- 6) Beginning with the 2011–2012 school year, all community service hours must be completed through a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization or a federal, state or local government agency.
- 7) May not be granted if the student is the recipient of the service. For example, the student cannot receive tutoring services and count those hours for community service. However, if the student is providing tutoring services, those hours can be applied toward community service.

Examples of 501(c)(3) Organizations

501(c) (3) organizations are tax-exempt charitable organizations that apply for and meet requirements set by the Internal Revenue Service. The organizations listed below are meant only as examples. A more comprehensive list of 501(c)(3) organizations can be found at www2.guidestar.org or www.irs.gov/app/pub-78.

- American Red Cross
- DC Habitat for Humanity
- Family and Child Services of Washington, DC
- Girls and Boys Town of Washington, DC
- Ronald McDonald House
- So Others May Eat
- Washington DC Convention and Tourism Corporation
- Washington Humane Society

- Washington Performing Arts Society

Examples of Federal, State or Local Government Agencies

Federal, state and local government agencies are any agencies that provide some regulatory service or enforcement and are responsible for the oversight and administration of a specific government function. The agencies listed below are meant only as examples. A more comprehensive list of federal, state and local organizations can be found at the following websites:

Federal Government Agencies

http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml. Examples include:

- United States Department of Justice
- United States Department of Agriculture

State/Local Government Agencies

<http://app.dc.gov/agencies/index.asp>. Examples include:

- Executive Office of the Mayor, District of Columbia
- Metropolitan Police Department, District of Columbia
- Department of Health, District of Columbia

Examples of Unacceptable Activities

There are some activities that may be “nice to do,” but will not be counted towards fulfillment of the community service requirement. The following are examples of activities that will not be approved for community service hours.

- Attending a club meeting or event
- Babysitting, performing chores, hair styling and/or braiding or dishwashing
- Contributing a donation (e.g., giving food, clothing, money, etc.)
- Performing any activity where a student receives payment
- Spending time coming up with or identifying a community service project
- Taking part in any activities organized by the school as part of school-sponsored activities such as:
 - Student government meetings, campaigns or general activities
 - Practicing, playing or being a member of a marching band, athletic team, choir, or similar organization
 - Membership in honor societies (though community service hours performed for honor societies or service organizations may be applied towards the graduation requirement as

long as they meet all other requirements)

- Practicing for athletics or choir participation
- Clerical or administrative tasks for school or JROTC employees

Beginning with the 2011–2012 school year, only community service hours completed through a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization or federal, state or local government agency will count towards a student's community service requirement.

Examples of Acceptable Activities

There are a wide variety of activities that may be performed to fulfill the community service requirement. The responsibility of determining whether an activity is acceptable lies with the Coordinator and ultimately the school Principal. The following are meant only as examples of acceptable activities (if performed under the requirements previously set forth):

- Tutoring students
- Participating in home building
- Making care packages for military personnel
- Instructing senior citizens on computer use
- Preparing or serving food
- Cleaning up rivers or parks

Responsibilities of School-Based Staff

The local school is responsible for:

- 1) Appointing a Coordinator for community service matters and someone to enter information into DC STARS
- 2) Communicating the guidance provided in this document to students and school-based staff
- 3) Monitoring the fulfillment of this requirement by its students as it would other graduation requirements
- 4) Verifying that the students performed the number of community hours they reported
- 5) Ensuring documents supporting the community service requirement are maintained in students' cumulative files
- 6) Entering of community service hours into DC STARS
- 7) Submitting a Graduation Verification Form signed by the Principal
- 8) Beginning with the 2011–2012 school year, verifying that the organizations/agencies students performed their hours through are 501(c) (3) organizations or federal, state or local government agencies.

1) Appointing a Coordinator and Someone to Enter Information into DC STARS

Each local school must appoint a Coordinator. The Coordinator is responsible for compliance with, and maintenance of, all documentation related to community service requirements for their respective school. This includes, but may not be limited to, the verification of all community service activities and ensuring that the appropriate community service documentation is maintained in students' cumulative folders.

Each school must also identify someone responsible for entering community service information into DC STARS. This person may be, but does not have to be, the same person.

