

**Leon County Schools
Student Services
Student Community Service Guidelines**

Student community service is an unpaid activity that addresses an identified social problem in the school or community. Community service is not a Florida or school district requirement for graduation with a standard high school diploma, but is among the general eligibility requirements for Florida Bright Futures awards. For Bright Futures award purposes, the student must “identify a social problem that interests him or her, develop a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the problem, and, through papers or other presentations, evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience.” (Florida Statutes 1009.534 Florida Academic Scholars award, 1009.535 Florida Medallion Scholars award, and 1009.536 Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award). Refer to the Florida Department of Education Office of Student Financial Assistance for the number of hours required for eligibility consideration for each award and other current award requirements.

Leon County Schools Student Services has established the following guidelines for the student wishing to receive district approval for community service activities:

- 1. Community service activities should directly address identified social problems in the school or community in areas such as health, education, environment, or public safety.**
- 2. Community service activities must receive prior approval from designated high school personnel (typically, the student’s high school counselor) to ensure that credit will be earned.**
- 3. Community service activities may be performed at school or in the community.** Activities performed at school should be designed to meet greater needs in the areas of health, education, environment, or public safety identified within the school. The benefits of the activities should be extended to individuals or families in need, not to the student’s own family or family-owned business. Activities should serve the “greater good.”
- 4. Community service activities must be unpaid.** The student must not be compensated with money, goods, or services for their time.
- 5. Community service activities must be rendered for not-for-profit organizations or agencies. In some cases, and with prior approval, activities rendered for for-profit organizations may receive credit** (e.g., if the activities are performed within the context of an organization’s pro bono work, address a social problem that would not otherwise be addressed by the work of paid organization staff, and do not result in any increase in the organization’s membership or profits.)
- 6. After identifying a social problem in the school or community, the student should be engaged in meaningful action for a sustained amount of time so that their activities can have a positive impact.**
- 7. The student may engage in direct, indirect, or advocacy service activities. Ideally, the student would engage in all three types of service throughout his/her high school career.**
 - Direct service involves face-to-face contact with service recipients. Examples include tutoring other students, serving meals at a homeless shelter, or working with the elderly in a nursing home.
 - Indirect service involves performing a service without having face-to-face contact with the recipients. Usually resources are channeled to help alleviate a problem. Examples include food and clothing drives, marathons, fundraisers, or environmental projects.
 - Advocacy involves educating others about a particular social problem, with a goal of eliminating the cause of that problem. Examples include writing letters to legislators or editors, preparing and displaying posters to an identified audience, writing and performing informative plays, or creating educational materials for other target groups.
- 8. Hours spent in community service activities must be verified by a site supervisor.**
- 9. The student must reflect throughout the community service experience and must provide a summative evaluation and reflection.**

10. Community service activities must be documented on the Leon County Schools Community Service Documentation Plan and Verification and Evaluation and Reflection forms, with appropriate signatures and dates. Completed forms should be maintained throughout the student's high school career and for three years after the student's graduation for Florida Bright Futures award program audit purposes.

11. High schools must provide recognition of community service learning hours on the student's Florida Automated System for Transferring Educational Records (FASTER) transcript. This recognition can appear in the "Number of Community Service Hours" field (field number 57 on the FASTER T1 record) or the "Course Number" field (field number 13 on the FASTER T4 record; course numbers are 0500370 or 2104330).

Activities that **may not** be approved and/or receive credit include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Any activity that violates federal or state laws, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, creed, sex, age, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.
2. Any activity whose chief purpose is to increase the amount of revenue for a private, for-profit business or to generate new revenue for that business.
3. Any activity that replaces a paid staff worker of the participating agency or institution with a student volunteer.
4. Any activity that compensates a student with money, goods, or services.
5. Any activity rendered as a prerequisite for student employment.
6. Any activity that is performed as a result of disciplinary action taken by the school or courts.
7. Any activity whose chief purpose is to convert others to a particular religious or spiritual view and/or which denigrates the religious or spiritual views of others.
8. Any activity whose chief purpose is to help prepare and/or participate in the performance of a religious service or religious education activity.
9. Any activity that has not been pre-approved by designated school personnel and verified by a site supervisor and designated school personnel.
10. Attendance at self-improvement workshops or conferences.
11. Participation as an athlete in school sports/athletics.
12. Participation as an assistant or trainer at a school-based sports training camp.
13. Participation in regularly scheduled school drama, band, or chorus performances; festivals, or competitions. In some cases and with prior approval, participation in school performances, festivals, or competitions (not including rehearsal or practice time) may be considered community service (e.g., if the performance meets an identified social problem, student participation is voluntary, any admission charge or donations accepted to attend are used exclusively to address an identified social problem, no payment is received by a student organization or a sponsoring organization, and the performance does not promote a sponsoring organization).

Transfer Policies

For a student transferring to Leon County Schools from a non-public Leon County high school or a high school in another district, any community service completed during high school that has been verified and recorded in the student's educational record will be accepted at face value by Leon County Schools. Leon County Schools personnel may contact the prior school(s) for additional information if verification or documentation appears incomplete.

For a student transferring out of Leon County Schools, any community service completed and verified during high school and prior to the student's withdrawal from Leon County Schools will be documented and forwarded by Leon County Schools personnel to the receiving school.

Community Service Recommendations

VolunteerLeon (www.volunteerleon.org) is a resource for students wishing to research local opportunities for community service opportunities. It also provides students opportunities to design and implement their own community service projects with guidance from experienced staff members.

Local community service opportunities may be available through the following organizations and agencies:

American Red Cross
Association for Retarded Citizens
Big Bend Cares
Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Catholic Social Services
Elder Care Services
Florida Park Service
Florida TaxWatch
Florida Trust for Historic Preservation
Goodwill Industries
Habitat for Humanity
Helping Every Little Person
Kids Incorporated
LeMoyné Art Foundation
Leon County Board of County Commissioners
Leon County Human Services
Leon County Public Library
Leon Reads
Literacy Volunteers Leon County
Mary Brogan Museum of Art and Science
Ronald McDonald House
Salvation Army
Teen Court
The Shelter
Second Harvest Food Bank
Tallahassee Big Dog Rescue
Tallahassee Fire Department
Tallahassee-Leon County Community Animal Service Center
Tallahassee Little Theatre
Tallahassee Museum of Natural History
Tallahassee Parks and Recreation
United Way
YMCA