

COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK-STUDY REPORT

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FINDINGS

FROM COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK-STUDY FOCUS GROUPS

Executive Summary of Focus Group Findings

In 2002 Campus Compact received funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service to conduct focus groups of campus community service and financial aid administrators to study campus community service Federal Work-Study practices. Seventy-eight people representing fifty-two institutions participated in eight focus groups held May – June, 2002. These institutions represent public, private, large, small, urban, rural, 2-year and 4-year institutions. The goal of the focus groups was to collect practitioners' feedback on good practice and challenges for community service work-study.

Major findings from these focus groups include:

Concerns regarding increasing administrative burdens and costs. Most individuals in the focus groups indicated their greatest area of concern relates to the current level of campus administrative resources, and most especially professional staff, required to meet federal paperwork expectations and to coordinate an effective program. This concern was nearly unanimously expressed in regard to any potential increase in the currently mandated 7 percent of federal work-study resources supporting community service.

Interest in incentives that encourage campus participation and commitment. Many focus group participants expressed support for the creation of incentives to encourage campuses to meet and exceed the current 7 percent mandate, and to do so through good practice.

Lack of clarity regarding what should be accepted as "community service." Many focus group participants struggle to understand what is intended by the current definitions of acceptable community service work-study positions. In addition, many practitioners expressed philosophical concerns regarding on-campus versus off-campus service.

Additional findings of note include:

Participants could list numerous **benefits** that community service work-study provides student participants, institutions and community organizations. Primary benefits include students' ability to balance a need to work with an interest in community service, and the community organizations' benefit of having students doing service for a longer and increased commitment.

Practitioners face numerous **challenges** in offering an effective community service work-study program. Greatest barriers include:

- Paying for the extra staff time needed to manage an effective program.
- Dividing leadership and management roles among various campus departments.
- Defining what types of student positions are appropriate.
- Locating and developing good community-based positions.
- Meeting the 7 percent matching requirement.
- Ensuring good supervision and support for students.
- Numerous administrative concerns, including liability and transportation issues.

A significant number of participants in the focus groups indicated that if necessary, the campus can rely on many on-campus positions (such as those in the library or campus theater box office) to "**inflate**" the percentage of work-study dedicated to "**community service**." Other participants reported refusing to report anything but "true" community service positions, even if this means they do not meet the 7 percent requirement. These comments indicate that meeting or not meeting the 7 percent requirement does not necessarily reflect the relative strength or

weakness of campus efforts in this area, nor should high or low percentages reported indicate good or bad practice in community service work-study.

Many campuses have dedicated significant time and resources over the years to develop strong **service-learning and campus-community collaboration programs**. Practitioners in all focus groups reported frustration that work-study is the only type of community service-learning or civic engagement activity considered in reporting to the federal government. Work-study is only a part, and in fact often a lesser-developed component, of many institutions' service-learning and civic engagement efforts. By only reporting on work-study, the full impact of higher education's contributions to building a civil society do not surface and are taken out of a larger, important context.

Most campuses **coordinate** community service work-study through a collaboration between different departments, most often community service-learning and financial aid. However, it is the complexity of this collaboration that creates the most difficulty for practitioners in terms of coordination challenges.

Most institutions offer **higher wages** to work-study students in community service placements.

Participants listed the importance of proper training and finding a “good match” between student interests and community opportunities as the two top concerns they have in working effectively with **students**. In working effectively with **community partners**, participants listed communication issues, site supervisor problems, and the importance of orientation most often. 50% of institutions require community partners to pay 25% of students' wages, while many others require either no matching funds or amounts that vary from 10% - 50%.

Participants did not generally favor having a **mandated level** of work-study funds dedicated to community service. However, if there is a mandate, 45% of participants favor a mandate of 10% or greater, while 18% favor the current 7% or lower. Financial aid administrators are less likely than other participants to favor an increase in the mandate.

PRINCIPLES OF BEST PRACTICE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK-STUDY

The following document outlines best practice in combining college and university work-study experiences with community service and service-learning. The principles were created by Erin Bowley and Marsha Adler for Campus Compact after conducting focus groups with practitioners from 52 colleges and universities in May and June, 2002. Ten principles that help construct an effective community service work-study program are listed below, then explained in greater detail with key points and specific campus examples. Representatives from the campuses used as examples are willing to be contacted for further information; their contact information appears at the end of the document.

