

CONNECT. LISTEN. ACT. LEARN

The University of Richmond encourages you to enrich your classroom education with learning experiences in the greater Richmond area. Staff and students at the Center for Civic Engagement are here to support you as you embark on off-campus volunteer work, service learning and research projects. Our goal is to help you build your practical knowledge and become more active in shaping society.

Experiences in the community will help you learn about social issues, develop valuable analytical and life skills, and explore personal areas of interest – all while helping to meet identified needs.

Work in the community often differs from classroom experience in that it offers the opportunity for self-directed learning. To maximize this opportunity, please read and reflect upon the following principles for ethical and effective service learning before you begin your work.

FACT: One in eight metropolitan Richmond residents (about 103,000 people) do not have health insurance. Source: REACH

Reciprocity through Partnership

Our goal is to develop collaborative and sustainable relationships with our community partners. We view these partners as co-educators who offer important learning opportunities. In turn, students like you can provide service of value to the recipient individuals or groups.

Humility and Respect for Diversity

We encourage you to listen to and learn from others as you go about your work in greater Richmond. This experience will give you many opportunities to encounter and reflect upon the many social issues we must confront as engaged members of a diverse community, and we encourage you to be flexible. Your contribution – whether it is mentoring, clerical work, manual labor, or research – fulfills an organization's unmet needs and offers the chance for meaningful interaction.

FACT: More than 24,000, or one-third, of children under 18 in Richmond live in poverty. So do approximately 16 percent of adults over 65. Source: United Way of Greater Richmond

Commitment & Communication

When you decide to become a volunteer, you are making a commitment to the partner organization to be a contributing and relied-upon member of that organization. You are also becoming an ambassador for the University within the greater Richmond community. As such, we ask that you honor your commitment by following these guidelines:

- Conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times
- Abide by all rules and regulations of the partner organization
- Communicate openly with your supervisors – it is okay to ask questions and advocate for your learning!
- Develop respectful relationships with others regardless of differences
- Show up consistently and on time
- Dress in comfortable, appropriate, non-revealing clothing
- Notify supervisors in the case of absence or tardiness
- Fill out timecards or sign-in sheets regularly
- Complete all required information forms and evaluations
- Consider confidential all information concerning clients and employees
- Notify the CCE and/or your professor if you have concerns about your placement



If you have not already chosen a site, consider asking yourself the following questions:

- Why do I want to do this?
- What issues do I have an interest in or passion for?
- What do I hope to achieve or draw from this experience?
- What skills do I want to develop?
- What population do I want to work with?
- What time commitment can I realistically make?

Safety

Attention to a few simple precautionary measures will help ensure the safety of all people involved in service learning activities.

- Use common sense
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times
- Comply with your site's code of conduct and safety or liability requirements

A few more helpful hints ...

- Get to know the people you are working with
- Observe carefully what is going on around you
- **Don't expect to have all the answers!**

Additional Online Resources

City of Richmond

<http://www.ci.richmond.va.us/>

2000 Census Reports

<http://www.ci.richmond.va.us/forms/Census.aspx>

Richmond Geographic Information Systems

<http://www.ci.richmond.va.us/departments/gis/webmapper.aspx>

Richmond Public Schools Statistics

<http://www.richmond.k12.va.us/indexnew/sub/statistics/statistics.cfm>

Connect Richmond

<http://www.connectnetwork.org/richmond/>

FACT: At any given time there are 1400 sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons living in Greater Richmond. Source: Homeward

Active Learning and Reflection

The process of experiential learning is different than learning in a classroom setting. The most meaningful experiences come to those who challenge themselves and take the time to reflect upon what they have learned in their community work. Keeping a journal is one excellent tool for reflection. You may also want to seek out others with whom you can talk about your experience, including fellow students, teachers, your site supervisor, or career counselors. Here are some questions to help you get started:

- What have you learned about this agency and the community it serves?
- Did anything surprise you? Make you feel uncomfortable? Why?
- Does this experience complement or contradict what you are learning in class? In what ways?
- Has your experience helped you to identify any issues that influence the situation in this community?
- How are these issues/needs impacted by what is going on in the social, economic or political sphere?
- Has this experience challenged any assumptions you may have had?
- How have your values, sense of self, and sense of community been impacted?
- Have you gained any realizations or insights through your work?
- Will your experience change how you think or act in the future?

DataShare Richmond

<http://www.mrcic.org/>

Richmond Times-Dispatch

<http://www.timesdispatch.com>

Center for Civic Engagement

<http://engagement.richmond.edu>

**YOU
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