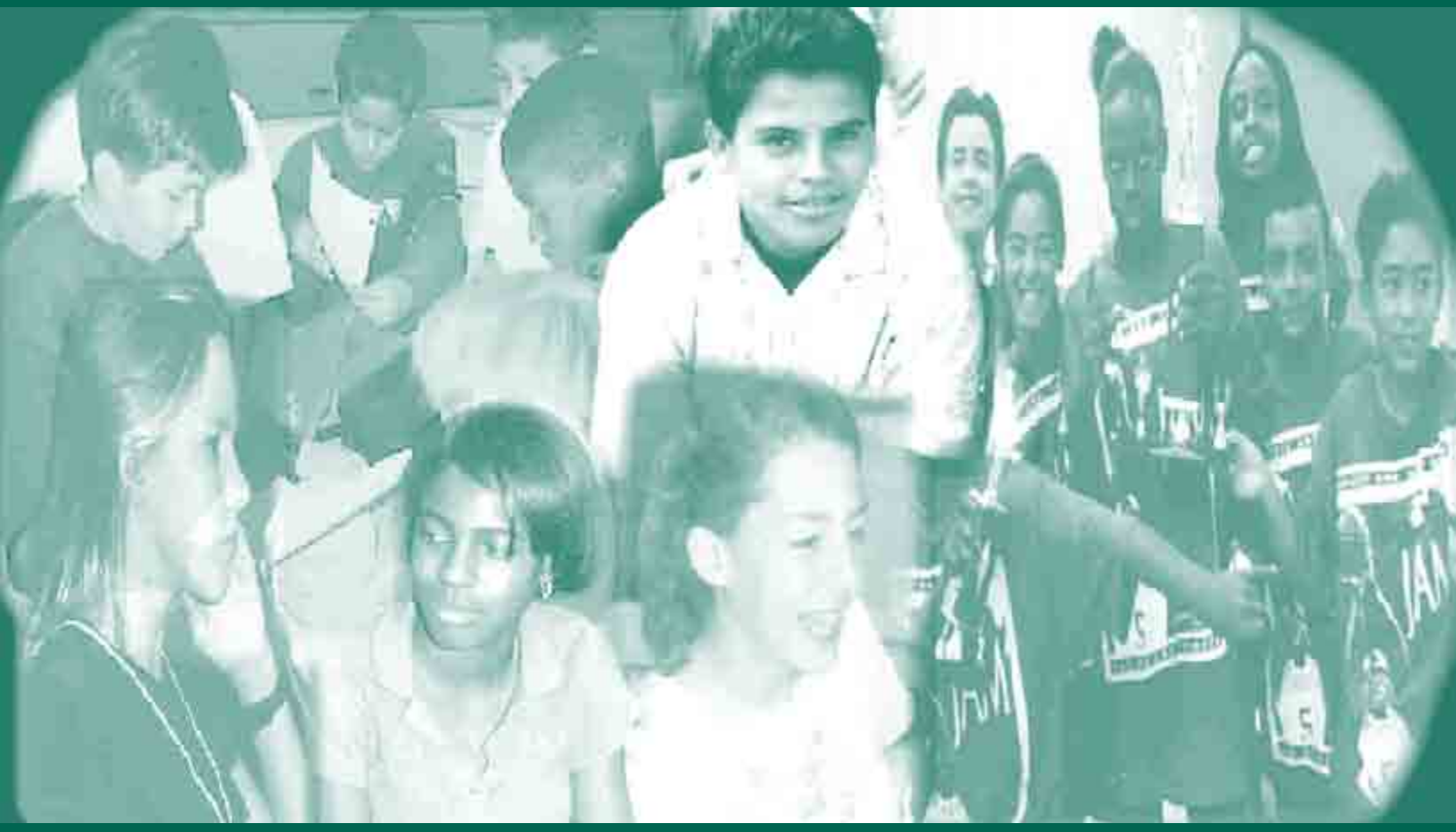
# School-Based Service Learning



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OJJDP Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Office of Justice Programs • U.S. Department of Justice

# School-Based Service Learning

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## Giving Back: Introducing Community Service Learning

## *Improving Mandated Community Service for Juvenile Offenders*

### An Action Guide for Youth Court Programs and the Juvenile-Justice System

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# Activity One: What's a Community?
## Teacher Guide

### Overview
In this activity, students discuss the meaning of community, the purpose of community service, and how they—and their community—will benefit from it.

