

MIAMI UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR CAREER EXPLORATION & SUCCESS



THE VALUE OF  
**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**  
IN YOUR CAREER SEARCH

# Introduction

You will learn:

1. To define Community Engagement and Service-Learning;
2. To explore service opportunities and how to get involved in the community;
3. To best articulate the value of your service experiences through your resume and cover letter;
4. About careers in Non-profit organizations.



“

As a student leader within OCES [the Office of Community Engagement and Service], I learned more about how people and communities interact, found a passion in social justice, and became a better listener, mentor, advisor, and leader. Community engagement work forces you to look at multiple solutions and think critically about working systems, while inspiring you to think creatively about solutions through collaboration.

I firmly believe that working and serving with the community is relevant no matter what your job ends up being in the end, because no matter where you go you will be a part of something bigger than yourself: your community.”

**Cassidy Venema, BA '17**  
AmeriCorps VISTA Member, University of Georgia

# What is Community Engagement?

Community Engagement in higher education is the application of University resources (e.g. knowledge and expertise of students, faculty and staff, political power, buildings, land, etc.) to address and solve challenges facing communities through mutually beneficial collaboration with these communities.

Methods of community engagement include, but are not limited to: community service, Service-Learning classes, community-based participatory research, training and technical assistance, partnerships with student organizations, community-based internships, political organizing and advocacy, economic development, capacity building (e.g. grant-writing, volunteer recruitment), and more.

## What is Service-Learning?

Have you ever taken a class that required you to participate in service as part of the curriculum? If so, you probably have experience with Service-Learning. Miami University defines Service-Learning as “an experiential pedagogical practice that uses action and reflection to meet needs and enhance learning through mutually beneficial, reciprocal partnerships.” This practice infuses course content with community service.

As a result, Miami students are able to gain real world skills and enhance their learning while contributing to the community. Regardless of the task, Service-Learning should be mutually beneficial to those who perform service as well as those being served.

## What Service Opportunities Exist? How Do You Get Involved?

Service experiences provide you an opportunity to exercise your citizenship while cultivating a high impact skill set that contributes to your professional development. Do not discount the value of your service experiences!

Many organizations advertise their service opportunities with Miami University. To learn more about these opportunities, visit the Office of Community Engagement and Service:

- [MiamiOH.edu/communityengagement](https://miamiOH.edu/communityengagement)



# Community Service: What Employers Value

Participation in service provides many opportunities to develop skills that employers value regardless of industry. Your ability to articulate what you learned and the skills you developed as a result of your service experience gives you a competitive advantage in the job and internship search process. This workbook will help you communicate the value of your service experience to employers.

What do employers want? According to a NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) survey of employers, the following skills are most highly coveted among applicants:

- Ability to work in a team
- Ability to problem solve
- Ability to communicate verbally and in written format
- Possess strong work ethic
- Ability to lead
- Ability to initiate/take initiative
- Ability to analyze quantitative data
- Ability to be flexible and adaptable
- Detail oriented
- Demonstrate interpersonal skills and relate well
- Technical knowledge related to job



“My undergraduate service experience has played an invaluable role in my career trajectory. It provided a foundation of experiences from which I have built a career rooted in service to my community.

I proudly share my experiences with others and it is always a topic of discussion in interviews with potential employers. I confidently seek out opportunities that are not only challenging, but provide purpose and meaning to myself and others.”

**Peter McCaughley, BS '14**

Accountant, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center



The communication, collaboration, organizational and leadership skills I gained in working with community members and agencies, fellow students, faculty and staff were extremely valuable and transferable in my first professional position, in my graduate studies and are still relevant in my work today.

**Jamie Viars, BA '17, MS '15**

Academic Coach, TRiO Student Support Services, Miami Regionals



Getting the crowd pumped-up

#MiamiOHMoments

Many students report developing valuable skills from participating in various forms of community engagement. As you can see, many are closely related to the NACE skills employers seem to value the most.

In addition, when people engage with their communities, they often cultivate the attributes below. Think specifically about your community engagement experiences and how they relate to your development of the skills and attributes listed below.

## Common Skills Acquired through Community Engagement

- Collaboration and relationship building within a team setting
- Critical thinking skills to identify, understand, and solve problems from multiple perspectives
- Growth as a leader and ability to manage a group of people
- Interaction and work with individuals from diverse backgrounds
- Effective communication



## Personal Attributes Developed through Community Engagement

Adaptable  
 Analytical  
 Caring  
 Cheerful attitude  
 Citizenship  
 Confident  
 Creative  
 Decisive  
 Dedicated  
 Dependable  
 Determined  
 Empathetic  
 Enthusiastic  
 Fair  
 Faith  
 Flexible  
 Generous

Honest  
 Initiative  
 Kind  
 Knowledgeable  
 Motivated  
 Open Minded  
 Organized  
 Passionate  
 Patient  
 Persistent  
 Persuasive  
 Quick Learner  
 Responsible  
 Resourceful  
 Socially  
 Conscious  
 Work ethic

# Examples of Effectively Describing Community Engagement on a Resume

1

**Position:** Service Saturday Coordinator

**Responsibility:** Organized a volunteer project for 50 students

## **Skills/Attributes:**

- Collaboration Skills
- Marketing Skills
- Responsibility
- Teamwork
- Analytical Skills

## **How to Adapt this to your Resume** (quantify if available):

- Collaborated with local community organizations to develop mutually beneficial volunteer opportunities.
- Planned and marketed 6 successful Service Saturday events, engaging nearly 200 students in 675 hours of service.
- Responsible for the distribution and collection of liability waivers from all volunteers.
- Developed a post-service assessment tool to gauge participant satisfaction and interest in future events. Analyzed data to determine areas for improvement.

