

Service Learning Program

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www.miracosta.edu/studentsservices/servicelearning

Service Learning

The Service Learning Program partners academic instruction with experiential community service. Each semester approximately 60 courses at MiraCosta offer in person and virtual service opportunities. Students work with their instructors and the Service Learning and Volunteer Center to find meaningful service opportunities (i.e., experiential learning opportunities) in the community that relate to what they are learning in the classroom. Placements include youth programs, conservation efforts, programs that address homelessness and hunger, senior services, child development programs, social services organizations, museums and arts programs, after school programs, and literacy programs as well as many other opportunities within K-12 grade public schools and non-profit organizations. Students can earn a certificate of participation in Service Learning when they complete 15 hours at one site, for one course. For a list of approved community partners, go to the Service Learning Community Partners List website at <http://hub.miracosta.edu/servicelearningpartners/>. Students can also take advantage of the Volunteer Certificate of Achievement offered through Sociology to jump start their academic and career path.

Through these community placements, students apply classroom knowledge to everyday situations and real problems. They gain practical experience that can help them explore or confirm possible career paths while earning documented work experience. Students are encouraged to mention their service learning experiences when they apply for scholarships or complete transfer applications, professional portfolios, or resumes. In addition, students become more civically aware and engaged as they discover the value and power of their own voice. Students have reported that these experiences affirm their career paths, provide job opportunities, and increase their cultural and social capital. Students who are pursuing careers in education, public health/nutrition, the non-profit sector, social work, government, racial justice, or any service-minded career should consider taking courses with instructors who offer service learning. For more information about the program, including its courses and community partners, students should visit the program's website.

Volunteer Program

Students who are not enrolled in service learning courses can engage with their campus or local community to earn volunteer hours. These experiences are often used to explore career paths, gain hands-on life skills, earn hours for scholarships, or add valuable experiences to their transfer applications. Students can earn two certificates of participation: MiraCosta Service Award (50-99 hours) or MiraCosta Presidential Service Award (100+ hours). For additional one-time volunteer

opportunities, students can visit the monthly calendar of volunteer opportunities or check out the list of local community organizations for ongoing service opportunities at www.miracosta.edu/studentsservices/servicelearning/.

Benefits of Service Learning and Volunteer Experiences

- ▶ Apply course content through "real world" experiences.
- ▶ Increase social capital and cultural humility.
- ▶ Grow in your own personal development and increase self-awareness of civic responsibility.
- ▶ Apply these experiences to your resume, transfer applications, and scholarships.
- ▶ Increase awareness of your community and its resources.
- ▶ Explore and confirm career paths, and network with community professionals and field experts.