### Materials & Preparation
**Handout One—What's a Community?**—1 copy for each student

**Time Required**—2 hours

### Procedures
Tell students that they are going to learn skills that will help them achieve three goals:

- Work on their community-service assignment.
- Complete a community service-learning project.
- Learn valuable leadership and citizenship skills.

Tell them that in order to learn these skills and achieve these goals, they are going to use handouts which include a short reading, directions for activities, and questions they will need to answer.

### Handout
Give each student a copy of **Handout One—What's a Community?** Have them review the Student Instructions. Answer any questions they may have.

### Reading
Have students complete the Reading. If they are working as a group, have them read aloud.

### Discussion Questions
Hold a brief discussion using the following questions:

- What does the tale of the blind men and the elephant teach about community?
- What are the three basic parts of community?
- How does crime take away from a community? (If possible, refer to the specific offense(s) that respondents committed.)
- How can people give back to a community?


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# What's a Community?

## Student Instructions

1. Complete the Reading.
2. Answer the Discussion Questions.

## Reading

Five blind men wanted to find out what an elephant was. They had one brought to them. Surrounding the elephant, each blind man reached up to touch it. The first blind man grabbed the elephant's trunk. He said, "Aha! So an elephant is like a snake." The second blind man, holding one of the elephant's legs said, "Oh, no, it's like a tree trunk. The third grabbed the elephant's ear and said, "How can you say that? An elephant is clearly like a fan." The fourth, clutching the animal's tail, said, "Fools! The elephant is a like a rope." The fifth, climbing up the side of the elephant, said, "You're all wrong! The elephant resembles a small hill."

*—Indian folk tale*

What's a community? As with the blind men and the elephant, different people describe community in different ways. Community consists of three basic parts: places, organizations, and people.

- Places—your home, school, the mall, streets, rivers, hills are all part of a community.
- Organizations—stores, religious groups, the fire department, the local television station are all community organizations.
- People—a part of your community. Without people, you would live in a ghost town. You would have a tough time getting the things you need to survive—food, clothing, shelter, entertainment. Besides, it would be boring and lonely.

Homes, schools, streets, rivers, churches, the mall, the fire department, your family, friends—even people you don't know—are all part of a community. You need them—they need you. When people commit crimes, they take away from a community. When young people fight or threaten one another, they drive a wedge between community members. When they steal, they add to suspicions and fears that others may have about young people. When they vandalize or tag a neighborhood, they make the community less attractive.

Community service provides people with an opportunity to give back. Community service takes many forms. People can volunteer—to work at a local animal shelter, teach younger children how to read, or to help elderly citizens with tasks they can no longer do themselves. Or, they can make a plan to address a community problem they think is important. Young people are particularly good at community service.

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# What's a Community? (cont'd)

## Thinking about Service

Teenagers in Washington State wrote a book on how to protect their community's natural resources.

Young people in Oregon formed a theater group to talk about problems of dating violence and sexual assault.

Students in Massachusetts started a community garden and donated the vegetables to a local homeless shelter.

By working on a service project, you can use your energy, skills, talents, and interests to make life better—for yourself and the people around you. Most important—it's good to know that people can depend on you.

## Discussion Questions

Hold a brief discussion using the following questions:

- What does the tale of the blind men and the elephant teach about community?

- What are the three basic parts of community?

- How does crime take away from a community?

- How can people give back to a community?


