

WHAT IS STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING?

Student Service Learning (SSL) is a way to combine what you learn in school with meaningful service, so that you will become a life-long contributor to your community. SSL is a graduation requirement in Maryland, and all students must complete 75 hours of service in order to receive a high school diploma.

You may begin working on your service the summer after completing 5th grade, and continue earning service hours throughout middle school and high school.

SSL is not the same as volunteering. Since it is a graduation requirement, the service must meet guidelines set by the state and county. Some of these are:

- You must prepare for, take action on, and reflect on your service.
- All service must be preapproved and occur in a public place, not a private home.
- Service must take place with a non-profit organization, and be supervised by an adult who is not a parent or relative.
- All SSL opportunities must be non-religious (secular) in nature.
- You do not earn any money for your service.

You also have some forms to fill out in order to get credit for your service. Ready to get started? Keep reading!

Deadlines to turn in SSL Verification Forms

*Turn in forms to Mrs. Soni
the Churchill SSL Coordinator
in Room 204*

For service done in the summer:
Last Friday in September

For service done 1st semester:
First Friday in January

For service done 2nd semester:
First Friday in June

**For service to count towards the
Superintendent's SSL Award:**
1st Friday in April



For more information, contact:
Mrs. Tishya Soni-Chopra, SSL Coordinator
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Getting Started with

Student Service Learning



Visit www.churchillhs.org, and click
on the **SSL Quick Link** to find forms,
guidelines, and opportunities.

Where to find opportunities



How can you get started with Student Service Learning?

Certain high school classes have SSL built in to them, including the government class that most students take (NSL).

Where else can you earn your SSL hours?

There are many opportunities in school, including clubs like Environmental Club, that help with recycling, and the Student Government Association which runs service activities like the food drive. Read the announcements for other school opportunities, like helping with Back to School Night, or at PTSA-sponsored events. Some students go back to their elementary schools to help their former teachers.

Outside of school, you have a wide range of choices. To find these, check the search using the Quick Link for SSL on www.churchillhs.org. Organizations that have a graduation cap icon next to their name have registered with the Volunteer Center, and are approved for SSL. Opportunities are also promoted on the announcements, on the Churchill website (scroll down to see "Highlighted Opportunities"), and on the SSL board near the cafeteria.



What if you want to work somewhere that is *not* on the approved list?

You can, as long as:

You turn in a preapproval form to Mrs. Soni **two weeks before you start your service**

AND

the activity meets the following criteria:

- Non-profit organization
- Tax-exempt
- Done in a public place
- Non-religious activity
- Done outside of school hours (can be before/after school or during lunch)
- Your supervisor is someone who is not a family member
- You do NOT earn any money from the activity

Preapproval forms are good for one school year and expire on May 31. New preapproval forms are required for the summer and the following school year.



Student Service Learning Awards

The **Certificate of Meritorious Service** recognizes those who have documented 260 SSL hours by the first Friday in April of their high school senior year. They get a certificate, mention in the graduation program, and a special purple tassel to wear at graduation.



Student Service Learning Verification Form Checklist

In order to get credit for your service, you must turn in a Verification Form by the deadlines shown on the SSL forms. Before you turn in your form, check to make sure everything is complete!

- ◇ The organization I worked for is preapproved (service done at an MCPS school, or organization and opportunity is on the Volunteer Center website accessed through <http://www.mcpsssl.org>.)
- ◇ If not preapproved, I have completed the *preapproval form* two weeks before the planned activity.
- ◇ I completed the top section of the form, including my Student ID number and my first period teacher.
- ◇ My student reflection answers the four questions and is a well-written paragraph.
- ◇ The organization information is complete, including name, Federal Employer ID #, phone and address.
- ◇ The dates and total number of hours are filled in by supervisor.
- ◇ The form is signed by the supervisor (who is not a relative)
- ◇ I turned in my form by the deadline (end of September for activities done in the summer, end of January for activities done first semester, middle of June for activities done second semester)

There's more to learn about Student Service Learning. To get the details, check the SSL section on the Churchill website, or contact

Mrs. Soni.

Enjoy your service! Not only will it help your community, it can help you explore careers, strengthen leadership skills and develop good workplace habits.