2

**Position:** Alpha Phi Omega, Treasurer

**Responsibility:** Managed service-based student organization's budget

## **Skills/Attributes:**

- Knowledgeable
- Effective Communication
- Initiative
- Resourcefulness

## **How to Adapt this to your Resume** (quantify if available):

- Managed the organization's funds and submitted budget requests and reports. Attended treasurer trainings. Knowledgeable about creating purchase orders, making deposits and collecting member dues.
- Exhibited effective communication by preparing monthly budget presentations for members to educate them about funding sources and increase buy in for fundraisers.
- Demonstrated initiative by developing three new fundraising events including a silent auction, dinner, and concert which generated over \$4,500.

**3**     **Position:** Opening Minds Through Art (OMA) Volunteer  
**Responsibility:** Volunteered with older adults as a part of Service-Learning Class

**Skills/Attributes:**

- Creativity
- Patience
- Adaptability
- Problem Solving
- Communication

**How to Adapt this to your Resume** (quantify if available):

- Helped to develop art sessions for Alzheimer’s patients by experimenting with different art forms and materials.
- Worked closely with an older adult with Alzheimer’s disease for full semester, which expanded my ability to interact with diverse populations.

**Practice**

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsibility:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Skills/Attributes:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**How to Adapt this to your Resume** (quantify - if available):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

“

My experience with service-learning, and specifically OMA [Opening Minds through Art], is the reason I received a bachelors and masters degree in gerontology and now work in the aging field. My experience was life-shaping and presented me with an opportunity I will never forget!

”

**Josie Rader, BA '14, MGS '16**

Director, Faith & Fitness | Health Promotion Specialist | Certified Fitness Trainer



# Service as a Career: The Non-profit Sector

## What is the Non-profit Sector?

“Non-profit” is a legal term that the Internal Revenue Service uses to define tax-exempt organizations whose money or “profit” must be used solely to further their charitable or educational mission, rather than distributed as profits to owners or shareholders.

Attempting to classify all the organizations that make up the Non-profit sector is difficult. Some of these organizations are specific, especially single-issue organizations like those dedicated to sickle-cell anemia or the prevention of cruelty to laboratory test animals. Other Non-profit groups are much broader in scope, like the United Way. Non-profit organizations can generally be categorized into eight main areas:

1. Health Services
2. Educational/Research
3. Religious Organizations
4. Social Service
5. Foundations
6. Arts and Culture, including Public TV and Radio
7. Civic, Social, and Fraternal Organizations
8. Legal Services



Peter at Oxford Community Pantry

#MiamiOHMoments

As a result from my community involvement as a student, it has opened new doors for me. With my large network of connections, I was invited by other community members/leaders to be on committees for their organizations and was appointed as a board member for 17 Strong in Hamilton, Ohio. As a Miami Alumni, I'm glad I attended Miami Regionals, where I learned the importance of volunteering and to be active in my community through civic engagement.

**Peter Norman Engelhard Jr., BS + BIS '16**

SNAP Outreach Counselor, Shared Harvest Foodbank  
Youth Peer Partner, Butler County Family & Children First Council  
Youth Coordinator, Booker T. Washington Community Center

# Working with Non-profit Organizations

There are a number of career pathways into Non-profit opportunities. Non-profit organizations also present a variety of entry-level job opportunities. Some positions provide a direct service to the public such as a Tutor, Counselor, or Early Childhood Educator. Others, such as Finance Manager, Program Grants Officer, Site Administrator, and Production Supervisor, are administrative and managerial in nature.

For college graduates, multiple entry-level positions exist for a variety of majors. Some examples of these positions are:

- Administrative Assistant/Coordinator
- Associate Editor
- Campaign Organizer
- Canvas Director
- Case Manager
- Communications Organizer/Administrative
- Community Organizer
- Direct Mail/Marketing Manager
- Field Director
- Office Manager
- Planning Analyst
- Policy Analyst
- Press Assistant
- Program Coordinator/Director
- Project Director
- Research Assistant
- Residential Counselor
- Vocational Instructor



## Careers In Public Service: Are they right for you?

As you think about your previous service experiences and your future career endeavors, you need to consider what motivates you and assess not only your interests and abilities, but also your personal values. Take a moment to evaluate the following questions:

- Is it important for you to work for a purpose?
- Do you want to do something good for the world?
- Do you have strong ideals?
- Do you enjoy working with people?
- Do intangible rewards truly mean more to you than money?
- Would you rather be a generalist or a specialist?
- Do you want an opportunity with sole responsibility for a project?

If you answered 'yes' to most of these questions, you may want to consider employment (with a Non-profit organization). The next step is research. To determine where to look for specific opportunities, you need to gather as much information as you can about the Non-profit sector. For information on job and internship search strategies, please visit the Miami University Center for Career Exploration & Success website and click on "Internship and Job Search".

“My career flourished from my involvement in service learning. After serving the Booker T. Washington Community Center, I was offered the opportunity to join the staff right before I graduated. Service learning will allow you to directly impact your community, while giving the community the endless possibility to impact you.”

**Samuel G. Broyles III, B.A.Sc.'15**

Program and Community Director, Booker T. Washington Community Center

“Engaging in community service with elders furthered my passion for studying gerontology and disability studies, and guided me in determining that I was on the right career path.”

**Hailee Yoshizaki-Gibbons, B. Phil '08, MS '13**

PhD Candidate - Disability Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago

Stop by the Career Center in 0045 Armstrong Student Center for assistance in taking the next steps to further develop your career skills with:

Career Advising

Career Fairs

Handshake

Internship & Job Search

Major & Career Exploration

Mock Interviewing

Programs & Workshops

Love. Honor. ***Success.***



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