

Atlanta Public Schools

Community Service Guidelines

2022-2023

****Effective December 1, 2022****

"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: A DEFINITION

The purpose of the community service requirement is mirrored by the APS mission ‘Through a caring culture of equity, trust, and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college, career, and life’. It is the hope that students will graduate with an awareness of the multiple needs of the community, a sense of moral obligation to help those less fortunate and the desire to make their community a better place in which to live.

MAKING YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS COUNT

Community Service refers to service that a person performs for the benefit of his or her local community. To reap the most benefit from community service, students are encouraged to seek service opportunities that:

- Are aligned with their interests
- Encourage them to step outside of familiar environments and expand their horizons
- Will strengthen their sense of civic engagement and nationalism
- Will broaden their educational, developmental, and social goals
- Will contribute to them becoming responsible, active citizens

As an APS student, you should plan for, and reflect on your community service to reap the most benefit from service opportunities.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

As a reminder, due to the impact of the pandemic on the accrual of community service hours, students within cohorts 2023 and 2024 are only required to earn 40 hours of community service to graduate.

For students in cohorts 2025 and beyond, earning $\frac{1}{2}$ of a Carnegie unit, or 75 hours of community service, is the requirement for graduation from Atlanta Public Schools. To avoid procrastination, students in cohorts 2025 and beyond are strongly encouraged to complete a minimum of 20 community service hours per school year for three years, and complete 15 community service hours during the fourth and final year of high school (for a total of 75 hours over a four-year period) .

Below is an example schedule of how students can remain on track to complete the community service graduation requirement.

*Students in Cohorts 2025 and beyond must complete 75 hours of community service to meet graduation requirements				
Freshman year: Complete 20 hrs	Sophomore year: Complete 20 hrs	Junior year: Complete 20 hrs	Senior year: Complete 15 hrs	Total Hours Completed = 75 hours

*Students who enroll into APS after their freshman year should discuss a plan of action with their school counselor to meet the community service requirement for graduation.

INTERNAL COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Community service opportunities are everywhere, you just have to be willing to pursue them. In-school community service is permissible and there are multiple opportunities for students to earn community service hours within their school community. Students who are members of certain extracurricular activities, clubs, and programs may be required to earn service hours as a part of their affiliation with that club, class, or program. Service hours that are a requirement for other Atlanta Public Schools related clubs, classes, extracurricular activity or programs (e.g., Signature Programming/Diploma Program Students, JROTC, or Career Technical Student Organizations) shall also count towards the service hours for graduation requirement. Unless otherwise specified, it is not necessary for a student to complete community service hours in addition to the hours that have been set as a requirement for graduation.

In addition to the service opportunities that may be provided as a part of a school-based club, class, extracurricular activity, or program, students may also access additional service opportunities that are created, sponsored, and managed by a school staff member at their school. Each school is encouraged to build community service opportunities at the school-level that meet the following parameters and are aligned to one or more of the APS profile of a graduate indicators:

Parameters for school-based or district-based community service opportunities – School service must meet all the following:	Profile of a Graduate Indicators – The service opportunity provides a students a chance to build in one or more of the Profile of a Graduate characteristics:
Involves an action or the essence of doing, or performing an act for the benefit of others	Self-reflective and globally connected
Is not self-serving and directly benefits one or more individuals	Self-directed and goal-oriented
Unless planned as part of a larger convening or activity, does not occur during instructional time	Critical thinker & skilled problem-solver
Is not related to routine tasks or requirements that students are invited or expected to complete (e.g. surveillance testing, participation in universal screeners, ACT, SAT, or related prep work)	Resourceful and driven
Does not result in compensation (monetary or otherwise) after the service task is completed	Academically prepared
Is meaningful and/or contributes to the betterment of the school community and/or larger surrounding community	Fully engaged learner

Examples of approved school or district-based service activities include, but are not limited to:

- Activities coordinated by an APS Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- School and/or community beautification activities
- Planning and coordination of a food pantry/canned food drive/clothing drive/blood drive
- Serving as sports team managers
- After-school peer tutoring
- Serving as designated school-based student leaders with specific functions and tasks (e.g., Student Ambassadors,

JROTC, Peer Leaders)

- Participation in Special Olympics or the Best Buddies Program

Examples of non-approved school or district-based service activities include, but are not limited to:

- Purchasing items for the food or clothing drive
- Participation in surveillance testing for COVID-19
- Taking a universal academic, social, emotional, behavior screener
- Participation in general surveys

EXTERNAL COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Organizations who have been established for a minimum of 1 year and have been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as tax exempt and non-profit under Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code for a minimum of 1 year meet the minimum eligibility criteria as an APS approved community service organization. Non-profit organizations may include, but are not limited to, religious entities, charitable organizations, civic organizations, or other nonprofit organizations that are otherwise created for scientific, literary, or educational purposes. Examples of non-profit organizations may include, but are not limited to, homeless shelters, boy scouts, girl scouts, food pantries, or humane organizations.

