MIAMI UNIVERSITY
Career Services

THE VALUE OF *Service*
IN YOUR CAREER SEARCH

Introduction:

The purpose of this guide is to:

1. Define community service and Service-Learning;

2. Explore service opportunities and how to get involved in the community;

3. Explain how you can best articulate the value of your service experiences through your resume and cover letter;

4. Learn about careers in non-profit organizations.

What is Community Service?

Community service refers to work, often unpaid, that is intended to serve the population of a particular area. Community service is often completed through a coordinated effort with a non-profit organization. There are a wide variety of community service opportunities, each unique to the population you are serving and the purpose of your work. Community service could include: building houses, cleaning up trash on the roads or volunteering at a local food pantry.

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 and 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**

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, employers want candidates who possess the following skills and have the ability to:

- Verbally communicate with persons inside/outside the organization
- Make decisions and solve problems
- Obtain and process information
- Plan, organize/prioritize work
- Analyze quantitative data
- Understand and develop technical knowledge related to the job
- Understand and be proficient with computer software programs
- Create and/or edit written reports
- Sell or influence others
- Be flexible/adaptable
- Build and maintain positive relationships both inside and outside the organization
- Be friendly and have an outgoing personality

Many students report gaining skills from service. As you can see, many are closely related to the NACE skills employers seem to value the most.

Common skills acquired in service work:

1. Collaboration
2. Sense of responsibility and initiative
3. Quick decision-making skills
4. Ability to manage and influence students
5. Ability to respect, value, and interact with individuals of diverse backgrounds
6. Knowledge of computer-based assessment programs
7. Strong communication skills
8. Flexibility and adaptability
9. Ability to identify, understand, and solve problems from multiple angles or perspectives
10. Creativity

When you think about what you did at your service site, consider the NACE skills listed on the previous page. In addition, think about the list of attributes developed through service on the following page and try to match them with the qualities an employer is looking for.

If your service experience doesn't have direct connection to the jobs or internships you are seeking, remember that your experiences provide insight into your values and communicate your commitment to the community.
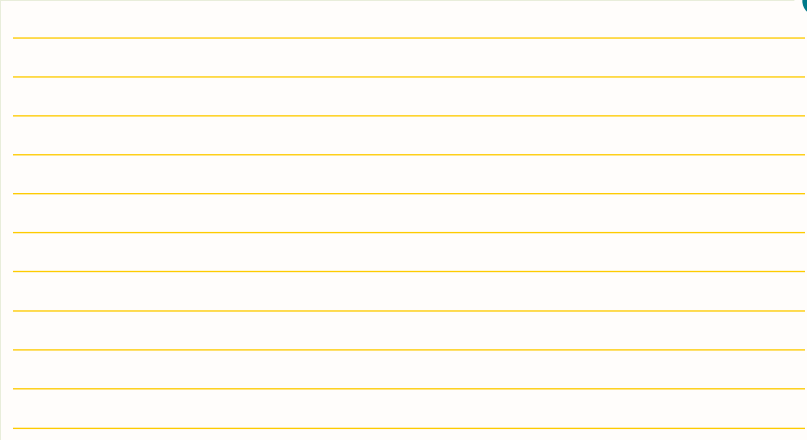
Attributes Developed Through Service

