

Maryland State Department of Education
Service-Learning Guidelines

Human Needs

1. Any service-learning activity whose chief purpose is to directly address human needs in areas such as health, education, the environment, or public safety, even if done in conjunction with a religiously affiliated agency or institution, can be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
2. Any service-learning activity whose chief purpose is to collect food, clothing, or other items necessary to benefit others and meet human needs, even if done in conjunction with a religiously-affiliated agency or institution, can be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
3. Any service-learning activity whose chief purpose is to serve the student's own family and which does not extend the benefit of the service activity to other families in need cannot be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.

Civic Engagement

1. Any service-learning activity whose chief purpose is to implement voter education activities that express views on particular legislation by way of letters, meetings with elected officials, testimony before governmental bodies, work with political candidates, and/or activities that provide information to voters about current issues can be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
2. Any service-learning activity that violates federal or state law which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, or disability cannot be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.

Independent and School Focused Service-Learning

1. Any service-learning activity that is done independently by the student without adequate preparation or reflection components as verified by designated school personnel or, in the absence of such designated personnel, by the school Principal cannot be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
2. Any service-learning activity whose chief purpose is to serve the school community itself *must meet the service-learning standards* articulated in Maryland's Best Practices for Service-Learning to be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement. Examples of potential activities include coaching school sports teams, singing in the school choir, or working in the school office. These activities are acceptable only when structured in a way that meets Maryland's Best Practices for Service-Learning and results in a quality service-learning experience for the student.

Business Relationships

1. Any service-learning activity whose chief purpose is to increase the amount of revenue for a private, for profit business or to generate new revenue for that business cannot be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
2. Any service-learning activity that replaces a paid staff worker of the participating agency or institution with a student earning service-learning credit cannot be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
3. Any service-learning activity that compensates a student with money, goods, or services such that the service-learning activity is performed in expectation of both the service-learning credit and the money, goods, or services cannot be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.

Faith-based Service-Learning

1. Any service-learning activity whose chief purpose is to convert others to a particular religious, moral, or spiritual view and/or which denigrates the religious, moral, or spiritual views of others cannot be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.
2. Any service-learning activity whose chief purpose is to help prepare and/or participate in the performance of a religious service cannot be counted toward the service-learning graduation requirement.