

## What Service-Learning Projects Should Do:

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What should students and school systems “count” towards service-learning?

All service-learning experiences should meet *Maryland’s Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning*. Listed below are additional guidelines that provide clarification on what LSSs should “count” toward meeting the service-learning requirement. Although all service-learning experiences should meet *Maryland’s Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning*, LSS discretion determines what activities are eligible for service-learning credit.

- Service-learning activities whose purposes are to directly address human needs in areas such as health, education, environment, or public safety, even if done in conjunction with a faith-based agency or institution, may be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
- Service-learning activities whose purposes are to collect food, clothing, or other items necessary to benefit others and meet human needs, even if done in conjunction with a faith-based agency or institution, may be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
- Service-learning activities whose purposes are to extend the benefit of the service activity to individuals or families in need, other than the student’s own family, may be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement. Activities should serve the greater good instead of being self-serving to a particular person or group.
- Service-learning activities whose purposes are to serve the school community must meet the service-learning quality practices articulated in *Maryland’s Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning* to be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement. These projects should be structured to meet greater needs in the areas of health, education, environment, or public safety identified within the school community.
- Service-learning activities whose purposes are to increase voter registration and participation and/or implement voter education activities on particular issues may be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
- Service-learning activities must be inclusive and non-discriminatory. Activities that violate federal or state law, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, creed, sex, age, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability, may not be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
- Service-learning activities that are completed independently by students in the community must meet the service-learning quality practices articulated in *Maryland’s Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning*. Designated school personnel or, in the absence of such designated personnel, the school principal, must verify the completion of the service-learning activity in order for students to receive credit toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
- Service-learning activities should allow students to spend a **significant portion** of their time engaged in meeting a recognized community need (action). The remainder of their experience may involve the other *Maryland’s Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning*. For example, a student project might involve three hours spent on researching and discussing hunger and homeless and exploring civic education issues. Five hours of the project might be spent on preparing and serving food to the homeless. An additional two hours might engage students in an exploration and reflection on the effectiveness of their project and what they learned from the experience.