APPLES
Service-Learning

Online Course Module

CAROLINA CENTER *for* **PUBLIC SERVICE**

Overview

What is APPLES?

- APPLES is a service-learning program founded in 1990 by students who believed learning extends beyond the walls of the classroom.

What is service-learning?

- Service-learning is a type of experiential education that involves the integration of academic coursework with meaningful and relevant community service.
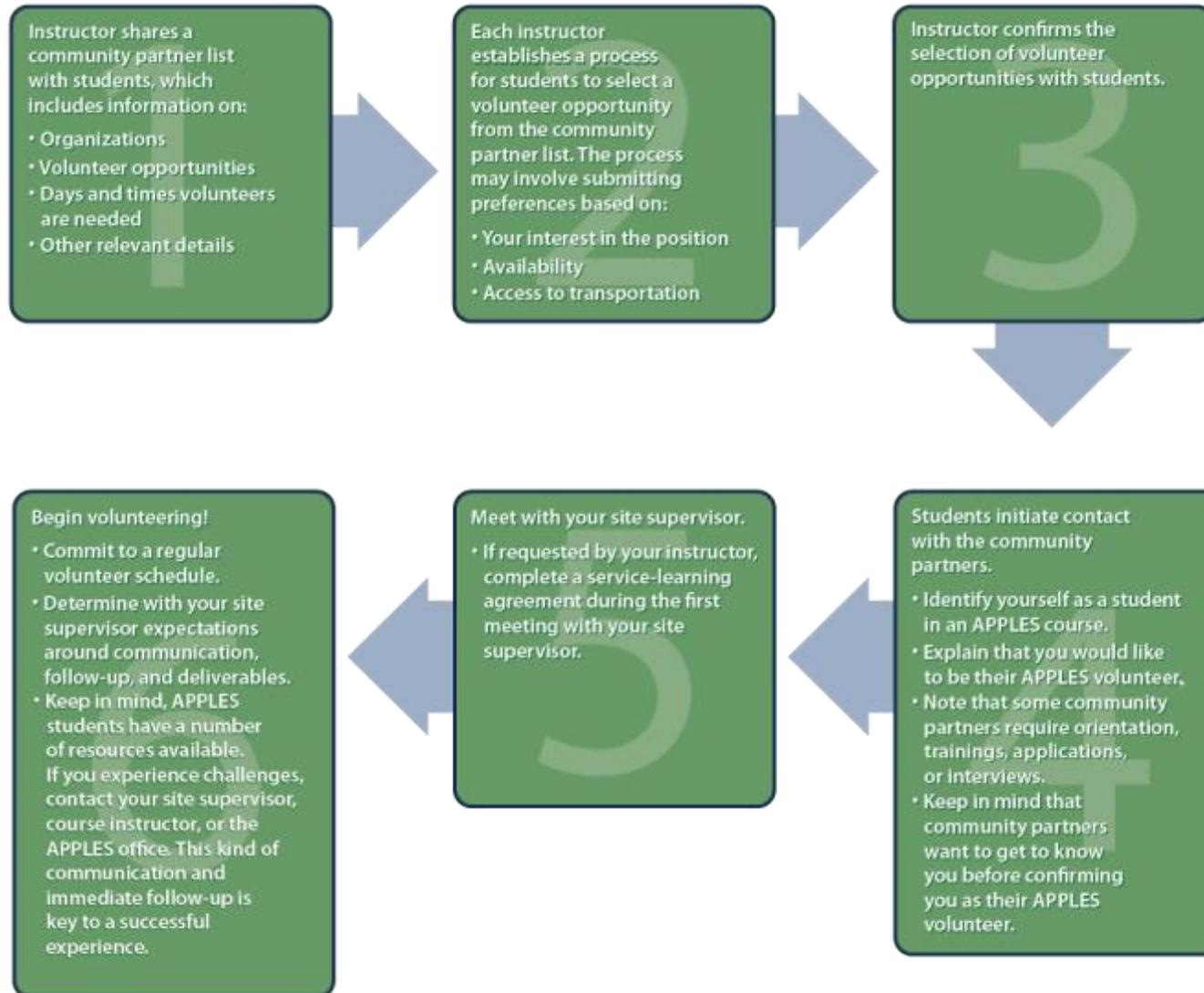
How many students are involved?

- Offered through the Carolina Center for Public Service, APPLES enrolls nearly 2,500 students each year in more than 100 service-learning courses across the disciplines.

Expectations

- ☑ Complete 3-5 hours a week of service for 10 weeks, for a minimum of 30 hours.
- ☑ Commit to one organization and volunteer position provided by your instructor.
- ☑ Immediately initiate contact with the community partner, once your instructor confirms where you are volunteering.
- ☑ Complete additional documentation from your instructor (for instance, time logs or service-learning agreements).

