



**Course title:** Certificate of Excellence in Service-Learning Practice

**Hours:** 64-course hours

**Class dates and times:** Instructor-led online program with required participation in four courses for 16 weeks. Each course will have two synchronous classes (8 hours) and an additional 8 hours of asynchronous instruction.

**Location:** Online

**Instructors:**

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**Course Description:** This course is designed for those who are committed to community and service and the pursuit of justice (social, climate, peace, education) and want to increase their knowledge and skills in using service-learning to take their service to the next level. Through this certificate program, participants gain foundational knowledge and tools to prepare themselves and others to make change through service-learning. Through training, practice, and networking opportunities, the certificate program develops the capacity of community volunteers, students, AmeriCorps members and community organizers to meet genuine community needs.

The four essential skill areas to be covered are:

- Grow a strong foundation of knowledge on high quality service-learning
- Build a toolbox of quality resources
- Engage in a learning community with other volunteers
- Develop skills and tools to lead service-learning experiences with youth

**Course Objectives:** At the end of this program, participants will:

- Assist community agencies in better meeting the needs of the community
- Develop cultural competence, cross-cultural communication skills, and an appreciation for different perspectives and backgrounds
- Build skills in communications, problem solving, reflection and program planning
- Develop a deeper commitment to ongoing community service and volunteerism beyond their AmeriCorps service year and plan for “what’s next”

**Course Expectations:** Since this is a synchronous online course, the attendance requirement is met through consistent participation during all four courses. Program participants are expected to attend each class period and to stay current with assignments and expectations. Program participants whose responses and completion of activities do not meet the timelines of each session impact the entire cohort.

**Requirements:** A strong commitment to justice and a willingness to fully participate in activities that require self-reflection and that may cause discomfort.

**Time Commitment:** This program is composed of four synchronous online courses. Each course is four days consisting of four hours of instruction each day. The 64 course hours includes reading/research, creation of a portfolio including course reflections. A key piece of this commitment involves the creation and sharing of course projects.

**Course Content:** Course schedule of the topics that will be covered and all assignments due for that course are listed in Appendix A: Course Content.

**Course Materials:**

- Getting Started in Service-Learning
- Service-Learning Unit Plan

The coursework will make clear reference to the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice.

The Standards can be accessed online at:

<https://www.nylc.org/page/standards>

**Withdrawal from Course:** In order to withdraw from the program it is NOT enough to simply stop participating in the course. You must formally withdraw from the program. Tuition is non-refundable.

**Certificate Criteria:**

**Participation (80%)**

The discussions and activities are central to the online learning experience. The instructors will evaluate the participants' levels of engagement in the conversation and their abilities to raise ideas and questions that spark the thinking of others. Your ability to process the information will not be measured in quizzes and tests but by your participation in the discussion and activities.

**Course Projects (20%)**

Participants will complete four course projects for submission. All participants will maintain an electronic portfolio that allows the participant to upload documents, link, and access content for future use. Participants will also submit reflections into a shared document for each session. The final project will be a compilation of the materials required for this course. The portfolio is intended to be a living document resource for the participant.

## Appendix A: Course Content

### **Course 1: Getting Started in Service-Learning**

1. Gain an understanding of service-learning as a teaching and learning strategy.
2. Learn how service-learning complements civics, career education, and social-emotional learning.
3. Explore processes for high-quality service-learning experiences.
4. Gain a knowledge base of outcomes-related research on service-learning.

*Project: Service-learning Infographic*

### **Course 2: Community Engagement and Cultural Competence in Service-Learning**

1. Explore strategies for respectful and inclusive community engagement.
2. Gain an understanding of local contexts and how to adapt service-learning projects accordingly.
3. Assess motivations and assumptions for service.
4. Explore effective tools for community engagement.

*Project: Partner Communication*

### **Course 3: Designing and Implementing Effective Service-Learning Projects**

1. Explore project management strategies, needs assessment, stakeholder engagement, and curriculum integration.
2. Gain an understanding of youth voice within the service-learning experience.
3. Practice strategies for fostering meaningful reflection, evaluation, and continuous improvement.
4. Plan opportunities to lead service-learning within the community.

*Project: Service-Learning Action Plan*

### **Course 3: Service and Leadership**

1. Engage in diverse leadership strategies.
2. Practice and reflect on leadership experiences in service-learning.
3. Discover ways to promote the value of service-learning to various stakeholders.
4. Reflect and plan for a future of service and learning.

*Project: Personal Development Plan*