Summary

1. Integrate community service work-study into the institution's overall civic engagement mission and programs.
2. Create program goals for community service work-study and an evaluation plan to measure progress.
3. Formalize a structured institutional system to provide oversight, coordination and optimal use of resources and capacity.
4. Offer a range of community service positions that are challenging, developmentally appropriate, and contribute to the common good.
5. Actively and effectively market the opportunities to students and community partners.
6. Ensure students receive a thorough orientation, are properly trained for their positions, and have opportunities for reflection and connections to academic study.
7. Contribute to student success through effective monitoring, ongoing supervision and recognition of student contributions.
8. Create partnerships with community organizations built on open communication, trusting relationships, joint design and evaluation of program objectives.
9. Prepare community partner supervisors to be effective in their role through a clear orientation, training as needed, and recognition of their contributions.
10. Adhere to the spirit and rules of U.S. Department of Education Federal Work-Study legal requirements.

1. Integrate community service work-study into the institution's overall civic engagement mission and programs.

- Establish community service work-study as an important component of campus community service programs and efforts.
- Build connections between community service work-study and other community service initiatives.
- Determine how the community service work-study students – who typically serve for more hours and longer periods of time – can support other campus service efforts as site coordinators, volunteer coordinators or assistants in service-learning courses.

Miami-Dade Community College, Florida

Community service work-study students play an essential role in helping administer and lead Miami-Dade Community College's (M-DCC) Center for Community Involvement. These students help run three comprehensive campus centers that oversee all service-learning and America Reads activities. Community service work-study students meet with faculty, visit classes to encourage students to get involved in service, counsel and place service-learning students with community agencies, help train agency partners about service-learning, help recruit, hire, support, and monitor America Reads tutors, and help with myriad other community engagement projects.

Macalester College, Saint Paul, Minnesota

The "Off Campus Student Employment" (OCSE) program (Macalester College's community service work-study program) is one of many programs administered by Macalester's Community Service Office. The OCSE program is expected to meet the same standards of good practice and follow the same guiding principles established for all service and civic engagement efforts of the college. Work-study students serve with many of the same core community partners as other service initiatives and many also participate in the Leaders In Service program, designed to develop student leadership across service programs. OCSE students support many facets of campus service initiatives as site coordinators for specific community partner locations and "point people" for action research courses. OCSE students are expected to serve as a "bridge" between Macalester and its partners in the community -- understanding the assets and needs of both.

Additional examples of good practice in this area:

Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

Kirtland Community College, Roscommon, Michigan

2. Create program goals for community service work-study and an evaluation plan to measure progress.

- Campus professionals, students and community supervisors should contribute to the creation of goals for the community service work-study program.
- Consider making a realistic number of short and long-term goals that are measurable, such as the number of students to complete community service work-study positions each year and the degree of satisfaction of stakeholders with the program.
- Create a plan to evaluate the goals through a regularly scheduled process.

Bentley College, Waltham, Massachusetts

Community service work-study students serve as Project Managers and Project Directors of community service-learning initiatives. These students are responsible for working in collaboration with community partner organizations to recruit and manage other student volunteers. As part of their role, students are asked to evaluate community sites and supervisors and complete a self-evaluation. Community supervisors also are asked to evaluate the students. These evaluations take place in the middle and at the end of each semester. The information is used to make program and site changes as needed to improve the program.

Additional example of good practice in this area:

Clarion University, Clarion, Pennsylvania

Macalester College, Saint Paul, Minnesota

3. Formalize a structured institutional system to provide oversight, coordination and optimal use of resources and capacity.

- Clarify and acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of various offices and departments on campus in managing the program.
- Simplify complex processes by taking the time to put a centralized system in place for management and oversight of important program functions, including marketing, recruitment, communications, paperwork, reporting, orientation and training, among others.
- Leaders of the program should have expertise in financial aid regulations, student development, and community partnership-building.

Stanford University, Stanford, California

Community service work-study is administered cooperatively by Stanford's Haas Center for Public Service and the financial aid office. The Haas Center, a nationally renowned program engaging students in the community, has responsibility for marketing, recruitment, and communications and conducts orientation and training for students. Time sheets also flow through the Haas Center. The Financial Aid Office keeps the Haas Center updated on federal student employment regulations. The Financial Aid Office maintains fiscal oversight, determining which students are eligible for the program and each student's individual earning limits based on federal needs analysis. The Financial Aid Office monitors the payroll and

reports earnings it receives through its database. The two offices communicate regularly and meet periodically to ensure efficiency and quality in students' experiences and to support community organizations' needs.

