

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

LINKING

**TITLE V, Part A
Innovative Programs**

&

SERVICE-LEARNING

Service-learning provides thoughtfully organized experiences that integrate students' academic learning with service that meets actual community needs. Service and learning blend in ways that serve and enrich one another.

Service-learning is a method:

- 1 under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community;
- 2 that is integrated into students' academic curriculum and provides structured time for a student to think, talk, or write about what they did and saw during the actual service activity;
- 3 that provides students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities;
- 4 that enhances what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community, thereby helping to foster the development of a sense of caring for others; and
- 5 that is supported by regular assessment to provide feedback and guide improvement.

How does Title V, Part A support service-learning?

Service-learning can be an effective means of meeting the goals of Title V, Part A, implementing innovative educational programs based on scientifically-based research. Title V, Part A supports service-learning in the following ways:

Local Innovative Education Programs

Part A, Subpart 3, Section 5131, (a) (10) and (a) (24):

This section provides funds to local education agencies (school districts) for innovative assistance programs that may include “community service programs that use qualified school personnel to train and mobilize young people to measurably strengthen their communities through nonviolence, responsibility, compassion, respect, and moral courage” and “service-learning activities.”

By linking Title V, Part A and service-learning, students will be introduced to concepts and experiences that have the potential to increase their sense of community and can provide opportunities for the development of positive behaviors. Students will develop a sense of caring and responsibility, and understand the value of being a good citizen. To achieve these goals, service-learning programs must be designed with high-quality, ensuring that programs feature the components and strategies necessary for outcomes to be maximized. Providing data as evidence of effectiveness will be necessary to sustain the practice of service-learning.

Examples of service-learning models that could be adopted by Title V, Part A programs

Professional Development:

The Nestucca Valley School District in Oregon uses innovative program funds to support its service-learning work. Funds were appropriated for professional development and training in order to connect the curriculum with service-learning and to document service-learning activities. The district has been recognized nationally as a leader in service-learning. Students participated in the Nestucca Valley Middle School Heritage Project in which they documented the history of one-room schools in Tillamook County, OR and a natural resources field-work project in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management.

Curriculum Development:

Title V funds may be used to develop curriculum that shows how service-learning may be used as a teaching method to help students meet standards. Interdisciplinary units, reflection guides, and community needs assessment documents could be produced.

Demonstration Projects:

States and/or local school districts can use Title V funds to conduct service-learning activities or case studies of exemplary practices. Case studies should feature data on student, teacher, school, and community impact. They should describe the service-learning cycle, giving details, for example, about planning, various activities, reflection, celebration, assessment, student voice, and other important program features.

Best Practices for Effective Service-Learning Programs

Effective service-learning programs demonstrate the following elements:

1. Service projects have clear educational goals that require the application of concepts, content, and skills from the academic disciplines and involve students in constructing their own knowledge.
2. Students are engaged in challenging cognitive and developmental tasks.
3. Assessment is used as a way to enhance student learning and to document and evaluate how well students have met content and skill standards.
4. Students are engaged in service tasks that have clear goals, meet genuine community needs, and have significant consequences for themselves and others.
5. Formative and summative evaluations are employed in a systemic, scientifically-based evaluation of service efforts and their outcomes.
6. Students have a voice in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating their service projects.
7. Diversity is valued and demonstrated by service-learning participants, practices, and outcomes.
8. Communication and interaction with the community are promoted and partnerships and collaboration are encouraged.
9. Students are prepared for all aspects of their service work. They possess a clear understanding of tasks and roles, as well as the skills and information required by the tasks; awareness of safety precautions; and knowledge about and sensitivity to the people with whom they will be working.
10. Student reflection takes place before, during, and after service; uses multiple methods that encourage critical thinking; and is a central force in the design and fulfillment of curricular objectives.
11. Multiple methods are designed to acknowledge, celebrate, and validate students' service work.

Sources: National Service-Learning Cooperative (April 1999). *Essential elements of service-learning*. St. Paul, MN: National Youth Leadership Council.

Billig, S.H. (2000). Research on K-12 school-based service-learning: The evidence builds. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(9), 658-664.

I'm interested ... Now what?

Confirm your eligibility:

Title V, Part A grants are awarded to local education agencies through an application procedure. For more information on Title V, Part A requirements and applications, check with your local district or state office of education. More information can also be found on the U.S. Department of Education's website, available at: www.ed.gov.

Plan your service-learning project:

Canvass the community to understand needs and willingness;

Develop agreements for student and community participation;

Explain how supervision will take place;

Provide information about liability and how problems will be handled;

Delineate the obligations of each party;

Develop an appropriate service-learning curriculum;

Design student materials and orientation processes;

Train those responsible for implementing the projects;

Connect service-learning to the curriculum through written and oral reflection opportunities; and

Conduct an evaluation to understand the program's effectiveness.