Adaptability

Analytical ability

Business sense

Caring nature

Cheerful attitude

Collaboration

Confidence

Courage

Creativity

Decisiveness

Dedication

Dependability

Determination

Endurance

Enthusiasm

Experience

Fairness

Faith

Flexibility

Generosity

Global expertise

Honesty

Industriousness

Intelligence

Intuition

Kindness

Knowledge

Leadership

Learning quickly

Motivation

Negotiation

Nurturing

Organization

Patience

Persistence

Personal drive

Persuasion

Problem solving

Relationship building

Resourcefulness

Service to others

Social interaction

Teachableness
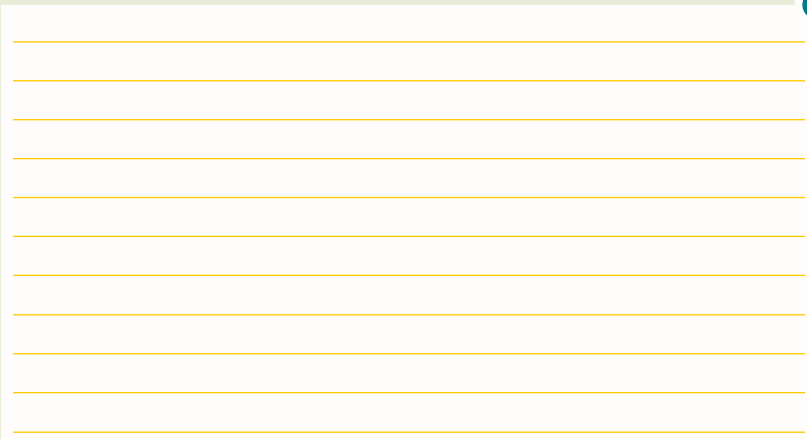
Teamwork

Tolerance

Vision

Willingness

Work ethic

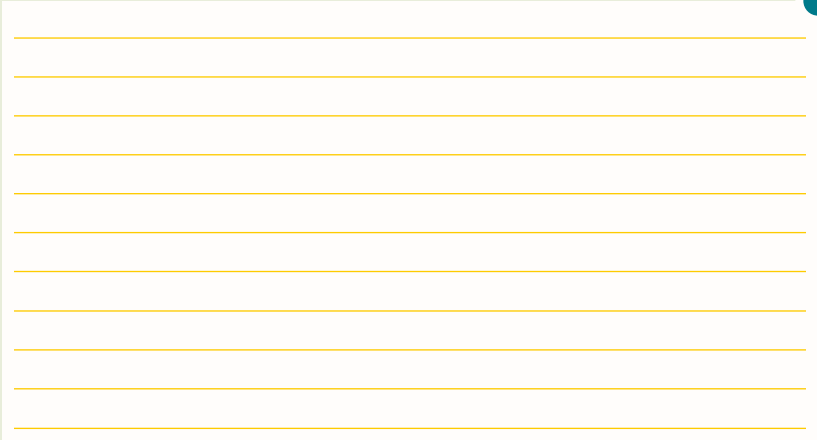# *Articulating Your Service Experience and Skills Exercises*

What did you do at your service site? Be sure to provide a vivid and accurate description of the work you've done.
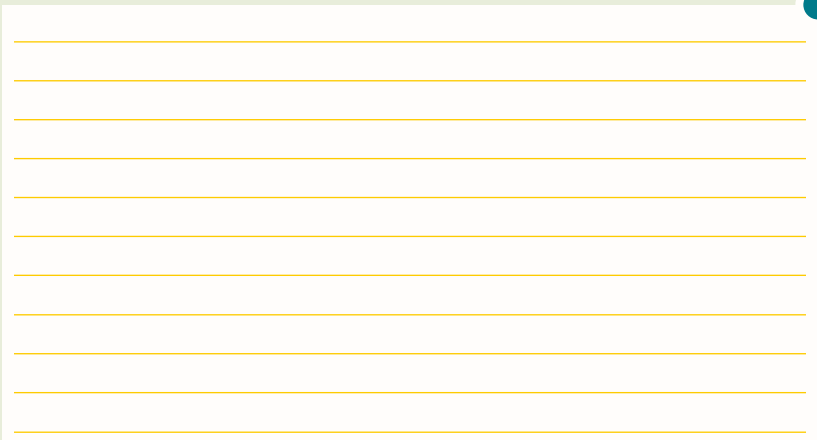
Which of the skills employers are looking for did your service help you develop? How? Be specific!

What did you accomplish in your service experience? (Quantify; how much, how many) (e.g. Collaborated with a team of 15 college students and successfully built four, two-family homes that housed eight families.)

Put it all together! Using the information you have brainstormed, create 3–5 bullet points that you could use on your resume highlighting your service experience. Make sure to talk about your position, the skills you acquired, and your accomplishments. As you begin to look at job and internship opportunities, highlight these skills and experiences during your job search.

Examples of Service on Your Resume:

Office of Community Engagement and Service   20xx–20xx
Undergraduate Service Coordinator
- Facilitated volunteer services at the Family Resource Center for 15 participants who worked at the thrift store
- Led weekly discussion on Service-Learning and community engagement
- Developed a strategy to cultivate and recruit volunteers
- Planned community events for team of 50 volunteers

Ambassadors for Children   20xx–20xx
President
- Implemented an aggressive marketing campaign that increased recruitment to the organization by 25%
- Raised $2500 for children in need
- Sponsored an awareness day that educated the Miami community about children living in poverty around the world

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 then 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. Civic, Social and Fraternal Organizations
6. Arts and Culture, including Public TV and Radio
7. Foundations
8. Legal Services

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.

- Administrative Assistant/ Coordinator
- Associate Editor
- Campaign Organizer
- Canvas Director
- Case Manager
- Communications Organizer/ Administrator
- Community Organizer
- Direct Mail/Marketing Manager

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:

- Field Director
- Office Manager
- Planning Analyst
- Policy Analyst
- Press Assistant
- Program Coordinator/ Director
- Project Director
- Research Assistant
- Residential Counselor
- Vocational Instructor

CAREERS IN 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.

- 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 the opportunity to have 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 Career Services website and click on "Internship and Job Search".

Career Advising

Career Fairs

Internship and Job Search

Major and Career Exploration

Miami CAREERlink

Mock Interviews

Programs and Workshops

**Visit our Website
MiamiOH.edu/careers
for more information**

Download the Career Services App!
More info: **MiamiOH.edu/careers/converted/app.html**

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