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# Activity Two: What's the Problem?
## Teacher Guide

### Overview
In this activity, students read about crime as a community problem. Then, they look at the problem of crime in terms of causes and effects. Finally, they brainstorm a list of community problems they think are important.

### Materials & Preparation
**Handout Two—What's the Problem?**—1 copy for each student

Collect Brainstorm Lists (see Handout Two) of community problems from students. They may use them in a later activity.

**Time Required—2 hours**

### Procedure
Tell students that before they start their service project, they are going to take a look at crime and other problems in their community.

### Handout
Give each student a copy of **Handout Two—What's the Problem?** Have them review the **Student Instructions**. Answer any questions students may have. **Important!** Make sure students know who is acting as the project leader at each stage of a community service-learning project.

### Reading
Allow time to read the handout. If they are working as a group, have them read aloud.

### Discussion Questions
Hold a brief discussion using the following questions:

- How does crime impact people's lives?
- Has crime influenced your life? How?
- How does crime affect people who aren't victims or perpetrators?
- Do you think crime is a serious community problem? Why or why not?

### Stop and Think
Explain to students that this activity requires them to stop and think about what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how they feel about it. Review the Stop and Think questions with students and tell them that they are required to write answers to the Stop and Think questions on a separate sheet of paper.

### Brainstorm List
Have students brainstorm a list of crimes that they think have the greatest impact on themselves and their community. Be sure to review the Brainstorm Tips below before they begin.

### Brainstorm Tips
A brainstorm is a quick-and-easy method to explore what you know about a topic. To do a brainstorm, follow these simple rules:

- Describe out loud any ideas that come to mind.
- Work as fast as possible to create a lot of ideas.
- Write down each idea.
- Don't reject ideas. There are no wrong answers in a brainstorm.
- If you are working with a group, build on each other's ideas.

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# What's the Problem?

## Student Instructions

1. Complete the Reading.
2. Answer the Discussion Questions.
3. Answer the Stop and Think questions.
4. Make a Brainstorm List of crime and community problems.

## Reading

Crime has an impact on everybody. Students are deprived of important books, papers, and prized possessions when backpacks are stolen from lockers. Elderly citizens fear being robbed or cheated. Innocent drivers and passengers of all ages are killed or injured in accidents caused by drunken drivers. When teenagers buy clothes at the mall, they pay extra to cover the store owner's losses to shoplifting. Victims of bullying, threats, and sexual assault say they never fully recover from the experience.

When people get caught, police records and prison terms leave a permanent mark on their lives. For most people, "getting away with it" doesn't work either. When people do something wrong, they know it. For most people, living outside the law makes life very difficult.

The effects of crime don't stop with its victims or offenders. In the future, you will pay extra taxes to protect your community from crime. As a voter, you will have to choose between candidates who may have different opinions about how to deal with crime. Some people think crime should be prevented with better education and more economic opportunities. Others believe that harsher punishment is the answer. People have different opinions about crime, but nearly everyone agrees that it is a serious community problem.

## Discussion Questions

Hold a brief discussion using the following questions:

- How does crime impact people's lives?
- Has crime influenced your life? How?
- How does crime affect people who aren't victims or perpetrators?
- Do you think crime is a serious community problem? Why or why not?


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# What's the Problem? (cont'd)

## Student Instructions

### Stop and Think

You have seen how crime is a community problem. Problems have causes and effects. You can learn a lot about a problem by looking at its causes and effects. Write answers to the questions below on a separate sheet of paper:

- What are some common criminal offenses committed by young people?
- Why do you think young people commit crimes (causes of the problem)?
- How do offenses committed by youth affect the community (effects of the problem)?
- If you were a community leader, how would you deal with the problem of crime?

### Brainstorm List

Brainstorm a list of five community problems you think are important. How many of them are linked to crimes? Keep your list of community problems to use later.