2) Communicating Guidance to Students

Local schools should communicate to students in writing and through any other means they deem appropriate, the guidance provided in this document. Guidelines can be in the form of a letter, brochure, or contained within the student handbook.

It is recommended that the Coordinator compile a binder of approved community service projects for students to reference.

3) Monitoring Fulfillment of the Requirement

Local schools should monitor community service hours and communicate with Central Office as needed, just as they would any other graduation requirement. Local schools should encourage students to fulfill their community service requirements throughout the school year and to turn in their paperwork at the end of each term.

4) Verification of Community Service Hours

The Coordinator is responsible for verifying service hours by collecting documentation from students. Students must either provide the information through the Project and Hours Form included in the Appendix or through a letter on the organization's letterhead that includes:

- a. Name of student
- b. Number of community service hours performed
- c. Name and contact information of the on-site supervisor

The community service Coordinator or designee must maintain all documentation related to community service requirements and must perform periodic review of related files.

5) Ensuring Appropriate Documentation in Student's Cumulative Files

The local school must keep in each student's cumulative files either a copy of the information through the Project and Hours Form included in the Appendix or a letter on the organization's letterhead that includes:

- a. Name of student
- b. Number of community service hours performed
- c. Name and contact information of the on-site supervisor

6) Entry of Community Service Hours into DC STARS

The local school must designate an individual responsible for entry of community service information into the student information system. The Principal may appoint either the Coordinator or another person for this responsibility. Hours submitted by a student to the Coordinator must be entered into the student information system no later than two weeks after the end of that term. (See "Managing Community Service Information in DC STARS" document in Appendix.)

7) Submission of Graduation Verification Form

Each school Principal must verify that every student graduating from their high school has completed the community service requirement and that documentation is available for review at their school. Each school Principal must sign and submit the Graduation Verification Form included in the Appendix by May 31, 2012.

8) Verifying Organizations' 501(c)(3) Statuses

It is the responsibility of the local schools to communicate to students that they must provide an organization's name, address and tax ID number before the end of the 2011–2012 school year, when all community service hours must be completed through a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. A list of 501(c)(3) organizations can be found at www2.guidestar.org or www.irs.gov/app/pub-78.

Responsibilities of the Student

Students have many responsibilities regarding their community service. They are responsible for:

- Selecting an eligible activity/site*
- Identifying an on-site supervisor
- Tracking, documenting and fulfilling their community service hours
- Submitting all required documentation (and other requested supporting documentation) to the school Coordinator
- Keeping copies of all documentation related to the community service requirement
- Abiding by any codes of conduct required by the site and meeting the expectations of their site supervisors
- Transportation to and from the community service site

* Beginning with the 2011–2012 school year, all community service hours must be completed through a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization or a federal, state and local government agency.

Responsibilities of the Community Service Site Supervisors

Community service site supervisors must:

- Verify community service hours by either signing the *Project and Hours Form* provided in the Appendix of this document or writing a letter on official letterhead that includes
 - Name of student
 - Number of community service hours performed
 - Name and contact information of the on-site supervisor
- Serve as a point of contact for the student and the Coordinator with regard to the community service hours performed
- Treat students professionally and with respect at all times

Although not required, it is highly recommended that all community service site supervisors conduct an on-site orientation that informs students of the agency's mission, their policies and the student's responsibilities.

Community Service Forms

Project and Hours Form

This form is used by students to document their project and to track their volunteer hours. Once this form is received by the community service Coordinator, the total hours must be entered into DC STARS no later than two weeks after the end of that term. A copy of the *Project and Hours Form* or a letter on the organization's official letterhead must be included in the student's cumulative folder. This form is included in the appendix of this document.

Community Service Graduation Verification Form

This form is completed by the Principal of each DC Public School for 12th grade graduating seniors only. It is submitted by the end of the school year. An original copy of the form is submitted to the DCPS Office of Secondary School Transformation, Office of the Chief Academic Officer and a copy is retained at the school with their graduation list. This form is currently located in the DCPS Graduation Verification Manual.

