

## Service and Community Based Learning Tip Sheet

### *Community Agency Preparation*

A service/community based learning project is most successful when it meets genuine community needs. A great way to ensure that participants will be of true service is to work with a community agency --- from project planning and preparation through execution and conclusion. This tip sheet provides some basic points to consider when connecting students with a community agency.

- Meet with agency coordinators to discuss service-learning and how it is different from community service or volunteerism.
- Coordinate service-learning across the disciplines. Agency should not be receiving uncoordinated calls from different departments.
- Start from the basis of agency needs and mission, not with "I'd like to send 20 college freshman over to do service."
- Be sensitive to time schedules and ways that agencies are different from the campus schedule.
- Plan and execute a win/win project so that students are motivated, the integrity of the learning component is maintained, and the agency is having a genuine need fulfilled and gaining positive visibility through the involvement of students.
- Consider working with an established and diversified organization, especially if you have not previously worked with a community agency.
- Offer the agency representatives concrete ways that students can help fulfill the agency's mission.
- Remember that community support will grow as students are seen as resources to address needs that have been identified by the community.
- Establish an advisory council that includes community-agency representatives as part of it.
- Help agency employees understand that service-learning helps to develop the next generation of volunteers.