

Community Service - Get the Facts

Why perform community service?

It's the right thing to do...to make a difference in your community...to learn new skills and meet new people...to learn the importance and value of helping others...to satisfy the eligibility requirement all 3 Bright Futures Scholarship Awards...to enhance your resume for college applications and scholarships. Consider the comments of some great humanitarians: "For it is in giving that we receive." Francis of Assisi "Our nation became great not because of what the government did, but because of what its people did." George Romney "When you cease to make a contribution you begin to die." Eleanor Roosevelt "Service is the rent each of us pays for living—the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time or after you have reached your personal goals." Marian Wright Edelman
Community Service - Get the FAQs:

- Is there a community service requirement for graduation? No.

- What is the community service requirement for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program?

Community service is required for all three Bright Futures award levels: Florida Academic Scholars (FAS), Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS), and Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV). All initial applicants must meet the community service requirement, as approved by the school district. No waivers of this requirement can be granted regardless of the method used to qualify (National Merit and Achievement Scholars and Finalists, National Hispanic Scholars International Baccalaureate Diploma recipients). During the 2011-12 academic year, and thereafter, the required community service hours to be completed for the following awards are:

AWARD	COMMUNITY SERVICE HOUR REQUIREMENT
FAS	100 hours
FMS	75 hours
GSV	30 hours

- What are the procedures for completing and documenting the hours of service for Bright Futures?

District guidelines for community service require the student to identify a social problem, develop a plan for personal involvement in addressing the problem, submit an evaluation of the experience, and verify the completion of service hours. There are two forms available in the guidance office, which provide directions and the structure necessary to completing a program of community service: and

Verification of Community Service. To complete the program, the following structure is suggested:

I. IDENTIFY A SOCIAL PROBLEM - You may choose to personally address one of the following seven social problems:

1. The preservation of the environment and/or the protection of historical sites
2. The promotion of the health, welfare and safety of the community
3. The improvement of the standard of living for residents of our community
4. The encouragement of the growth of the arts in our community
5. The improvement and enrichment of the lives of the mentally and/or physically disabled of our community
6. The promotion of a quality life for the senior citizens of our community
7. The provision of leadership, guidance, and activities for the youth of our community

or

You may address a combination of the above problems,

or

You may identify a social problem not covered by one of the above seven areas

II. DEVELOP A PLAN - You will need to develop a plan for personal involvement in addressing one of the above social problems. Describe your plan in 50 words or less.

III. EVALUATE THE EXPERIENCE – When you have completed the service hours reflect on your experience in 100 words or less.

V. SUBMIT DOCUMENTATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE – (Form available in your school's Guidance Office) to give pertinent information about your community service, i.e., date, number of hours, type of work, site, and a verifying signature.

- When should the appropriate forms be submitted to the Guidance Office?

Community Service hours may be submitted to the Guidance Office at any time prior to graduation. Students who meet the eligibility requirements for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program at the end of the first semester of their senior year, will receive an award letter. Current seniors who want to be considered for Bright Futures at the seventh semester eligibility review should submit these forms no later than January 15. Seniors who complete their community service hours during the eighth semester and submit the forms prior to graduation will be evaluated following graduation.

For Bright Futures, what counts, what doesn't.

1. Service may be volunteered to the school and/or the community.
2. Students must perform volunteer services on their own time, which can include the participant's lunch break. Study hall time may be included for peer counseling activities or service to the school, e.g., office aide. Participation in performances, festivals, or competitions during the school day may count if this meets the criteria under #4 and participating students are given permission by the principal to be absent from class.
3. Participation in performances, festivals or competitions counts if the following apply:
 - a. Volunteer service meets an identified community service need, and
 - b. There is no admission charge accepted for the performance, and
 - c. Student participation is of voluntary nature, and
 - d. The performance does not promote the sponsoring organization, and
 - e. Neither the student organization nor the sponsoring organization receives payment for the performance. If participation meets the above criteria, then partial rehearsal time may be counted. Performing hours may be matched with the same number of rehearsal hours. For example, a chorus member performs 1 hour at a nursing home and is given 2 hours of credit (1 hour for the performance and 1 hour for rehearsal).
4. Students may not be paid for service rendered.
5. Volunteer service involving academic requirements for a class will count.
6. Service rendered as a prerequisite for employment will not count.
7. Attendance at self-improvement workshops or conferences will not count as service.
8. Fundraising for non-profit organizations or charities will count.
9. Service may not be performed for a student's family or for a profit-making organization, except for institutions like hospitals or the human society.
10. Service performed as a result of disciplinary action taken by the school or courts cannot count.
11. Volunteer work for the purpose of promoting a particular religious or political point of view or person cannot count as volunteer hours in this program. For example, if your church youth group helps with the Special Olympics, those hours would count, but not time spent distributing flyers advertising a church revival.
12. Participation in Varsity or Junior Varsity Athletics and regularly scheduled band and chorus performances does not constitute volunteer service under this program.
13. The above criteria will not cover all circumstances. If a question exists regarding the acceptance of an activity for volunteer service, the student's counselor should approve the service prior to the student's participation. A good guideline would be to ask how the activity addresses the social problem that the student has identified to work on as a part of his/her community service plan.
14. Some common activities, which do not count, include: acolyte, altar server, lay reader, vacation Bible School, babysitting, working in church nursery, church choir and clerical work for religious, political, or profit making organizations.