

Duval County Public Schools Bright Futures Community Service Guidelines

Per the State of Florida, eligibility for a Florida Bright Futures scholarship award requires that a student complete community service work as approved by the local school district. Scholarship eligibility also requires that students meet testing and grade point average minimums for Florida Bright Futures.

The following guidelines were written by Duval County Public Schools and will assist students as they develop an appropriate Florida Bright Futures community service plan. Accumulated volunteer hours for other initiatives such as National Honor Society, CAS activities for the International Baccalaureate diploma or University applications may not meet the Florida Bright Futures community service hours requirement.

Only Florida Bright Futures eligible hours will be entered into the transcript of Duval County Public School students. However, students are encouraged to participate in volunteer projects outside the scope of Florida Bright Futures if they and their families find value in such experiences.

“Students 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 Statue 1009.534

GUIDELINES

FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS IN DCPS

A healthy community works to protect its citizens and prevent negative outcomes for its most vulnerable members. While planning your community service project, there are several methods for developing a plan. Following are some suggestions.

Identify a Social Issue

Serve an Area of Interest that is important to you or that you want to learn more about. Your service should be directed toward a problem or a potential problem that would likely occur without the service. Perhaps there is a lack of community cohesion or there is a community vulnerability that needs to be addressed. Or perhaps you have a thriving community and you want it to stay that way! Literacy is a very important issue for communities and it empowers people to grow and learn and stay informed. You may want to volunteer at your local school to assist young readers by spending time listening as they read aloud to you. Or perhaps you would prefer to assist at your local library by shelving books for this nonprofit agency with a mission for public literacy!

Serve a Special Population

Serving members of a special population or causes that support them can be a very exciting service experience! A special population typically refers to those members of a community who, without intentional consideration, may be marginalized or may be vulnerable to negative impacts or outcomes. They may need special assistance or support by community members or organizations in order to have basic needs met or to achieve long term wellness. Following are Special Populations within most communities: **Categories by Special Populations** include Senior Citizens, Early Childhood (ages birth to 12 years), At Risk Youth (ages 13 to 18), Single Parents, Special Needs, and Deaf/Hard of Hearing.



Consider Prevention Efforts

Consider assisting with preventative activities that support the long-term wellness of community members. Prevention is getting ahead of the curve and fortifying community members with supports that help move them toward positive outcomes. An example of prevention would be to work with your local nonprofit health clinic to get the word out to parents of young children about the importance of keeping the children current on routine vaccinations.

Reduction of Existing Problems

There are no perfect communities but we can work toward making the positives far outweigh the negatives! For instance, if you live in a community where there is rising crime, maybe you would like to volunteer with your local Neighborhood Watch group, posting signs for upcoming meeting times or getting the word out through your local paper for instance. Perhaps you love nature and really care about keeping the beaches free of trash and pollutants for wildlife. You could organize or participate in a local beach cleanup day to help reduce the amount of trash along the shore.

Hours Not Acceptable for Community Service

- Family related activities or service to family members
- Hours compensated financially
- Hours tied to school activities where grades, extra credit or awards are involved (including athletics)
- Court adjudicated service hours
- Service for the sole benefit of a religious house of worship and/or its congregation. Some activities sponsored by these organizations that benefit the community **may be** acceptable for Bright Futures (eg: working in a soup kitchen, community cleanup events, community health fairs, community dances or festivals, clerical support for social service activities)
- Volunteer work for the purpose of promoting a particular religious or political point of view
- Donations (eg: Locks of Love, blood)
- Hosting or housing a foreign exchange student

STEPS TO COMPLETE THE BRIGHT FUTURES SERVICE REQUIREMENT

Identify a Social Problem

At the heart of the Bright Futures community service plan is a social problem.

1. To identify a social problem, students may consider whether they would like to address a social issue as an *Area of Interest* or if they would like to assist a *Special Population* (see Categories by Special Populations, page 4). Some projects will address both.
2. Next, students will decide whether to volunteer their time in *Prevention of Negative Outcomes* related to an area of interest or a special population OR if they want to volunteer in experiences intended to *Reduce Existing Problems*. Some projects will be both preventive and useful in reducing current problems.
3. Identify a non-profit institution to oversee your community service. Students may NOT earn service hours at a for profit business.



Write a Community Service Plan

Part of the Community Service experience is for students to research social issues and special populations to determine how they would like to serve and to locate possible avenues to provide services.

While developing a plan, students should keep the following points in mind:

1. It is highly advised that students complete the community service plan and seek written School Counselor approvals **before** proceeding with a project intended to meet Florida Bright Futures community services hours requirements.
2. Your campus school counselor is authorized to approve community service hours based on the district guidelines. *While well intended, other school personnel such as clerks, coaches, teachers, deans, assistant principals, administrators and others are not authorized to **approve or deny** community service hours for Duval County Public School students.*
3. Your school counselor is available to counsel with you on your specific interests and work with you to determine how to meet your needs for personal growth while also meeting the criteria for the Florida Bright Futures service hours. **Please set aside time to meet with your school counselor.**
4. Duval County Public Schools does not require submission of a written community service plan. *However, it is expected that students complete a written plan for each community service initiative and develop contacts within the community to fulfill the plan through volunteer services.* If you are not certain about whether your volunteer hours will count for Florida Bright Futures, you should submit your written plan for preapprovals by your school counselor.

Document Community Service Hours

Students must use the Verification of Community Service form provided by Duval County Public Schools to document all volunteer hours for Florida Bright Futures Scholarship eligibility.

