

**APPLES**  
*Service-Learning*  
**COURSES**

Orientation

# 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 integrates academic coursework with meaningful and relevant community service.

## How many students are involved?

- APPLES is a program of the Carolina Center for Public Service and enrolls nearly 2,500 students each year in more than 100 service-learning courses across various disciplines.

# 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, organizational* or *policy/advocacy* based capacities;
- in more *traditional* volunteering (mentor twice a week for Blue Ribbon Mentor Advocate) or in *project-based* volunteering (create materials to recruit mentors for Blue Ribbon Mentor Advocate).



# Summary



- APPLES offers a variety of programs including internships, fellowships and alternative break experiences to transform educational experiences by connecting academic learning and public service.
- Visit the [APPLES website](#) for more information on specific programs.
- Next, we will discuss community partnerships, a key part of the service-learning experiences offered by APPLES.

# Creating Successful Community Partnerships



# Four Concepts for Creating Successful Community Partnerships

## Asset-Based Community Development

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

- 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 or volunteers

*Try not to see your volunteer placement as a problem that you need to “fix,” but as a way to understand your local community and learn about nonprofit work.*

# Four Concepts for Creating Successful Community Partnerships

## Listening and Learning

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

- 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.

*Ask questions and try to learn about your placement beyond just the program or population you are experiencing.*

# Four Concepts for Creating Successful Community Partnerships

## Keep an Open Mind

You will likely experience new things both with the organization and with the population you are serving. Some important things to remember include:

- Challenge your assumptions about the community and the issues the community partner is addressing.
- Allow the service-learning experience to better inform you about the complexities of the issues in the community.
- Practice empathy and build sensitivities to the community, its people and the issues addressed through the community partner.

*Your expectations may change throughout this placement and you should try to remain flexible and see everything as a learning experience.*

# Four Concepts for Creating Successful Community Partnerships

## Skill-Based Volunteerism

Volunteering is a great way to gain professional experience and enhance existing skills and challenge yourself to learn new skills:

- 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.
- Think of an area where you would like to improve and consider working on that through your volunteer placement.

*Ask your site supervisor for feedback during your placement to learn more about your strengths and areas for improvement.*

# The Four Concepts in Action

- Asset-based community development
- Listening and 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](#)

# Service-Learning Course Expectations

- ✓ Complete three to five hours of service per week for 10 weeks, for a minimum of 30 total hours of service.
- ✓ 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).
- ✓ Remain committed to your partner for the semester!

# The Process

**1**

Instructor shares a list of community partners, with information about:

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



**2**

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.

# The Process (cont.)

4

Students initiate contact with community partners.

- Identify yourself as an APPLES course student.
- 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

Students meet with their site supervisors.

- If required 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 your site supervisor's expectations for 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.

# Practical Advice

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

- Ask questions.
- If you have problems or issues, deal with them early on in the semester by speaking with the supervisor, your course instructor or the APPLES office.
- Be creative with problem solving.
- Use your resources.
- Balance your time wisely.
- Reflect on how your classroom and community experience connect.
- Be open to new experiences and people.
- Be culturally sensitive.
- Be reliable to your organization.
- Communicate with your community partner often.
- Check out [this video](#) about practical advice.



# Making it Meaningful



What can you do to make this experience more meaningful?

- Individual or group reflection.
- Apply for funding to complete an extra project.
- Serve beyond the required 30 hours.
- Get involved in other APPLES programming.

# Reflection

Reflection is the hyphen in service-learning. 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 both 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.



# Reflection Questions to Consider

What do you hope to gain from this experience and what are your expectations?

What are the positive and potentially negative impacts of service?

Why does the organization you are working with exist?

Is what you are doing valuable? To whom?

What do you already know about the organization or population you are serving?



# 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.
- Previous examples of partnership grants have included printing marketing materials for a community partner, purchasing supplies for a middle school science class, funding for a cooking class to teach about healthy food practices.
- Apply online on the [APPLES website](#).

# What's Next?

Now that you have completed the orientation to APPLES service-learning courses, you are ready to begin your service-learning experience. Feel free to review content in this module any time during the semester. Enjoy your APPLES experience!



# More Opportunities

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



- Bryan Fellowships
- Spring and summer internships
- Alternative Breaks
- Service-Learning Initiative: Engage

Best of luck in your public service endeavors!