The Process

1. Instructor shares a community partner list with students, which includes information on:

- Organizations
- Volunteer opportunities
- Days and times volunteers are needed
- Other relevant details

2. Each instructor establishes a process for students to select a volunteer opportunity from the community partner list. The process may involve submitting preferences based on:

- Your interest in the position
- Availability
- Access to transportation

3. Instructor confirms the selection of volunteer opportunities with students.

4. Students initiate contact with the community partners.

- Identify yourself as a student in an APPLES course.
- Explain that you would like to be their APPLES volunteer.
- Note that some community partners require orientation, trainings, applications, or interviews.
- Keep in mind that community partners want to get to know you before confirming you as their APPLES volunteer.

5. Meet with your site supervisor.

- If requested by your instructor, complete a service-learning agreement during the first meeting with your site supervisor.

6. Begin volunteering!

- Commit to a regular volunteer schedule.
- Determine with your site supervisor expectations around communication, follow-up, and deliverables.
- Keep in mind, APPLES students have a number of resources available. If you experience challenges, contact your site supervisor, course instructor, or the APPLES office. This kind of communication and immediate follow-up is key to a successful experience.

Testimonies

Now that you have been introduced to APPLES, take a moment to view [this video](#), which includes testimonies from community leaders and students who have volunteered:

- As an individual or as part of a team
- In direct or indirect service to clients (for example, having direct contact with clients by serving meals to them at the Inter-Faith Council [IFC], or indirect contact by creating a donation flyer for IFC).
- In more traditional volunteering (for example, mentoring twice a week for Blue Ribbon Mentor Advocate) or in project-based volunteering (for instance, creating materials to recruit mentors for Blue Ribbon Mentor Advocate).

Creating Successful Community Partnerships

Four Concepts for Creating Successful Community Partnerships

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is an approach to community-based development, based on these principles:

- Appreciating and mobilizing individual and community talents, skills and assets (rather than focusing on problems and needs).
- Community-driven development rather than development driven by external agencies

Asset-Based Community Development

Four Concepts for Creating Successful Community Partnerships

Listening and Learning 2

A key reason to serve your community through APPLES is to gain hands-on experience. Part of this experience stems from listening and paying attention to your environment and those you work with:

- Listen to directions, observe their approach and learn from it.
- Listen to the partner's perspective, specifically their description of past mistakes, the population they serve and the previous difficulties they have encountered and tried to resolve.

Four Concepts for Creating Successful Community Partnerships

Keep an Open Mind

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- Challenge your assumptions about the community and the issues the community partner is addressing.
- Keep an open mind about the experience of the people that the community partner serves, making sure not to assign any judgments or expectations.
- Allow the service-learning experience to better inform you about the complexities of the issues in the community.
- Continue to build sensitivities to the community, its people and the issues addressed through the community partner.

Four Concepts for Creating Successful Community Partnerships

Skill-Based Volunteerism

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- Approach service with the knowledge that you have specialized skills and talents.
- Serve with an awareness of what you have to offer and take action to capitalize on those skills.

The Four Concepts in Action

Asset-Based Community Development	**Listening & Learning**
Keep an Open Mind	**Skill-Based Volunteerism**

Now that you are aware of the four concepts, let's take a look at how each applies to APPLES and service-learning. Click the link for each concept to view a short video:

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)

Listening and Learning

Keep an Open Mind

Skill-Based Volunteerism

Reflection

Reflecting on your service is key. It helps connect your classroom learning with your community experience in an academic context. It can lead to further action and a broader perspective on concepts encountered throughout the course and in the community.

To complete your service experience, reflect in and out of class:

- Objectively describe facts and events related to your experience.

- Subjectively analyze the experience using the disciplinary lens from your course.

- Consider the future impact of the experience on you and the community.

- In addition, your course evaluation allows you to comprehensively reflect on your APPLES service experience.

Practical Advice

Before you launch into your APPLES service-learning experience, review these tips from students and community partners:

- Ask questions.
- If you have any problems or issues, deal with them early on in the semester.
- Be creative with problem solving.
- Use your resources.
- Balance your time wisely.
- Remember to connect the classroom experience to the community experience.
- Be open to new experiences and people.
- Be culturally sensitive.
- Be reliable.
- Communicate with your community partner.
- Check out this video for more practical advice.

Grants

One way to deepen your service-learning experience is to apply for a Partnership Grant. These grants fund supplementary materials for enhancement projects related to your community partner.

- Ten Partnership Grants of up to $100 each are awarded each semester. Applications must be submitted with both a student and community partner signature.

- Apply online on the APPLES website.

What's Next?

Now that you have completed the orientation to APPLES, you are ready to begin your service-learning experience. Feel free to review content in this course any time during the semester. And don't forget the following resources:

- APPLES staff and students
- Your professor
- Your peers
- Your community partner

More Opportunities

In addition, the [APPLES website](#) includes information on the following post-class opportunities:

- Bryan Social Innovation Fellowships
- Spring and Summer Internships
- Alternative Breaks
- Service-Learning Initiative

Best of luck in your service endeavors!