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: Students 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
2. Complete the Checklist for Partnership Development (see next page).

Check-List For Partnership Development

☐ Identify experiences/issues with your partner that relate to your learning objectives/student organization goals
How does the project address a community identified need?
Do research prior to service on the history and mission of the organization, familiarize yourself with social issues

☐ Discuss the community engagement project/logistics:
  o How many students will/can the project accommodate?
  o How will the schedule be determined?
  o What types of orientation occur prior to service?
  o Does the student need training? When/where will the training take place?
  o What materials or supplies are needed? Who will provide them?
  o Who should students call if they will be absent or late?
  o Do students need to be fingerprinted or have a background check? Any certifications? Who will pay for this?
  o What waivers (if any) does the CP require (Don’t forget Drake’s waivers)
  o What (if any) transportation/parking needs are required?

☐ Establish shared expectations between community partner and faculty/ students
  o What is the recommended dress code?
  o Discuss any important dates with CP
    ▪ Invite CP to facilitate an orientation with the students/student organization prior to starting service

☐ Things to keep in mind:
  o You are representing Drake University when you work with Community Partners. Leave your CP eager to work with Drake again
  o Be on time & accountable - call if you are going to be late/absent – CPs are relying on you.
  o Respect confidentiality and do not take photos without permission
  o Be aware of your own identity, power, and privilege in communities that differ from your own

☐ Track your partnership and service hours - The Office of Community Engaged Learning tracks partnerships and service hours for the university as a whole. Please share this information by completing the following survey: https://drake.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6tABa1oIwMhFzhP

Questions?
For more information, please contact Amanda Martin, Program Coordinator of Community Engaged Learning, amanda.martin@drake.edu, 515-271-2767. Visit www.drake.edu/community/learningservice.