

Practical Tips for Agency Success

- Remember Service Learners are students not volunteers.
- Supervisors must always keep in mind that not only do **Service Learning students** want to help meet important community needs, they **are also using the experience as a basis for understanding their college course**. Students **are receiving academic credit for learning through their service efforts**. Help students think about what the experience means to them, the organizational context, and overall societal issues and impacts.
- Plan ahead.
- Clear, well planned Service Learning placement descriptions outlining tasks, responsibilities, and time commitments must be prepared in cooperation with the Simpson course instructor and given to the Service Hub Director, the student, and the instructor.
- Be aware that some students may not match your needs - be selective.
- Although the course instructor will refer student Service Learning candidates to your agency, you will make the final selection. If a student's qualifications and/or motivations are not in harmony with your needs, **it is your right and obligation to request a different student**.
- Orient, Train, and Supervise.
- **Students require carefully structured orientation** to your agency, staff and clients. This should answer questions such as: "**Where do I fit in? How do I get things done? What do I need to be aware of? What is expected of me?**"
- Introduce students to staff, give them a tour of the facility, and **make sure they feel comfortable and welcome**. Students should be familiarized with your mission and key community and societal issues facing your agency (i.e. "the bigger picture" - why you do what you do).
- Be realistic with your time commitment expectations of students- think semester.
- Remember that you will have to **be aware of the semester schedule and adapt accordingly**.
- Be an involved teacher and mentor to the students.
- Throughout the assignment the supervisor should help the student interpret the experience and the relationship between what he/she is doing and the world of the agency and others. **The student-supervisor relationship is one of the most significant parts of the student's experience** and often determines the success of placement. **The supervisor is truly a partner with the course instructor in the student's education** and should view him/herself as an "educator."
- Say Thanks.
Students liked to be appreciated. This may take many forms, from letters of recognition, to thank you notes, to a simple acknowledgement of a job well done. **They need to see how their work is important to your agency's mission**.
- Talk with us.
Keep the course instructor and Service Hub Director aware of any concerns, problems, successes, and/or other issues related to the placement and/or student.