**Five Community Problems**

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

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# Building Your Own Action Projects

## Teacher Guide

### Overview

In this first Build Your Own option, students and teachers work together to plan and complete a community service-learning Action Project. First, they choose a community problem they want to work on. Next, students complete an action plan and present it to the teacher. Then, students use the action plan as a guide to complete their project.

### Skills and Objectives

Students will be able to. . .

- Choose a community problem that can be addressed with a service project.
- Work cooperatively as a group.
- Actively explore the community for resources (partners and materials).
- Make an action plan and use it to complete a project.
- Evaluate their project in terms of self and community improvement.

### Materials & Preparation

**Handout One—Building Your Own Action Project**—1 copy for each student

**Handout Two—What's the Problem?**

This community service-learning option requires students to work in small, supervised groups.

### Procedure

Tell students that they are going to:

1. Choose a community problem they want to work on.
2. If possible, have students address the causes and effects of specific problems with an action project.
3. Plan a project to deal with a community problem they think is interesting and important.

### Handout

Have students work in small groups. Give each group a copy of **Handout One—Building Your Own Action Project**. Have them review the Student Instructions. Answer any questions students may have. **Note:** Make sure students know who is acting as the project leader at each stage of a community service-learning project.

### Reading

Have students work in small groups. Allow time to read the handout.

### Choose a Problem

Have students work together to make a list of community problems on a large sheet of paper. If possible, have students brainstorm additional problem areas and add them to the list they completed on **Handout Two—What's the Problem?**

Have students consider each problem on the list by asking: Will working on this problem:

1. Use your skills, talents, and interests?
2. Help you learn something about yourself and your community?
3. Be fun and interesting?
4. Have a positive impact on the community?


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Have students choose the problem they want to address with a community service- learning project.

**Important!** Don't choose a problem that is too big or too little. For example, don't choose a problem like crime. That would be too big and you could never solve the whole problem of crime. Don't choose a problem that is too small to be important or interesting. To be successful, tackle a problem big enough to be important and interesting but small enough that you can do something about it!

## Plan the Project

Explain that students are going to create a plan to build their own service project. Tell them to:

1. Work as a group.
2. Discuss each Action Plan step.
3. Write clear answers in the spaces provided.

**Note:** Teachers should give students as much responsibility as possible in the planning and implementation of their Action Project. Learning how to interact with community groups and individuals to get what they need helps build civic-participation skills.

## Reporting

Before they begin their project, have students report on their Action Plan to you and other students. Reporting helps students clarify problems, goals, and strategies.

## Go to Work!

Have students follow their Action Plans to complete their community service-learning projects. Make sure students know who is acting as the project leader at each stage of a community service-learning project.

## Stop and Think

After they have completed their projects, have students answer the Stop and Think questions.

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# Building Your Own Action Project

## Student Instructions

1. Complete the Reading.
2. Choose a Problem.
3. Make an Action Plan to address the problem.
4. Report to others on your Action Plan.
5. Put your Action Plan to work.
6. Answer the Stop and Think questions.

## Introduction

You are going to build an action project to deal with a community problem you think is important. To build your own action project you will:

1. Choose a community problem you want to work on.
2. Plan a project to address the problem you have chosen.

## Choose a Problem

To choose a problem write a list of community problems on a large sheet of paper. For each problem ask: Will working on this problem. . .

1. Use your skills, talents, and interests?
2. Help you learn something about yourself and your community?
3. Be fun and interesting?
4. Have a positive impact on the community?
5. Choose the community problem you are going to work on.

**Important!** Don't choose a problem that is too big or too little. For example, don't choose a problem like crime. That would be too big and you could never solve the whole problem of crime. Don't choose a problem that is too small to be important or interesting. To be successful, tackle a problem big enough to be important and interesting but small enough that you can do something about it!

## Plan the Project

Take the time to make an Action Plan. You will save time and effort. Why? Because you will know where you're going and how to get there.

To make an Action Plan, follow the steps below. Discuss each step. Write a clear answer. Each step influences the others. Make sure they all fit together. Make sure your plan will create a positive impact on the community.