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

For two decades, responsibilities for community service work-study placements at Indiana University-Bloomington have been shared by the Office of Student Financial Assistance, Career and Employment Services/Student Employment Office. Staff from these offices and representatives from community service, service-learning and academic programs meet regularly with community agencies to update them about the range of opportunities available through work-study. IU has developed a sophisticated information system for community service work-study through its web site, with links to community service agencies that students use to apply for positions. Additionally, programs built into the web site have simplified the administrative operations for tracking student hours and reporting payroll information.

Tufts University, Boston, Massachusetts

Tufts University has a unified structure for community service work-study that is coordinated by the Director of Student Employment. The Director's office realigned its system by conducting a focus group of community service personnel, community organizations, and business representatives to determine community needs and campus resources. After gathering the information, the Student Employment director developed a system for recruiting and maintaining community contacts and a system for recruiting and placing students in those organizations. For reporting, community supervisors fax or e-mail student employment data to the Director, and records are produced monthly. Students are paid by direct deposit by the university through the payroll system that is tied to the monthly reports.

4. Offer a range of community service positions that are challenging, developmentally appropriate, and contribute to the common good.

- Develop placement opportunities in a variety of community issue areas and organizations to engage student interest in the program and to provide for career exploration.
- Match students to positions carefully through an interview or other process. Ensure positions are developmentally appropriate for students' differing levels of experience with work settings, professional responsibility, and particular tasks.
- Provide students with leadership development opportunities to build student ownership, develop skills, and utilize a valuable resource for additional coordination of efforts.
- Agree on a definition for appropriate community service work-study positions, including how "community service" will be defined and what types of placements will be acceptable.

Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

Brown University works closely with students to create or find community service work-study positions that complement their academic and other experiences while at the university. Brown strives to provide students with experiences in the community that develop skills they could not gain through an on-campus work-study experience. To do this, a set of criteria for appropriate community positions was developed and an application process for community organizations is used. Strong community supervisors are sought. Students are matched with developmentally appropriate positions where they are encouraged to build community relationships, reflect on their experiences, think critically about their experience, and consider the larger community context around their work.

University of New Mexico-Gallup

The Gallup campus of the University of New Mexico employs FWS community service students as tutoring and mentoring coordinators and service learning coordinators and recruiters. The predominantly native American students also are helping lead civic engagement efforts by coordinating and facilitating community-student dialogues using the Campus Compact dialogue model. The students are trained in the Baldrige framework, "Equip for the Future" and participate in workshops that focus on leadership skills. Faculty at the University have noted that students have been empowered by their leadership roles and the empowerment is carrying over into their coursework and classroom participation. At the same time, the gains for the tutoring and service-learning programs are notable.

Columbus State Community College, Columbus, Ohio

Columbus State Community College strives to connect work-study eligible students in particular fields of study with community service positions that complement their field. To do this, campus staff members review lists of students who are work-study eligible but who have not yet located a position. They work to develop positions with community agencies that fit the fields of study of many students looking for positions. They also send a customized letter to students alerting them to particular positions available in the student's chosen field of study."

Additional examples of good practice in this area:

University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado

5. Actively and effectively market the opportunities to students and community partners.

- Inform students who are eligible for work-study about the opportunity and how to get involved. Use multiple means of communication.
- Determine how community partners of the campus will be recruited and selected as appropriate locations for community service work-study positions.
- Inform community partners of this resource and the benefits community service work-study offers to their organization.

Cedar Crest College, Allentown, Pennsylvania

During student orientation each year, Cedar Crest students participate in a day of service. During the service day activities, students are given information about community service positions through Federal Work-Study. The college offers students a choice of five fields of service positions: animals and environment, hunger and homelessness, health and wellness, children and youth, and special events, and moves students through a track of increasing responsibility as they progress through their four years.

Clarion University, Clarion, Pennsylvania

Clarion includes community service work-study as one of several highlighted ways students can get involved in the community during their time at the university. To inform students of the community service work-study opportunity, staff meet with students and their parents during summer orientation meetings. They advertise work-study positions in the community through a brochure, newsletter, website, activity days fair, information tables, and posters on bulletin boards. Many more students are interested in community service work-study than can be accommodated each year. Community organizations are registered on a list kept by the university that is developed through significant personal contact between university staff and community leaders.

