



Community Service-Learning in Massachusetts



“Service-learning is a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”

--From the National Commission on Service-Learning 2001

Grants Funded in 2008-2009

Funding through Learn and Serve America (www.learnandserve.gov) supports:

- **57 grants** to 43 districts ranging from \$4,000 to \$16,470
- More than **30,000** students will engage in curriculum-connected service projects.
- Funding supports activities including:
 - Professional Development for High-Quality Service-Learning
 - Teacher stipends for curriculum and project development
 - Materials and supplies for implementing projects
 - Convening of Service-Learning Advisory Committees to support the development of policies and practices that serve to sustaining service-learning programs.
- For a list currently funded grants visit: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/csl/grants.html>

Grants Available for 2010 (RFPs released in the Spring)

- **Community Service-Learning School-Based Grants (Fund Code 354)**
 - Approximately, **\$275,000** available for grants to districts to support implementing and institutionalizing service-learning. Priority given to districts: serving at-risk youth, proposing to involve youth in projects that serve to reduce barriers to learning. *A portion of this funding is dedicated to continuation grants for current grantees.*

For more information about the Community Service-Learning Program at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education please contact:

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Community Service-Learning: Definition and Key Elements

In 1990, the Corporation for National and Community Service said that service-learning:

- Promotes learning through active participation in service experiences
- Provides structured time for students to reflect by thinking, discussing and/or writing about their service experience
- Provides an opportunity for students to use skills and knowledge in real-life situations
- Extends learning beyond the classroom and into the community
- Fosters a sense of caring for others (as adapted from the National and Community Service Act of 1990)

There are **four key elements** to service-learning, which is also sometimes called community service-learning:

- Service that meets a community need
- Explicit, authentic and guided learning
- Youth decision-making; and
- Analytic reflection.

Service-learning can be applied across all subjects and grade levels—from kindergarten through college—and can involve a single student or group of students, a classroom, or an entire school.

For example: one student may serve a local food pantry while studying the roots of poverty; a science class may clean-up a local streambed while analyzing water samples; and an entire school may adopt a service-learning curriculum focused on community health. Whatever the focus, service-learning benefits the school, community, and the students.

--From Bring Learning to Life, Learn and Serve America, 2/2005

| School-based service-learning is | School-based service-learning is not |
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| ... a method of teaching that combines community service with curriculum-based learning. | ... a volunteer or community service program with no ties to academics. |
| ... linked to academic content and standards. | ... an “add-on” to the existing curriculum. |
| ...about students helping to determine and meet real, defined community needs. | ... logging a number of service hours in order to graduate. |
| ... reciprocal in nature, benefiting both the community and the student. | ... one-sided – benefiting either the students or the community. |
| ... an effective way to encourage and foster active citizenship as part of a public education. | ... compensatory service assigned as a form of punishment by the courts or school administrators. |
| ... an approach to teaching and learning that can be used in any curriculum area as long as it is appropriate to learning goals. | ...only for use in social studies, civics, or American Government classes. |
| ...for all ages, even the youngest children. | ... only for high school and college students. |

--From the National Commission on Service-Learning 2001