

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PREPARATORY ACADEMY (ISPA)

Student Guide to Community Service

The purpose of this guide is to help you satisfy the community service requirement for graduation.

What Is Community Service?

Community service is any voluntary activity that is designed to address a problem or need in the community. The community service you choose to perform should also reflect your personal interests and skills. Worthwhile community service requires an on-going commitment on your part for which you receive no monetary benefit. In other words, you work for free.

Why Is Community Service Important?

Community service is a valuable and important part of your high school experience. It is designed to expand your view of your local community, while instilling a sense of purpose and pride regarding your own abilities and interests. Don't underestimate the power and importance of community service in your life.

Community service has also become an important part of college and university applications. Many college and university admissions officers use community service as a method to separate and select their applicants and is also used to determine who receives scholarships and student loans. It is often the amount and quality of community service that separate equally talented applicants. In that regard, it is best to select one type of community service and remain with it throughout your high school career rather than accumulate an array of different types of community service.

What Are the Community Service Graduation Requirements?

To complete the community service graduation requirement for Miami-Dade County Public Schools, you must perform some type of community service. There is no set required number of community service hours. However, if you wish to be eligible for Florida Academic Scholars or the Superintendent's Diploma of Distinction, you must complete a minimum of 100 hours of service.

What Types of Community Service Satisfy the Requirement for Graduation?

You may do any of a variety of voluntary activities to meet the graduation requirement. You can spend time with senior citizens in convalescent homes, tutor elementary students, work in a homeless shelter and much more. You may conduct your community service at a school or in the community. You may work as an individual or you may work in a group. Below is a brief description of the types of community service that are acceptable.

School-Site Community Service

Volunteering at a school is an excellent way of meeting the requirement for community service while also helping meet the special needs of a school. If you choose this type of service, you should commit to providing on-going support and assistance to the school. Additionally, your service must not be completed as part of a regular school course in which you are receiving academic credit (with the exception of the elective courses in community service).

Group Community Service

Group community service activities provide excellent opportunities for you to complete your community service requirement while also helping meet the special needs of an individual neighborhood or community. This type of community service provides excellent service opportunities for organized student groups such as service clubs, honor societies, and athletic teams. Membership in a service club or organization does not in itself meet your community service responsibilities. However, you can work with others in the organization to meet your community service responsibility.

Individual Community Service

Individual community service activities allow you to complete the service requirement while addressing a community need which interests you. When working on this type of community service, you should be committed to providing on-going assistance to the community.

Examples of Individual Community Service include the following activities:

The organizations and agencies listed below typically welcome volunteers. This list should help you develop ideas for the service you would like to perform.

- Chambers of Commerce
- Charities
- City governments
- Civic organizations
- Convalescent homes
- County agencies
- Cultural centers
- Day care centers
- Elementary or middle schools
- Hospitals
- Libraries
- Museums
- Parks
- Recreation centers
- United Way agencies
- Zoos

Additionally, you are strongly encouraged to involve your parents or guardians in the process of selecting the community service you would like to pursue. While this is your activity, their support is also necessary.

How Do I Receive Credit for Community Service When It Is Completed?

You may complete your community service anytime between 9th grade and 12th grade; however, it is strongly suggested that you not wait until your senior year to begin work on this graduation requirement. To receive credit for the community service you perform, follow the procedures outlined below.

Documenting and Reporting Your Community Service

You are required to complete the (1) Community Service Report, (2) Community Service Activity Log Form, (3) Project Summary Report and (4) provide an official letter printed on business stationery from the person who supervised your community service.

The original forms must be submitted to the school counselor by June 1st of your junior year.

Retain a copy of all forms and letters submitted to ensure that the total number of community service hours that is reflected in your academic history is accurate.

Contact the school counselor if you have questions regarding community service information.

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COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORT

Please **PRINT NEATLY** the following information:

_____		_____	
Last Name of student		First Name of student	
_____	_____	_____	_____
Student ID Number	Grade Level	Date(s) of Service	Hours Completed

I attest to the fact that I have read the Student Reference Guide to Community Service and the information and letter that I have submitted are accurate and the community service I am reporting was conducted voluntarily.

Signature of Student

Date

Name of Parent/Guardian (Last, First)

Contact Telephone Number

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Please note the following information:

Community Service is a high school graduation requirement. There is no set number of community service hours. You must complete a minimum of 100 community service hours to be eligible for the Florida Scholar's Award or the Superintendent's Diploma of Distinction. We recommend that you begin your community service during the beginning of your ninth grade year.

An official letter printed on business stationery describing the community service and the hours you performed is required from the person who supervised your community service. The original letter and this form must be submitted to the school's counselor.

You are responsible to ensure that the total number of hours reflected in your academic history is accurate. Please retain a copy of all forms and letters submitted for your records.

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Project Summary Report

Directions:

1. Complete the Project Summary Report in ink and sign it. Print clearly or type.
2. Complete all parts of the required essay as outlined below on your own paper.
3. Attach the essay to the other documents that will be submitted. (make a copy for your records).
4. Have the completed project summary report signed by your parent/guardian.

Required Essay: Summarize your community service experience in essay form. Address each of the following in your essay. (Five paragraphs)

- A. Briefly describe your community service activities.
- B. Briefly outline the steps you took to plan, implement and complete the project. Indicate how much time you spent in completing all aspects of your community service.
- C. Describe the problems that occurred during the community service and explain how these problems were handled.
- D. Describe the impact that your community service hours had on the community or on the people who received your service.
- E. Describe what you learned about your community as you worked on your hours.
- F. Describe what you learned about yourself and the importance of giving something back to others.

I have reviewed my son/daughter's Project Summary Report and understand that community service is required to meet the graduation requirements for Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Principal's Signature or designee: _____