

### WHAT IS COMMUNITY SERVICE?

**Community service is donating your time, energy, and skills to a specific cause in your area that benefits a larger group of people.** Community service is an important and fun part of our USA High School and Grants Programs. Through community service, you can directly impact your community by investing in something larger than yourself. In addition, your Community Service Projects enable you to immerse yourself in American culture, form meaningful connections with your community members, and make friends, too! Successful completion of your Community Service Projects is required to receive your Certificate of Completion for the USA High School and Grants Programs.

### WHAT IS MEANINGFUL SERVICE?

**Your projects should focus on supporting and improving your community, and building relationships with its residents.** When choosing a project, think about what interests you and what qualities, abilities and skills you can put to use in your community. Do you like to cook? Inquire with a local soup kitchen about serving a special dish from your home country. Do you like to play soccer? Organize a soccer clinic for local children, or help coach a children's team. Have you ever helped your younger brother or sister with their schoolwork? Ask your teachers if they know of younger students that might need help completing their homework. Do you like animals, or miss your pets at home? Volunteer at an animal shelter and spend time with animals that need a home in the U.S.!

### WHAT IS NOT MEANINGFUL SERVICE?

**Activities that do not benefit a larger community are not considered to be meaningful service projects and will not be counted towards your total hours.** Examples of activities that are *not* community service include: babysitting; doing housework/yard work or shoveling snow for your host family or neighbors; selling food or candy at a sports game; participating in activities such as sports, theatre, or music through your school or community.

### WHERE AND HOW CAN YOU VOLUNTEER?

Care Center/Nursing Home	Local Government Office or Town Hall
Animal Shelter/Humane Society	Environmental Cleanup Project
YMCA/Sports Camps	Trail Maintenance/Conservation Corps
Local Chamber of Commerce	4-H Club or Sierra Club
Museums	Library
Church, Temple or Mosque	Blood Drives, Food Drives, Clothing Drives
After School Programs	Community Presentations About Your Country

### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Complete 20 hours of community service during your program year (10 hours per semester).** You must record all volunteer work and hours on a Supervisor's Community Project Evaluation Form. Your project supervisors will complete this form to show that you have fulfilled your service hours.

#### Deadlines:

- Submit at least half of your total required hours of service by **January 1st**.
- Submit the remainder of your total required hours of service by **April 30th**.
- August semester students: submit all required hours by **January 1st**.
- January semester students: submit all required hours by **April 30th**.

**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS** (continued)

2. **Submit a written essay about your Community Service Projects by April 30th.** Your essays must be 500 words or more. Describe how your projects have impacted your life, and the lives of those around you. Please consider the following questions when writing your essay:

- What did you like most about your volunteer experience? What did you like the least?
- What kinds of tasks did you complete? What did you do exactly to help others?
- What kinds of personal connections did you make while volunteering?
- What have you learned from this experience?
- Has the experience changed any of your ideas or opinions of the United States?
- Does volunteering in the United States differ from volunteering in your home country?
- How can you continue to be involved with volunteering when you return home? What will you teach your family and friends about volunteering?
- Do you feel that you have helped make a difference? Why or why not?

Photo Essays: We love to see smiling photos of our students in action! Instead of a 500 word essay, you may submit a photo essay illustrating your community service experience. Please include a caption explaining what each photo shows. *Please note that, if you submit a photo essay, a written essay of at least 300 words is still required.*

Please submit all forms, essays and photo essays to [communityproject@ciece.org](mailto:communityproject@ciece.org).

Be sure to include your **name and student ID number** in the subject line of your email.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Please visit our website for more information (scroll to the bottom of the page for the community service section):

[www.ciece.org/usahs-support](http://www.ciece.org/usahs-support)

All Community Service Projects Forms can be downloaded on this site. You can also download a letter from CIEE to present to your project supervisors.

We are sure that your community project will be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. We look forward to hearing about the important work you have been doing in your communities!