

Frequently Asked Questions: *Chicago Public Schools Service Learning Policy*

Please note: the information provided here refers to the new service learning requirements which apply to students matriculating in 2016–17 and subsequent years. Students matriculating in CPS schools in school year 15–16 or earlier will still be governed by the previous policy.

What is the service learning requirement?

Students must complete two service learning projects in order to graduate. In compliance with the Illinois Civics mandate, at least one of the service learning projects must be completed in a student’s Civics or AP Government course. It is recommended that the second project be completed in a 9th or 10th grade course in order to prepare students for a “capstone” project experience in the Civics or AP Government course.

What is a service learning project?

A service learning project is a civic learning experience that allows students to connect what they are learning in class to work that contributes to the common good in their schools and communities. All service learning projects must include *preparation, action and reflection* components. They should meet the following standards of excellent practice: student voice, meaningful service, curriculum integration, reflection, community partnerships, progress monitoring, diversity and duration and intensity. More guidance can be found at [this link](#).

What are the requirements for independent service learning projects?

Schools may choose to allow students to complete one of the service learning project requirements independent of a specific course. However, these projects must be completed with a certified CPS service learning partner organization and meet the guidelines of service learning as determined by the Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement. Students will be required to work with the designated school Service Learning Coach to receive approval *BEFORE* the project can be implemented. Schools will be responsible for certifying that independent projects meet the required components of a project, which include preparation, action and reflection. Students will be required to present documentation that they have met all three components. A course code for independent service learning projects will be provided upon request.

Where can I find a list of certified CPS service learning partners and organizations?

You can access a list of certified Service Learning Community Partners at [this link](#).

**What about individual community service hours that students might perform?
How will those be recorded?**

Non-credit bearing community service hours should be entered in the awards and honors section of the student’s transcript. This will allow students to showcase their volunteer service to prospective colleges, employers and scholarship review committees. Counselors and/or service learning coaches will be able to enter community service performed by students and the cumulative amount will appear on the final transcript. [Details](#)

How is service learning recorded and tracked?

[Service Learning Projects are recorded in Gradebook](#) with a course code; this automatically populates students’ records on the transcript.

In order to record completion of the Service Learning Project in Civics/ A.P. U.S. Government and during 9th or 10th grade, teachers must assign a non-credit bearing grade for Service Learning. If a student fails a course but has successfully completed the Service Learning Project, they should be given credit for completing the project. Completion of both Service Learning Projects will be reflected on the student’s transcripts. Service Learning course codes are listed below:

Career & Technical Education	999902N	Physical Education	999602N
Civics	999801N	Science	999501N
English	999802N	Social Science	999502N
Fine Arts	999701N	World Language	999401N
JROTC	999702N	Independent Service Learning	999901N
Mathematics	999601N	Other Service-Learning	999402N

How will students receive credit for volunteer hours or community service performed outside of their classrooms?

If a student completes individual community service hours, above and beyond their classroom service learning projects, counselors or service learning coaches can manually record the hours on the Service Learning Hours page in IMPACT SIM. This information will automatically populate on the student's official transcripts; the amount of hours on the transcript will reflect the cumulative amount of service during their high school years.

[Project Preparation for Independent Service Learning Form](#)

[Project Reflection for Independent Service Learning Form](#)

What is the role of the service learning coach?

Service Learning Projects reduce the need for coaches to enter individual hours or create plans for individual community service opportunities. However, coaches play a critical role in helping staff to develop and implement high-quality service learning projects connected to course content. In addition, coaches must complete reporting requests regarding implementation. Finally, for schools that decide to require independent service learning projects, coaches will work with students to identify and support high quality independent project opportunities, and to collect documentation of those projects. See [here](#) for Service Learning Coach responsibilities.

Does the Service Learning Policy apply to all CPS students?

High schools must provide an opportunity for current 9th and 10th grade students, class of 2020 and 2021 respectively, to complete the 2 Service Learning Projects required for graduation. Service Learning Projects must be completed as follows:

1. Successful completion in the Civics or A.P. U.S. Government course;
2. Successful completion in a course offering in 9th or 10th grade (or, if the school chooses, as an independent project – see [this](#) chart for details).

For further questions regarding Service Learning in CPS, including existing resources and related supports, contact Shanti Elliott, Service Learning Manager, at skelliott1@cps.edu.