

CSULB Center for Community Engagement
Instructionally-Related Activities (IRA) Service Learning Reimbursement Program
Procedures and Guidelines

Purpose and Scope

Each semester the [Center for Community Engagement \(CCE\)](#) offers reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses associated with CCE-recognized service learning/community-based course activities. Students and/or faculty are reimbursed for expenses directly related to students' Service Learning activities. Expenses that are reimbursable are for service learning activities that directly relate to the course's service learning goals and objectives, are consistent with service learning best practices, and meet other criteria as detailed below under "Criteria for Receiving Funds." This Service Learning Reimbursement Program generally awards up to \$500 of IRA funds for a service learning course.

Criteria for Receiving Funds

IRA awards will go to CCE-recognized service learning classes that follows best practices for service learning (See Appendix A and [Service Learning Resource Guide](#)) and are being taught during the current term. Priority consideration will be given to certified service learning courses in which service learning is required (not optional or extra credit) for at least 20 service learning hours (per student) over the course of the semester, and which demonstrate a potential meaningful impact on both student learning and the community.

Additional criteria include:

- Activities are clearly connected to well-defined course learning objectives, serve to enhance students' learning, and cannot otherwise be completed without incurring out-of-pocket expenses.
- Activities demonstrate collaboration with one or more community partners to help address a community-identified need.
- For large projects we encourage seeking resources in addition to IRA funds (e.g., financial, donated, in-kind).
- Expenses are reasonable, demonstrate good judgment and fiscal responsibility, and are directly related to the service learning activity.
- *S4 @ The Beach* is used to document and track students' placements and service learning hours.
- Allowable Expenses:
 - Life Scan or other background screening
 - Consumable supplies and materials (e.g., art supplies for an art workshop, grade-appropriate workbooks for academic tutoring, binders and paper for training curriculum)
 - Printing/copying costs (e.g., materials for a training workshop)
 - Rental costs (e.g., rental of hand tools—rakes, brooms, trowels—for a gardening activity; audio-visual equipment for a videotaping activity)
- Unallowable Expenses:
 - Food or Drinks for hospitality or refreshments
 - Equipment/Furniture
 - Gifts/Clothing
 - Travel/Transportation
 - Salaries/Wages
 - Tuition/Fees

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- Capital Outlay
- Charitable Contributions
- Space rental
- Deposits (both refundable and non-refundable)

Exceptions to unallowable expenses *may* be considered on a case-by-case basis by the CCE *if* there is a direct link to the educational component of the activity and if deemed allowable by the university IRA fiscal administrator.

Procedures

To Apply for the CCE Service Learning Reimbursement Program:

1. Faculty must submit an application for funds prior to incurring expenses.
 - a. First Application Deadline: Friday of the 3rd week of instruction.
 - b. Award Notification: By Friday of the 5th week of instruction.
 - c. Applications received after the first deadline will be considered based upon the remaining availability of funds.
2. Faculty should ensure that students understand these IRA guidelines, particularly which expenses are allowable and which are not, to avoid unpleasant surprises should a student submit a receipt that we cannot reimburse.
3. Faculty must ensure that students use the *S4 @ The Beach* database to complete their placement and to document their service learning hours.
 - a. Student & Faculty Access to *S4 @ The Beach*: <https://app.calstates4.com/csulb> or directly through the *Single Sign On (SSO)* chiclet.

To Receive Reimbursements:

Individual reimbursement requests shall be for no less than \$10. Since at this time we cannot process petty cash using normal procedures, the CCE will submit all reimbursements using the Direct Payment Request form for you and your students. Students/faculty should receive their reimbursement check in the mail three to four weeks after original receipts and forms have been received by the CCE. Please note that errors, submission of unallowable expenses, incomplete forms or non-original or missing receipts will delay the reimbursement.

1. Faculty or students must complete the CCE's [Request for Reimbursement Cover Sheet](#). You will need to be logged into your *S4 @ The Beach* account in the same browser in order to complete the form. <https://app.calstates4.com/csulb/ira-reimbursement-request>. , You can also access the form through our website at <http://www.csulb.edu/center-for-community-engagement/faculty>.
2. A scan or photo of the original receipts must be submitted via e-mail to mitra.baghdadi@csulb.edu with your name, campus ID, email address, and mailing address (where the check should be sent). This should be done at the same time you submit the online form so that we can be sure to match them properly. Please retain your original receipts as the University's Accounts Payable Office may change their procedures. You can always shred them

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later if they are not needed. **We are currently working on integrating into the Request for Reimbursement form a means to upload pdf or photos of receipts. We will provide updates when that occurs.**

3. Faculty must complete a brief [Faculty IRA End-of-Semester Final Survey](https://app.calstates4.com/csulb/faculty-ira-end-semester-final-survey) (<https://app.calstates4.com/csulb/faculty-ira-end-semester-final-survey>) describing how IRA funds were used and their impact on your course and on the community.