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions about Community Service

Q: *If a school sponsors a food drive, can the students receive community service hours for donating can goods?*

A: No. A student who donates a can or goods to a charity cannot count the action of donating items as community service. A student who organizes a fundraising activity, however, can count the hours while engaged in the activity as community service. Beginning with the 2011–2012 school year, all community service hours must be completed through a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization or a federal, state or local government agency.

Q: *Can students perform tasks at their schools and receive community service hours? For example, can schools give band members community service hours for practicing on the weekends?*

A: Time spent as part of a school-sponsored activity (student government, marching band, class, JROTC, etc.) cannot count toward community service hours. If a student is expected to take part in the activity as part of his/her class, the hours cannot be applied towards the graduation requirement. However, if the student is performing community service as part of a group he/she takes part in voluntarily (National Honor Society, Key Club, church youth group, etc.), any hours that meet the requirements outlined in this document may be counted towards the community service graduation requirement.

Q: *Can students perform office assistant tasks and receive community service hours?*

A: Beginning with the 2011–2012 school year, all community service hours must be completed through a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization or a federal, state or local government agency. Thus office tasks may be counted towards the graduation requirement only if they are performed through a 501(c) (3) organization or a federal, state or local government agency and support and approved community service activity.

Q: *Can students perform community service through their school?*

A: Beginning with the 2011–2012 school year, community service for a school must be done through a 501(c)(3) organization or a federal, state or local government agency. Many schools have alumni organizations that are 501(c)(3) organizations. There are also many 501(c)(3) organizations that work with our schools to provide support.

Q: *When students perform community service with an organization or agency, what kind of documentation do they need to provide? Is a phone call enough?*

A: No, a phone call is not sufficient documentation for a student to provide. Students must either provide the *Project and Hours Form* attached or a letter on official letterhead from the organization providing:

- Name of student
- Number of community service hours performed
- Name and contact information of the on-site supervisor

It is highly recommended that students turn in their forms each term. Students are responsible for keeping a copy of all documentation for their own records. If a student loses his/her form, he/she must work with the site supervisor to agree upon the dates and times of service and complete a new form.

Volunteer Websites & Resources

There are many resources in the District of Columbia area that support volunteering and provide comprehensive information regarding service learning. The websites listed below are a good start to finding an appropriate community service activity, but any community service activity must meet the requirements outlined in this guide in order to be counted towards the DCPS graduation requirement regardless of where the opportunity was found.

Greater DC Cares

Greater DC Cares is the largest coordinator of volunteering and business philanthropy in the Washington, DC region. The program is a network of thousands of volunteers and hundreds of nonprofits and businesses working together to make DC the best place to live and work for all who live there. To explore volunteer opportunities in the Washington, DC region visit the website:

<http://www.greaterdccaes.org> and click on “Get Involved.”

Serve DC – The Mayor's Office on Volunteerism

www.serve.dc.gov

The mission of Serve DC is to strengthen and promote the District of Columbia’s spirit of service through partnerships, national service and volunteerism. Serve DC focuses on three areas to accomplish this mission:

- Partnerships: Develop partnerships among civic groups, government agencies, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, corporations, small businesses and the faith-based community.
- National Service: Administers AmeriCorps programs in the District and facilitates collaboration among all national service programs, including Senior Corps, Learn and Serve, AmeriCorps*NCCC and AmeriCorps*VISTA.
- Volunteerism: Encourages citizens of all ages and backgrounds to address a variety of community needs by volunteering. Leads the Citizen Corps initiative, which provides citizens with opportunities to volunteer and make their communities safer, stronger and better prepared to address threats of terrorism, crime and disasters.

Serve.Gov – The Corporation for National and Community Service

[Serve.gov](http://www.serve.gov) is the federal government’s online resource for finding national volunteer opportunities in the community and also creating service activities. To explore this resource, visit the website: www.serve.gov.

Additional Volunteer Websites

Volunteer.Gov: <http://www.volunteer.gov/gov/>

Serve Net: <http://www.servenet.org/>

Volunteer Match: <http://www.volunteermatch.org>

Appendix

Entering Community Service Information

Student Diploma Screen

The community service hours completed by a student must be entered within DC STARS. This is accomplished on the Diploma screen for the student. Once you have brought up the student on the start screen, click on the diploma button.

