

Taking Action: Four Types of Service

In the **action** phase of service-learning, students draw on academic skills and knowledge to carry out their project through direct service, indirect service, advocacy or research. Throughout the process, students continue to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to develop meaningful interactions with the people and the environments they encounter as well as academic knowledge and skills specifically related to the project they are completing.

DIRECT SERVICE

When engaging in **direct service**, students work directly for or with people who benefit from their service. This is a very rewarding type of service as students can see the results of their service immediately and may receive positive feedback right away.

Examples: *visiting a senior center, tutoring younger children, walking dogs at an animal shelter, serving food at a soup kitchen*

INDIRECT SERVICE

When students provide a service without being directly involved with those being served or provide service that benefits the environment or the community as a whole, it is called **indirect service**. Schools and classes can easily be involved in indirect service as it doesn't necessarily require students to leave the school grounds.

Examples: *planting a community garden, collecting clothes for a homeless shelter, fundraising for malaria prevention, preparing and shipping care packages to soldiers*

ADVOCACY

A third type of service, **advocacy**, involves informing the community about the need to help solve a problem and ways to make a difference. Advocacy is easy to build into class time; in fact, students often engage in advocacy at school without even realizing it!

Examples: *writing letters to public officials, holding a "town hall" style meeting, creating and displaying posters to discourage bullying, writing and disseminating a public service announcement about healthy eating*

RESEARCH

Students can also engage in **research**, or gathering and reporting on information, to benefit their community or the public interest as a type of service. Students of all ages can be involved in research.

Examples: *conducting an oral history project, testing water or soil quality, developing new products from recycled materials, conducting surveys about neighborhood recycling habits*