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# Building Your Own Action Project (cont'd)

## Action Plan

**Step One. What's the Problem?** How does this problem influence your lives? How does it impact the lives of other people–your family, friends, people at school, and others in your community? What are some causes and consequences of the problem?

Problem:

Who does it impact?

Causes:

Consequences:

**Step Two. Goal.** What do you want to achieve? How will your goal help the community?

**Step Three. Name.** Have the name describe your project goal.

**Step Four. Tasks.** What do you have to do? Write down each task, how long it will take, and who will do it. Be specific! This is the road map for your action project.

Task:

Time Needed:

Who Does What?:

**Step Five. People and materials.** Who will support your project? List people who can help you. What materials do you need to complete your project? Where will you get them?

Partners:

Material:

Source of Materials:

**Step Six. Go to Work!** Follow your action plan to complete your Action Project. Good luck!

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# Building Your Own Action Project (cont'd)

## Reporting

Before you begin your project, report on your Action Plan to your teacher and other students in your class. Reporting helps you clarify problems, goals, and strategies.

## Stop and Think

Use these questions to measure the success of your Action Project:

What did you do in your Action Project?

What did you learn about your community?

What did you learn about yourself?

If you worked as a team, did you work well together? Why or why not?

How could you do this project better next time?


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Community-Service Learning Option 2

# Teach Ins
## Teacher Guide

### Overview
Teach In projects engage students in teaching younger students about specific topics. Cross-age projects such as these have the potential to positively impact both the older and younger students' knowledge about a particular topic. It can develop organizational, presentation, listening, and participation skills in both groups and develop deeper understanding and respect for the legal system. Cross-age projects, especially those with a prevention component, also can impact older and younger students' attitudes about engaging in at-risk activities. To achieve positive outcomes, care must be taken in designing the Teach In project. The following tips are provided to help ensure a successful experience.

### Goals and Outcomes
In designing a Teach In project, the first step is to determine what impact you would like the experience to have on the student. A well-designed Teach In project can help the student develop:

- Problem-solving skills (identify an audience, find transportation)
- Organizational skills (prepare to teach a structured lesson, gather materials)
- Communication and presentation skills (schedule a site visit, present to an audience)
- Social skills (interact with teachers and younger students)
- Knowledge about a specific topic (content of lesson he/she teaches)
- Positive self esteem (serve as a positive role model to younger students)
- Academic skills (reading, comprehending, and applying what is read)
- Positive attitudes (about the legal system, about avoiding trouble)

### Designing a Teach In Project
Teach In projects should provide a positive experience for both the student and the young audience. To this end:

- Provide the student with a simple, step-by-step lesson plan. Use an existing lesson or activity that you know the student can handle. The student should not be expected to create a lesson plan alone.
- Keep the lesson plan very simple. Teach In lessons should not require the student to have advanced teaching skills such as leading small-group activities, in-depth discussion activities, or lessons that require a lot of handouts or supplies.
- Choose a lesson plan for the student to teach that provides useful information for the student. The idea is for the student to gain knowledge and skills to help him/her avoid trouble and/or gain knowledge or insight about the law.
- Choose an appropriate lesson plan for students to teach. The lesson should take no more than one class period to deliver.
- Assign a Teach In project to students who have the appropriate skill set (reading, speaking, etc.).
- Ensure that the student identifies an age-appropriate group to present the lesson to. Help the student identify the skills the young students will need and determine the grade level or age group accordingly. Also check the content of the lesson: a topic like date rape would not be appropriate for elementary students, nor would stranger danger be appropriate for a high school audience.
- Use a lesson plan from an existing successful curriculum to avoid pitfalls and better ensure a positive experience for all. A good starting point is the Youth for Justice partners (**www.youthforjustice.org**).

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# Volunteering
## Teacher Guide

### Overview
In this community service-learning option, students volunteer at a community-service agency. First, they research agencies and other community groups that address community problems. Next, they choose and contact an agency where they can volunteer. Third, students answer questions describing and evaluate the agency's purpose and effectiveness and reflect on their volunteer experience.