1. Students will itemize each date of volunteer service, even if the hours served were to work on one project. Date of service must include month, day, and year, as indicated in the Verification of Community Service form. Hours approved **cannot exceed 12 hours per day** without PRIOR School Counselor approval.
2. Each date of service requires a Verifier's Signature. Written verification by way of an original letter written on organizational letterhead is acceptable with original signature IF the letter includes dates of service, total hours, and itemization of service performed by date. Students may attach such letter to the completed verification form. Students may write "see attached" in place of verifier's signature.
3. Each community service entry must be complete and legible. This is a permanent record and Duval County Public Schools will keep the student's original document(s) with signature(s). Students should make a copy of all records prior to submitting them to the school counseling office.

Write or Present a Reflective Summary of the Community Service Experience

Students should be able to provide a summary on the community service experience(s).

1. Students should submit evidence of their community service reflection. This is a personal statement of feelings and thoughts in direct response to the service experience and can be achieved through group presentations, individual discussion with a school counselor, journaling personal reactions to the service experience, or through other avenues that benefit the individual student volunteer.



2. While creating the Reflective Summary, students may consider: a) how they might approach the service experience differently in the future, b) who is impacted by the services performed and whether there are better methods for making an impact and why, c) what the cost verses the benefit is for the services provided, d) where the services were performed and if this seemed appropriate for those who were to benefit, e) when and how often services are available and whether this seems adequate or f) personal feelings, thoughts, concerns, surprises that were experienced and how this impacted the student.

Submit Your Documentation of Hours to Your School Counselor

All Florida Bright Futures Community Service hours must be approved by a DCPS school counselor.

1. Students may begin earning Florida Bright Futures community service hours in the summer prior to entry into grade nine.
2. Each student must complete and submit for approval by his/her school counselor all Florida Bright Futures community service hours prior to the student's graduation date. Florida Bright Futures will not allow students to submit community service hours after graduation.
3. Seniors who want their community service hours to post for the Bright Futures Early Evaluation must have their hours turned in to the school counseling office by the end of the first semester of their senior year.
4. An adult must verify all volunteer hours. Verifiers may not be a relative or step family member of the volunteer.
5. Approved community service documentation will be placed into the student's cumulative folder. Students should make copies of all documentation prior to submitting it to the school counseling office.
6. Community service hours earned by students prior to enrolling in a DCPS school, eg. Home Education, private school, and transfer students can be used for Florida Bright Futures if:
 - such hours meet the criteria established as appropriate for Florida Bright Futures service in Duval County Public Schools and
 - the student can provide documentation and signed verification of the hours. All community service hours must be itemized on the Verification of Community Service form for school counselor approvals.

Community Service Hour Requirement for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship	
<i>Florida Academic Scholars</i>	100
<i>Florida Medallion Scholars</i>	75
<i>Gold Seal Vocational Scholars</i>	30

For more information regarding the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship program, please visit <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf/>.



EXAMPLE COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Reminder: this list will not cover all circumstances. If a question exists regarding an activity for community service, the student should see their school counselor for approval of the hours prior to participation in the activity.

- American Cancer Society
- American Diabetes Association
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- American Red Cross
- Art Gallery / Museum Volunteer
- Big Brothers / Big Sisters
- Clara White Mission
- City Rescue Mission
- Environmental Clean-up
- Food Bank of Jacksonville
- Girl / Boy Scouts Volunteer
- Goodwill Industries
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hospice
- Hubbard House
- Little League Coaches, Referees and Umpires
- Non-profit Summer Camp Volunteer
- Hospital Volunteer
- Jacksonville Humane Society
- Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
- Local Library
- Make-A-Wish Foundation
- March of Dimes
- Meals on Wheels
- MOSH (Museum of Science and History)
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society
- NHS Campus Clean-up
- Peer Tutoring
- Public Library Volunteer
- Race for the Cure
- SADD
- Salvation Army
- Soup Kitchens
- Special Olympics
- Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless
- Non-profit Retirement and Elder Care Facilities
- Ronald McDonald House
- Tutoring at public Middle / Elementary Schools
- The Bridge
- United Way
- Web page design for a non-profit organization or group
- YMCA

Two excellent resources for activities:

- **United Way 211**
- www.handsonjacksonville.org



CHECKLIST
FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS IN DCPS

I have identified a social problem. I will address:

- an area of interest
- a special population

My volunteer service will:

- prevent negative outcomes/support positive results
- reduce existing problems

My volunteer service will assist:

- an individual
- a group
- the community at large

My Community Service Plan is important:

- I have completed my plan and had it signed by my school counselor
- I am still working on my plan

Documentation of community service hours:

- I am recording each service date on my *Verification of Community Service* form.
- I am collecting Verifier Signatures for each date of service.

Reflections:

- I am journaling or planning a presentation of my Reflections for each community service activity.
- I am considering Who, What, When, Why, and How in my reflections.

I will submit community service documentation:

- I have documented service hours that meet the eligibility requirements.
- I am submitting my documentation each year, and all documentation will be submitted PRIOR to graduation.
- For Early Evaluation I will submit my documentation by January of my senior year.
- All service hours were completed between the summer prior to ninth grade and prior to graduation.
- I have completed each column on the *Verification of Community Service* form.
- I have a verification signature for each date of service.
- I have made a copy of my service hours verifications forms for my records.
- I have attached all letters that verify the itemized dates and types of service.
- I have submitted my community service hours to my School Counseling Office.