University of Montana – Missoula

The University of Montana has engaged work-study students in community positions for several decades, and the campus president is very supportive of the program. Students are informed of the opportunity to do community service work-study at meetings held during orientation week where opportunities on-campus and off-campus are described. In addition, the Career Services website contains job information including descriptions of all types of work-study positions. The Director of Financial Aid has long-standing relationships with many local organizations and individuals and makes them aware of the opportunity to post community positions on-line. One in five UMT work-study students has a community service position.

Additional examples of good practice in this area:

Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Emerson College, Boston, Massachusetts

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts

6. Ensure students receive a thorough orientation, are properly trained for their positions, and have opportunities for reflection and connections to academic study.

- Provide a thorough orientation to the program, including expectations, paperwork issues, professional behavior, and an introduction to working in the community.
- Students may require specific skills to be successful in their positions. Clarify with community partner supervisors exactly which skills are desired and who is responsible for providing the training students need.
- Service experiences can be challenging, confusing, thought-provoking and life-changing. To enhance the learning opportunity offered by service experiences, gather students regularly to reflect on their experiences.
- Consider making connections between community service work-study and academic study. Develop courses around important training topics, engage work-study students in support of service-learning or action research courses, or encourage service-learning students to extend their service past the course through community service work-study.

Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Augsburg College prepares work-study students for their community experience by working with a major community partner to provide a site orientation that includes an overview of the community partner's mission and programs at the community partner's location. The site orientation includes a tour of the neighborhood to familiarize students with the area. Students are trained before beginning their positions by the campus service-learning staff, community site supervisors and consultants in specific topics. Students attend monthly reflection and on-going training sessions developed to address issues and needs of the students as they arise. Monthly reflection also takes place via email.

California State University, Fresno, California

CSU Fresno's orientation and training program for community service work-study students begins with an overview of requirements for reporting and other administrative details. Students are then required to keep a weekly journal of their activities and reflections and attend an "all hands" meeting monthly. The monthly meeting includes updates and reminders as well as small-group reflection focusing on successes, sharing of individuals needs, and brainstorming about solutions. In the final monthly session, students present stories, examples, and experiences that illustrate best practices for their sites. A year-end meeting includes evaluation of students' experiences (shared with site supervisors), reflection and celebration.

Kirtland Community College, Roscommon, Michigan

Kirtland Community College is considering multiple ways to engage work-study students in support of service-learning efforts. Positions include conducting evaluation of current service-learning practice, satisfaction among community partners, and support for individual faculty members who integrate service-learning activities in their courses.

Additional example of good practice in this area:

Normandale Community College, Bloomington, Minnesota

7. Contribute to student success through effective monitoring, ongoing supervision and recognition of student contributions.

- Designate the students' official supervisor and clarify the goals of community service work-study with them. Inform students whom to approach with questions and concerns during their experience.
- Recognize students' contributions in meaningful ways during and at the end of their experience.

Juniata College, Huntington, Pennsylvania

Juniata College utilizes the Bonner Scholar objectives for community service using a community learning agreement. In this process, community organizations develop learning and work objectives that meet the learning and service goals set out by students. Juniata staff mentor students in developing their goals for the work and service experience. These goals are revisited during the experience by students, community supervisors and Juniata staff. At the end of the assignment, community organizations and Juniata staff meet with the students to evaluate the experience.

University of Denver, Colorado

The community service work-study program at the University of Denver is distinguished by the attention given to students who are serving in community agencies. During the initial training for student workers, DU leaders clearly establish the students' job duties and clarify their responsibilities in representing the university and the partner organization. A year-end celebration is held in a neighborhood center, where students and community partners enjoy food and entertainment, and recognition certificates are presented to students and community partners.

Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans

Xavier University's Volunteer Service Office carefully developed a program to support student workers engaged in community service work-study. The Office chose to work with ten schools and ten nonprofit agencies charged with providing students meaningful service positions outlined in a memorandum of agreement. The University provides students an orientation and specific training in literacy and education, mentoring, and working with special populations. Students attend regular meetings that include speakers from nonprofit organizations, AmeriCorps and other service organizations, job training, and reflection. Throughout the year, students are recognized for their work through dinners and other gatherings and receive greeting cards and other small tokens on birthdays and holidays. A university van also is available to take them to and from their placements.

Additional examples of good practice in this area:

Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota

8. Create partnerships with community organizations built on open communication, trusting relationships, and joint design and evaluation of program objectives.