SERVICE GUIDELINES

VOLUNTEERING WITH INDEPENDENT AGENCIES OR BUSINESSES

If you question whether an activity or service placement meets the eligibility criteria for you to earn community service hours, you should talk to your school counselor **before** the student participates in the activity.

MyVoluntier: COMMUNITY SERVICE TRACKING AND MONITORING EASE

To aid students and schools in the tracking and monitoring of community service hours, the district has partnered with MyVoluntier. MyVoluntier is the district selected web application used to find, track, and mobilize individuals to better impact their communities. Students may access MyVoluntier via the portal which is located within [MyBackpack](#). This platform will allow students to research and connect with local service opportunities who need volunteers. To allow students and parents access to monitor service hours in real time, organizations who offer service opportunities are encouraged to enroll into MyVoluntier directly. To enroll an organization into MyVoluntier, this link <https://tinyurl.com/yv935fh4> should be shared with the partnering organization for verification and approval. Students may perform community service within any organization which meets the community organization requirements. Upon completion of service hours with an organization that is not currently enrolled into MyVoluntier, students should present documentation on the organization's letterhead of the details of service (community service contact name, phone number and address of the organization, dates and hours of service, total hours of service completed, brief description of service tasks completed) to the school counselor for submission to MyVoluntier.

NOTIFICATION OF SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to locating potential service opportunities within the MyVoluntier app, students may also independently seek community service opportunities. Depending on one's interest, community service projects are everywhere. Students may choose to search service opportunities online; below are a few websites that may assist students in securing placements, however, if a student secures a placement that is not currently within MyVoluntier, the school can initiate adding the organization into MyVoluntier and/or the student can provide the organization with the link above to directly enroll into MyVoluntier. The student should wait until the organization has been added to the MyVoluntier platform before beginning a service project with that organization. Students will not have the ability to log hours unless the organization is listed within the MyVoluntier platform.

In addition to MyVoluntier, students may access the following additional online sites to seek service opportunities:

<https://volunteer.handsonatlanta.org/>

<https://www.atlantaparent.com/where-to-volunteer-as-a-family-in-atlanta/>

<https://365atlantatraveler.com/service-projects-for-kids-in-atlanta/>

<https://kidsthatdogood.com/news/five-volunteer-opportunities-teens-atlanta/>

<https://www.upparent.com/lists/volunteer-opportunities-for-kids-in-atlanta>

STUDENT SUCCESS GUIDELINES

Remember that at your community service agency, you are not only representing yourself, you are representing Atlanta Public Schools. You are responsible for arriving at the given location on time, wearing the appropriate attire aligned to the service task, and respecting all the rules and regulations of the agencies with whom you are volunteering.

APPEARANCE & DRESS

Your personal appearance is considered very important. A standard of dress reflecting your community service status is equally important. The service project and location will largely determine how a student should dress. For example, a student who is helping to build homes with Atlanta Habitat for Humanity, tackle urgent needs through Hands On Atlanta, or prepare food with Project Open Hand would likely dress very differently for service than a student who is volunteering for the Ronald McDonald House or Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Students are encouraged to inquire with the service agency or the school counselor if they have questions regarding appropriate dress. Students should also practice good hygiene when participating in service.

SERVICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Your service hours should be submitted and maintained in accordance with your school's recommended specifications. School personnel, including but not limited to school counselors and graduation coaches, will engage in conversations annually with students about their status towards achieving the 75 hours. School staff are available to provide support to students, however, satisfying the APS community service requirement is the responsibility of the student.

BENEFITS

You will benefit from your volunteering by building on your leadership, communication, and decision-making skills. You will also learn a lot about yourself. This will help you develop academically by being able to integrate your learning experiences with practical experiences. At the same time, others will benefit from your volunteerism.

CHAPERONES

If an adult chaperone is required for a student to complete community service hours at a specific location, the student is responsible for securing the chaperone prior to signing on as a community service volunteer.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Remember that you represent your school and district when you are out in the community. Your actions are a reflection on you and your school. Any misbehavior or unlawful activity while on a volunteer assignment within the community may be reported to the local authorities and/or your School Principal, and may be addressed according to the APS Code of Conduct.

TRANSPORTATION

You are responsible for obtaining your own transportation to and from service opportunities. Atlanta Public Schools does not assume liability for any student traveling to and from service opportunities.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Although you are giving your time, your service agency is counting on you to be prompt and dependable to aid them in accomplishing their goals. Unless an emergency arises that prevents you from attending or participating in the agreed upon schedule for service, you are expected to attend and participate.

COMPENSATION

No monetary compensation is permitted for work done for community service;community service is unpaid.