Standards for Service

WHAT QUALIFIES AS SERVICE?

Service is volunteer work that aims to improve the community through organizations such as a nonprofit, government agency, school, grassroots organization, or iCED-approved projects. Service must be performed while enrolled or employed at MDC.

Where Can You Serve?

- A nonprofit organization
- A public sector agency such as a school, government office, or park
- A campus-based service provider (Single Stop, ACCESS, Food Pantry, tutoring lab, etc.)
- A hospital, public health/non-profit health clinic, or a nursing home
- A pro-bono initiative or program from a for-profit organization

Service Activities *MUST* Meet an Identifiable Community Need.

Examples of Community Needs: animal care, arts/culture, children/youth, immigration, gender/race/LGBTQ+ issues, environment/sustainability, disaster relief, disability services, education, health, homelessness, etc.

Qualifying service can take four forms: Direct, Indirect, Research, and Advocacy

DIRECT	Direct service is working directly for or with people who benefit from your service.	*Examples*: Serve food for the homeless. Tutor, mentor, or coach youth.
INDIRECT	Service without being directly involved with those being served.	*Examples*: Design flyers for a non-profit organization. Fundraise for a cause.
RESEARCH	Gathering and presenting information on an issue that directly benefits the community, not only yourself.	*Examples:* Work in a lab researching the effects of climate change. Work on an oral history project about recent immigrants.
ADVOCACY	Advocacy is attempting to cause political or social action by influencing the government or community leaders.	*Examples*: Conduct information campaigns. Lobby on behalf of a community issue. Organize a letter writing campaign.

WHAT DOES NOT QUALIFY AS SERVICE?

Activities for Internal Benefit: Activities that are a requirement of a position or primarily benefit your organization are not service. Example: recruiting members for your club (not service) vs. organizing an awareness event about a civic issue with your club (service).

Donating: Donating (cash or in-kind) is not service. Example: donating 5 cans cannot equal 1 hour of service.

Fundraising: Fundraising must involve increasing awareness and focus on an identifiable community need. Fundraising cannot be an activity for internal benefit. Example: raising money to buy T-shirts for a club (not service) vs. raising money for the food pantry while handing out pamphlets on food insecurity (service).

Participation: Walking in a 5K or attending meetings are not service. However, serving on the board of a nonprofit, organizing a 5K for charity, or assisting at a civic event is service.

Religious Proselytizing: Converting or proselytizing on religious beliefs is not service. However, assisting at a foodbank or daycare operated by a place of worship is service as long as it is secular in nature.

Compensation/Paid Work: Those completing service can receive a stipend, but compensation must be less than minimum wage. Example: working with AmeriCorps or City Year is service.

Preparation/Planning/Orientation Hours: A reasonable number of hours of orientation, planning, and preparation can be counted as "service" but generally should not exceed the number of hours of actual service.

For further questions, reach out to your campus iCED staff (mdc.edu/iced).