### Skills and Objectives
Students will be able to. . .

- Choose and contact a community-service agency where they can volunteer.
- Interact usefully and responsibly with a community-service agency.
- Learn useful job-site skills.
- Work cooperatively with others.
- Describe the purpose and methods of a community-service agency.
- Describe and reflect upon the role of service for the good of the community and themselves.

### Materials & Preparation
**Handout One—Volunteering—**1 copy for each student

Prepare a selected list of community-service agencies.

**Note:** Teachers should give students as much responsibility as possible in locating and choosing an agency to volunteer at. Learning how to interact with community groups and individuals to get what they need helps build civic-participation skills.

Before students volunteer at an agency, ask the following questions of the agency's contact person:

1. Does the agency use volunteers? Who is the contact person for volunteers?
2. What is the agency's purpose? **Optional:** Does it address the causes or effects of any criminal offenses?
3. What tasks will volunteers perform? Are tasks related to the agency's purpose? If so, how?
4. Where is the agency located? How will respondents get there?
5. Insurance coverage: How will respondents be covered for injury and liability?

### Procedure
Tell students that in order to complete their community-service requirement, they are going to volunteer at a community-service agency. Explain that they are responsible for choosing and contacting an agency.

### Handout
Give each student a copy of **Handout One—Volunteering**. Have them review the Student Instructions. Answer any questions they may have. Make sure students know who is acting as the project leader at each stage of a community service-learning project.

### Reading
Allow time to read the handout. If they are working as a group, have them read aloud.

### Volunteer Questions
Students who volunteer at a community-service agency should gather three kinds of information.

1. Contact information
2. The agency's purpose and its effectiveness
3. Personal reflections about their volunteer experience

Review **Handout One—Volunteering** with students and answer any questions they may have. **Helpful Hint:** You may want to keep track of student service hours and/or have a representative of the community-service agency sign each student's handout.


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# Volunteering

## Student Instructions

1. Complete the Reading.
2. Choose and contact an agency where you can volunteer.
3. Fill out the Contact Info on the handout.
4. Go to work at the agency.
5. Answer the Agency Purpose and Effectiveness questions on the handout.
6. Complete the Stop and Think section. Keep track of the hours you spend on the project.
7. Hand in your completed project worksheet to your teacher.

## Reading

As part of your youth court assignment, you are going to give back to the community by volunteering at a community-service agency. Community-service agencies are different from other organizations. Their purpose is to improve the community. They do not make money. In order to keep running, most community-service agencies are supported by tax money, donations, or money from grants. Many depend on volunteers to help them with their goals. That's where you fit in—you are going contribute your time, skills, talents, and energy to the community by volunteering at a service agency.

## Questions

Ask your teacher how to contact community-service agencies where you might volunteer. Your teacher may have a list. To choose the agency that is best for you, answer these questions:

- What does this agency do? Does it address the causes or effects of any criminal offenses? If so, what offenses?

- What are your interests? What are your talents?

- How can you use your interests and talents to help this agency?

- What can YOU learn by working at this agency?

- Where is this agency? Is it near your school or home?

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# Volunteering (Cont'd)

## Contact Info

Agency name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Contact person (Who is in charge of volunteers?): _____

Transportation (How will you get there?): _____

Community service-learning hours (How many hours do you need?): _____

Dates and times for volunteering: _____

## Agency Purpose and Effectiveness

(If you need more room, use a separate sheet of paper to answer these questions.)

1. What problem or problems does the agency address? Does the agency address the causes or effects of any criminal offenses? If so, how?

2. How does the agency deal with these problems?

3. Do they do a good job? Why or why not?

## Stop and Think

1. What tasks did you do?

2. How did you to use your OWN interests and talents to help the agency?

3. What did you learn?

4. How did you feel about your community service-learning experience?

Hours Completed: _____


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