

Developing Community Partnerships

Drake University partners with a variety of external organizations and intentionally seeks to build mutually beneficial partnerships that work toward collective community and/or organizational impact. Before establishing contact with a community agency, here are a few things to keep in mind.

Community Partner Definition

Community Partners may be public, community-based, private, an industry business or academic organization working at the individual, neighborhood and city, regional, state, national, or international levels.

Characteristics of a Quality Partnership

Community Voice & Inclusivity: Community 'voice' should be central to your planning and implementation process. Community identified needs emphasizes the inclusion of individuals served by local agencies, residents and other community stakeholders. "Community Voice" refers to degree to which the values, opinions, beliefs, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds of the people in a community are considered, included, listened to, and acted upon when important decisions are being made (Ed Glossary).

Solidarity & Reciprocity: The community experience offers value to both the community partner as well the students. Students work WITH and learn from others. There is a mutual exchange of knowledge and resources that drives meaningful action.

Orientation & Training: Students participate in an orientation with the agency and are given adequate background information about the social issues being addressed. Students are prepped with the skills to accomplish the project.

Critical Reflection: Student intentionally participate in reflection on the community experience (ethical and civic dimensions, the discipline and themselves).

Evaluation & Sustainability: Plans for long term endurance and success are considered.

Partnership Development Process

1. Contact the Office of Community Engaged Learning for a list of suggested partner agencies, at least one semester in advance of the course being taught.
2. Complete the Checklist for Partnership Development (see next page).
3. Office of Community Engaged Learning invites Community Partner to Orientation
 - a. Offered 2-3 times a year the orientations are an opportunity for agencies to learn about all the ways they can work with Drake students (i.e. internships, research projects, service-learning, volunteer, etc).
 - b. Partner signs Drake University's Community Partner Agreement and returns a certificate of insurance to Donna Blunck's Office.

Check-List For Partnership Development

- Arrange an in-person site visit
- Discuss course goals and objectives with agency.
 - How does the community experience enhance the learning objectives?
- Identify experiences/issues with your partner that relate to your learning objectives.
 - What will the students learn that will be applicable to their academic discipline?
 - How does the project address a community identified need?
- Discuss the community engagement project/logistics:
 - How many students will/can the project accommodate?
 - How will their schedule be determined?
 - What types of orientation occur prior to service?
 - Does the student need training? When/where will the training take place?
 - What materials or supplies are needed? Who will provide them?
 - Who will supervise the students? How can this person be contacted? Is there a backup supervisor?
 - Who should students call if they will be absent or late?
 - Do students need to be fingerprinted or have a background check? Any certifications? Who will pay for this?
 - What waivers (if any) does the CP require (Don't forget Drake's waivers)
 - What (if any) transportation/parking needs are required?
- Establish shared expectations between community partner and faculty/ students
 - What is the recommended dress code?
 - Discuss any important dates with CP
 - Invite CP to facilitate an orientation in-class prior to starting service
 - Invite the CP to share in classroom dialogue and discussions
 - Invite CP to end of semester final presentation/reflections
- Remain in consistent communication with CP, check in monthly and 1 and 2 weeks out.

Questions?

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