Questions? Contact

Mitra Baghdadi, Administrative Coordinator
562-985-7019 or e-mail Mitra.Baghdadi@csulb.edu

Carmen Arreola, Community Engagement Coordinator
562-985-2307 or e-mail Carmen.Arreola@csulb.edu

Carina Sass, Associate Director
562-985-2376 or e-mail Carina.Sass@csulb.edu

MY IRA CHECKLIST

- ✓ *My course incorporates service learning best practices, including relevant and meaningful service with the community, enhanced academic learning, and purposeful civic learning.*
- ✓ *I submitted an application to the CCE and received notification prior to submitting receipts for reimbursement.*
- ✓ *My course and community partners are listed in S4 @ The Beach and my students have placed and are documenting their hours.*
- ✓ *I have fully conveyed to my students all criteria, guidelines and deadlines related to reimbursable expenses.*

MY IRA REIMBURSEMENT CHECKLIST

- ✓ *Expenses are allowable, directly connected to course goals/objectives, reasonable and necessary, and meet all other criteria of this program.*
- ✓ *Reimbursement requests are for no less than \$10, have all original receipts and the Request for Reimbursement Cover Sheet attached.*
- ✓ *Requests were submitted within 2 weeks after completing the activity but no later than the stated deadline, to the Center for Community Engagement (AS-127).*
- ✓ *The online IRA survey has been completed.*

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APPENDIX A

Service Learning Defined

Service Learning is a high impact teaching approach utilizing community-based experiential learning to connect theory and practice through critical reflection. Service Learning emphasizes learning through community service activities that are fundamental to course outcomes.

Service Learning provides benefit to community partners as well as students by promoting sustainable campus-community relationships that address community-identified needs and enhance student learning. Students develop their academic and critical thinking skills, gain a deeper understanding of course content, and develop an enhanced sense of civic engagement and social justice. Service Learning benefits both the campus and the community by meeting community-identified needs, developing a culture that promotes civic engagement and social justice, and by forming mutually beneficial partnerships that expand opportunities for our campus to contribute to the public good.

Three criteria serve as the litmus test for whether a course may be considered service learning:

1. Relevant and Meaningful Service with the Community:

The service provided within the community agency must be relevant and meaningful to all stakeholder parties.

2. Enhance Academic Learning:

The addition of relevant and meaningful service with the community must not only serve the community but also enhance student academic learning in the course.

3. Purposeful Civic Learning:

The addition of relevant and meaningful service with the community must not only serve the community and enhance student academic learning in the course, but also directly and intentionally prepare students for active civic participation in a diverse democratic society.

All three criteria are necessary for a course to qualify as academic service learning. If any of the three is absent, then it is either another form of community-based service and/or learning or an ineffective model of academic service learning. It is important to note that while service learning courses may have other learning objectives and/or outcomes, as in the social or affective domains, these are not necessary conditions for academic service learning.

Common Misunderstandings about Service Learning¹

Misunderstanding #1:

“Academic service learning is the same as student service and co-curricular service learning.”

Academic service learning is *not* the same as student community service or co-curricular service learning. While sharing the word “service,” these models of student involvement in the community are distinguished by their learning agenda. Student community service, illustrated by a student organization adopting a local elementary school, rarely involves a learning agenda. In contrast, both forms of service learning—academic and co-curricular—make intentional efforts to engage students in planned and purposeful learning related to the service experiences. Co-curricular service learning, illustrated by many alternative spring break programs, is concerned with raising students’ consciousness and familiarity with

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issues related to various communities. Academic service learning, illustrated by student community service integrated into an academic course, utilizes the service experience as a course “text” for both academic learning and civic engagement.

Misunderstanding #2:

“Experience in the community, is synonymous with learning.”

Experience and learning are *not* the same. While experience is a necessary condition of learning (Kolb, 1984), it is not sufficient. Learning requires more than experience, and so one cannot assume that student involvement in the community automatically yields learning. Harvesting academic and/or civic learning from a community service experience requires purposeful and intentional efforts. This harvesting process is often referred to as “reflection” in the service learning literature.

Misunderstanding #3:

“Academic service learning is the addition of community service to a traditional course.”

Grafting a community service requirement (or option) into an otherwise unchanged academic course does *not* constitute academic service learning. While such models abound, this interpretation marginalizes the learning in, from, and with the community, and precludes transforming students’ community experiences into learning. To realize service learning’s full potential as pedagogy, community experiences must be considered in the context of, and integrated with, the other planned learning strategies and resources in the course.

ⁱ *Adapted from Service Learning Course Design Workbook*, Jeffrey Howard, Editor, MJCSL, University of Michigan, pages 10-11.