



Service-Learning Best Practices:
Orientations with Community Partners

PURPOSE: To ensure students gain the most out of the partner's orientation so that they can effectively contribute to the organization.

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the answers to your questions on this form and keep it handy all semester!

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I. Information to Take Away From an Orientation Session

You should be introduced to:

- Individual staff and clients
 - Staff in specific program/office you are serving
 - Other staff you will see or interact with on a regular basis
 - Clients who you will be interacting with regularly
 - Anyone who might provide feedback about or direction for your role or actions
- Roles of staff and clients
 - Supervisor and their direct supervisor (if different)
 - any co-workers present at the orientation
 - clients or anyone serving alongside the students directly as co-volunteers

Information about the organization:

- Mission of the organization
- Brief history of the organization
- Overview of primary programs, services, and initiatives
- Population(s) and community(ies) served - any demographic information about the,
 - *Clientele*
 - *Neighborhood(s)/community(ies) they are located within and/or serving*
 - And if they serve beyond your immediate community, and why
- Where your service will physically take place within the organizations facility (ies), and what resources are available within the facility (ies) you may or should use.
- The specific responsibilities and expectations of your service role.
- Who will you be serving and interacting with regularly in this role.
- How does your service fit into the rest of the organization?
- Who will supervise you (who you can go to with questions) and evaluate you at the end.
 - *Where you can find your supervisor on-site*
 - *Should you check in and out with their supervisor while on site?*
 - *The best ways (e.g. phone or e-mail) for you to contact your supervisor*

II. Expectations to Establish/Clarify During Orientation

- What do you need to do to prepare for your service?
- Do you need to bring anything with you to serve each week?
- Is there a dress code you need to adhere to while serving on-site?
- Do you need to create any materials to use during service?
 - For example, if you are teaching a class, do you need to prepare your own curriculum or is there one already in place that you can follow?
 - Do you need to create any worksheets or other homework materials for the students you are tutoring or are these resources provided?
- What are the rules and regulations of the organization?
 - Are their specific policies to follow in regards to:
 - Interacting with all or certain clients (in-person or over social media)?
 - Situations in which youth may be disruptive, get in physical altercations, and/or need to be disciplined?
 - Adhering to the confidentiality policies of your organization?
- Do you need to enter the facility through a certain entrance? Do you need to sign in with a photo ID, etc.?
- Are you required to keep a time log or other administrative paper work each time you are on-site?

III. Helpful Hints

- Find out the policy for absences (all absences must be communicated to the site supervisor and the S-LTA in advance) and the best way to contact the direct supervisor.
- If available, ask for a tour of the entire office/facility, above and beyond the tour of the specific facility where your service will take place. This will give you a sense of how large or small the organization is, a greater understanding about where you will be serving and the resources available to you (i.e. computers, whiteboards, jump ropes/games, chalk, or anything they may need to use.)