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, visit www.drake.edu/dugood to see upcoming volunteer opportunities, or schedule a 1-1 meeting or group presentation with a Community Engagement Peer

2. Complete the Checklist for Partnership Development below.

Checklist For Partnership Development

☐ Identify experiences/issues with your partner that relate to your learning objectives/student organization goals.

     o How does the project address a community-identified need?

     o Do research prior to service on the history and mission of the organization; familiarize yourself with the social issues.

☐ Discuss 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 have a background check? Who will pay for this?

     o What waivers (if any) does the community partner require? (Be sure to fill out the [Drake experiential learning waiver](https://www.drake.edu/community/volunteer/)).

     o What (if any) transportation or parking needs are required?

☐ Establish shared expectations between community partner and students.

     o What is the recommended dress code?

     o Discuss schedules and any important dates with community partner.

     o Invite the community partner to facilitate an orientation with the students prior to starting service.

☐ Things to keep in mind:

     o You are representing Drake University when you work in the community. Leave your community partner eager to work with Drake again. Follow through on all agreed-upon expectations.

     o Be on time and accountable – call if you are going to be late and give ample notice if you need to cancel. Community partners are relying on you. Never just don't show up.

- 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.
- o   Remember that your community partner brings years of experience and cultural competency – rely on them for their expertise while bringing in your own perspectives and background.
- o   Be professional and respectful in written and verbal communication; communicate as you would a boss or future boss.
- o   Be fully present – keep phones and other distractions out of reach.
- o   Typical business hours of community partners are usually 8am-5pm (with some exceptions); keep in mind that not all partners can accommodate your schedule.
- ☐   Track your service hours on Dugood – www.drake.edu/dugood

Questions?

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