- Community partners – the people and organizations with whom students serve and work – are a key part of the community service work-study equation. Taking the time to develop strong partnerships will have multiple benefits for all involved.
- Set a tone of respect and openness with community partners through regular, effective communication.
- Strive to know key partners individually. Understand the mission of their organization, their needs and their assets.
- Include partners in helping design the goals of the program and helping evaluate its effectiveness.
- Consider positioning the campus as the official “employer” of students to lessen paperwork burdens experienced by community partner organizations.

Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana

Earlham College strengthened partnerships with community organizations by hiring a director who had served on the United Way Board of Directors and other community organizations. She continues her service in the community and uses her strong personal ties with organizational leaders to enhance communication. As a result, the director is welcomed when she visits the service sites, and community leaders feel comfortable relaying concerns to her. Even before she came, Earlham had established an orientation program for all community sites and created an “Opportunity Day” for community organizations to present information about their work to students and members of the campus community.

Ohio Dominican College, Columbus, Ohio

Ohio Dominican College began its outreach to community partners only two years ago, but it has moved quickly to establish strong working relationships with organizations. To begin, ODC identified its “community” as the 43219 zip code, moving out from the college in concentric circles to search for partners. The colleges invited 75 potential partners to campus for a one-day conference and identified a number of potential partners from the group. ODC also appointed a well-known neighborhood activist to its staff who has been very effective in maintaining community ties. ODC conducted focus groups to identify community organizations' capacity needs and has begun a series of training sessions on the campus in topics such as technology, grant-writing, and recruiting and retaining volunteers.

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

The University of Michigan exemplifies its commitment to the community by providing the matching funds required under federal work-study. This match often is paid by community organizations directly, however the University pays this match itself. Further, for larger projects like America Reads, the University employs experienced students at a higher wage to serve as site directors and mentors for other work-study students. The University collaborates with community partners to design student training that best meets their needs.

Additional examples of good practice in this area:

Grand Rapids Community College, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Juniata College, Huntington, Pennsylvania

9. Prepare community partner supervisors to be effective in their role through a clear orientation, training as needed, and recognition of their contributions.

- Provide an orientation for community partner supervisors in person and through written materials.
- Recognize that community partners are often extremely busy and are serving as co-educators of the students. Communicate appreciation of these efforts, including a formal recognition or show of thanks at the end of the year.

Davenport University, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Davenport University has created a supervisors' manual that is shared with work-study supervisors in the community. The manual contains information on the overall program, expectations of students and supervisors, examples of timesheets, a sample performance appraisal for the supervisor to use in evaluating students, and guidance on what to do if problems arise. A financial aid staff member meets with all community supervisors to give them the manual and go over its contents. By meeting at the community site, university staff also gain a better understanding of the specific needs of the organization.

Hamline University, Saint Paul, Minnesota

Hamline University organizes an annual lunch for community service work-study site supervisors, students, campus administrators and faculty. The lunch serves as a recognition of the time and commitment of the community supervisors and provides a way for them to deepen their relationship with other departments and programs at the University. In addition, the Director of Service-Learning offers to make visits to community partner supervisors at the beginning of the year to discuss the coming year, answer questions, and strengthen the relationship between the university and community organizations.

10. Adhere to the spirit and rules of U.S. Department of Education Federal Work-Study legal requirements.

- Establish systems that facilitate accurate and clear tracking and reporting.
- Visit the following websites for additional information:
 - Frequently Asked Questions about Federal Work-Study and Community Service*
(provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service)
<http://www.nationalservice.org/areads/FWS/fwsfaq.html#SERVICE>
 - Federal Work-Study Handbook for Financial Aid Professionals*
(provided by the Department of Education)
<http://www.ifap.ed.gov/sfahandbooks/0102Vol6FWS.html>
 - 1997 U.S. Department of Education Guide to Community Service Work-Study*
<http://www.ifap.ed.gov/IFAPWebApp/currentFWSGuidePag.jsp>

University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado

In order to effectively track information on large numbers of students participating in various community service work-study programs, the University of Colorado designed ways within its existing financial aid software to track information on students in programs such as America Reads, America Counts, etc. This includes a process that allows community agencies to electronically enter students' timecard data directly into the university's time collection system. This system ensures that students are paid in a more accurate and timely manner.

Additional examples of good practice in this area:

College of St. Benedict/St. John's University, St. Joseph/Collegeville, Minnesota

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

Tufts University, Boston, Massachusetts