This brings up the Student Diploma Screen. On this screen, you will see an area for community service information. The field labeled Service Learning Hours lists the number of hours required for the student to graduate (100). Below that, S.S.L. shows the number of hours that have been completed by this student.

The screenshot shows the 'Student Diploma Screen' for a student at Anacostia Senior High School. The student's name is Jane, born 01/01/1996, in grade 09. The 'Service Learning Hours' field is highlighted with a red box and shows 100.0. Below this is a table of credits required, earned, and needed for various subjects. At the bottom, the 'S.S.L. Detail' button is also highlighted with a red box.

Option	Required	Earned	Needed	Waived	Assoc CDP
For Diploma	24.000	0.000	24.000		
Compulsory	20.500	0.000	20.500		
Optional	3.500	0.000	3.500		
English	4.00	0.00	4.00		
Science	1.00	0.00	1.00		
Lab Science	3.00	0.00	3.00		
Algebra	2.00	0.00	2.00		
Geometry	1.00	0.00	1.00		
Math	1.00	0.00	1.00		
World History	2.00	0.00	2.00		
U.S. History	1.00	0.00	1.00		

Eqv. Credits Granted : 0.000 Total Credits Earned To Date : 0.000

Buttons at the bottom: Career program not met, Subst. Courses, Equivalent Credits, **S.S.L. Detail**, Analyze Diploma, Middle School C.

To enter a student's hours, or to see a breakdown of where those hours are coming from, click S.S.L. Detail at the bottom of the screen.

Viewing Community Service Information

Student Diploma Screen

On the student diploma screen shown earlier and below, you will find the number of completed community service hours in the field marked S.S.L.

Student Diploma Screen

450 Anacostia Senior High School Homeroom No Homeroom

Pupil Number Legal Last Name Suffix Legal First Name Gender Birth Date Grade Middle Name

9276914 Public Jane F 01/01/1996 09

Diploma Type Intended Career Development Program Bound For

DCPS 24-CU ?

Diploma Dates Career Dev. Progress

Service Learning Hours 100.0

S.S.L. 18.0

Option	Required	Earned	Needed	Waived	Assoc CDP	Subject Cnt
For Diploma	24.000	0.000	24.000			
Compulsory	20.500	0.000	20.500			
Optional	3.500	0.000	3.500			
English	4.00	0.00	4.00			
Science	1.00	0.00	1.00			
Lab Science	3.00	0.00	3.00			
Algebra	2.00	0.00	2.00			
Geometry	1.00	0.00	1.00			
Math	1.00	0.00	1.00			
World History	2.00	0.00	2.00			
U.S. History	1.00	0.00	1.00			

Eqv. Credits Granted : 0.000 Total Credits Earned To Date : 0.000

Ranking School and Date
No School Data

Unweighted Weighted
Rank Out Of GPA

Custom GPA and Rank

GPAs Ind Course Plan S.S.L. Detail Analyze Diploma

Career program not met Subst. Courses Equivalent Credits Middle School C.

Student Transcript/Letter of Understanding (LOU)

In addition to the student diploma screen, you can also see the number of community service hours completed by a student on the LOU portion of the student transcript. At the bottom of the "Credits Earned" section, you will see a line listing the number of community service hours required and earned.

Credits Earned

Subject Required	Required	Earned	Remaining
English	4	0	4
Science	1	0	1
Lab Science	3	0	3
Algebra	2	0	2
Geometry	1	0	1
Math	1	0	1
World History	2	0	2
U.S. History	1	0	1
U.S. Government	.5	0	.5
DC History	.5	0	.5
Foreign Languages	2	0	2
Music	.5	0	.5
Art	.5	0	.5
Phys Ed/Health	1.5	0	1.5
Career & Technical Education	0	0	0
Other	3.5	0	3.5
TOTAL CARNEGIE UNITS	24	0	24
College Level/Career Prep	2	0	2
Community Service Hours	100	18	82