



**SALVE REGINA  
UNIVERSITY**

**Service Advocate Program:  
Student Handbook  
2023—2024**

# SERVICE ADVOCATE PROGRAM

## **Program Description:**

Offering outstanding students an opportunity to participate in yearlong civic engagement and service, the Service Advocate program provides students with the knowledge and skills to become active leaders through embedding the Critical Concerns of Mercy into their work. Highlighted by regular training, direct service and reflection activities, students engage in valuable leadership experiences in the Aquidneck Island Community and endeavors to promote a positive culture of service and civic engagement on campus.

This service and leadership program is designed to help inspire a sense of real community activism among undergraduate students, promoting change throughout their time at Salve Regina University. Creating leaders in service through the Critical Concerns of Mercy, dedication, passion and motivation are the goals of the program. Service Advocates are students dedicated to make a difference in the community through volunteer efforts. Through their dedication, passion and motivation, Service Advocates complete 100 hours of service at an approved community partner site throughout the academic year. Students receive a stipend for each year of this leadership position.

## **Program Outcomes:**

- *Establish a deeper connection with the Salve Regina Mercy Mission*
- *Striving towards spiritual growth through spending time in personal reflection*
- *Build a sustainable partnership with Salve volunteers and Aquidneck Island non-profits*
- *Develop critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills through a passion for service*

## **Program Details**

### ***Funding***

- In order to be eligible to receive a \$1,600 award towards educational expenses, Service Advocates must complete all program requirements. Note, this program is not based on financial need:
  - Student eligible for work study, must apply through Handshake and will receive funding in December and May. These students can have both an on-campus work study job and be a service advocate.
  - Students not eligible for work study, will apply online and will receive funding in December and May at the completion of the program.
- If students transfer mid semester, they will not be eligible for funding
- Students cannot earn wages for service hours completed at partner site

## **Description of Program Elements:**

### ***Primary Service Hours***

Students must complete 100 hours of service from September to May in-person at an agreed upon service site. The Center for Community Engagement and Service will determine sites for service. All hours must be submitted weekly on MySalve in the Community Service tracking system. No extensions to complete the service hour requirement will be granted. Hours need to be completed by the last day of classes at the end of the school year

### ***Center for Community Engagement and Service Office Hours***

Weekly throughout each semester, Service Advocates are required to hold one office hour in the Center for Community Engagement and Service. The purpose of the office hours is to build student traffic in the center and to build community amongst the students involved in the program. Students will list their office hours on the Service Advocates white board in the center, and perform any tasks needed for their service projects, hold meetings with students about service, complete marketing materials for upcoming events and be a presence in the office.

### ***One-on-One Meetings with Center for Community Engagement and Service Director***

Program meetings are an important part of the program. Service Advocates will share service experiences, discuss any issues and/or current events surrounding community engagement. These meetings will happen once per semester and will be set up via email.

### ***Leadership Trainings***

Advocates will participate in a variety of programs to help develop service and leadership skills as well to gain a better understanding of the community needs. The overall, goal is to better understand our partner's need and how they can utilize their talents. This retreat will be led by a Senior Service Advocate, Graduate Intern and/or Alumni of the Service Advocate Program.

### **Mandatory Training Dates:**

- April 2023 - Pre Service Advocate Orientation TBD
- Thursday, May 4, 2023 NOON
- Tuesday, June 6, 2023 (Zoom) NOON
- Wednesday, August 2 NOON
- Wednesday, August 9 NOON
- Tuesday, August 22 NOON
- Wednesday, September 13 3-5:00PM
- Friday, January 19, 2024 8AM-3PM
- April 2024 - Pre Service Advocate Orientation TBD

### ***Blog Posts***

Once each semester, Service Advocates are responsible for writing a blog post about a particular experience they had volunteering, what a typical day of service looks like at their site, an exciting service project they are working on, or the impact of service overall.

### **Blog Post Requirements:**

- Written in first person point of view, this should be a few paragraphs long

- 300-600 words is the ideal length to have an impact on readers
- Must be emailed to designated office staff member who will make necessary edits and add to website
- Photos of the service site and/or you completing service must be sent along with the written portion
- This is a chance to share your voice, so feel free to be creative and get as personal as you are comfortable doing! Incoming students will be able to see these blogs so it is important that they are personal and positive.

### ***One-Time Service Events***

Service Advocates will choose at least two of the one-time service events from our menu and/or create their own event. You will help organize, promote, and facilitate two of our already planned group projects.

### ***Monthly Community Service Social/Meeting***

Monthly social/meeting led by Senior Service Advocates are a way to build community among the service advocates and an opportunity to hear about local community partners on current events and social issues.

### ***SRYou Day Presentation***

SRYou Student Exposition is an event that takes place every March in which students can showcase their work and experiences. All undergraduate students have the opportunity to share their curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular involvements with their peers, faculty, staff and community members. Service Advocates will present about their service advocacy position on SRYou day, either in the form of a poster or 30-minute presentation. This can be done alone or with other Service Advocates at your service site. Click [here](#) to learn more about SRYou Day.

### ***Center for Community Engagement and Service Evaluations***

At the end of each semester, you will be asked to fill out the required online evaluations and meet with the director to discuss your progress.

## **Mandatory Center Events**

Service Advocates will be asked to support

### ***Fall Semester***

- Mercy Week Celebration (September)
- World Peace Day (September)
- Veteran's Day Ceremony (November)
- Feed-A-Family Thanksgiving Drive (November)
- Angel Tree Drive (December)

### ***Spring Semester***

- MLK Day of Service (January)
- Earth Month (April)
- End-of-the-Year Donation Drive (May)

# GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE ADVOCATES

*We encourage you to review these guidelines before you meet with your site supervisor*

As a Salve Regina University Service Advocate, you will be working with professionals to address real and vital issues in our community. It is assumed that you will approach your community partner site with professionalism, respect, and sincerity. Below are some guidelines to help you prepare for and engage in your role.

## **Learn about the Newport community and your community partner organization.**

Seek out useful information about the community, organization, and project on which you will be working. Consider learning about:

- The population and/or geographic area being served by your community partner organization
- The organization's mission statement
- The names of the organization's staff and their responsibilities and roles within the organization
- A brief history of the organization
- The role that volunteers play in the organization

While being a Service Advocate, all partners—faculty, students, and community partners—are considered teachers and learners. Open yourself to learning from the community and the organization with which you are working.

- Be careful that you do not assume that you know how to solve perceived “problems.” Often problems are much more complex than they initially appear.
- You may come from a very different community than the one you work with during your project.
- Be open to seeing things in new way. Seek out other people's viewpoints and ask questions.
- Make an effort to identify community strengths, as well as community needs. Work to understand the relevance of your service project to your learning goals or course objectives

## **Establish a positive working relationship.**

- Discuss the community partner's expectations and determine what you need to know to do what is expected of you as a Salve Regina University Student.
- Be aware that community partners (non-academic settings) do not work by the Salve Regina University academic calendar.
- Understand that your community partner has other responsibilities and priorities in addition to the project on which you are working together.
- Remember that your community partner might have limits on the time they can spend on your Salve Regina University Student project.
- Strive to be non-critical and non-judgmental. Approach challenges and detours in your Salve Regina University Student experience as opportunities to learn and grow.

- Realize that you may not already know how to do what is expected of you. Be prepared to learn from your community partner.
- Maintain regular contact with your community partner and The Center for Community Engagement and Service regarding your Salve Regina University Student experience.
- If you become concerned about any aspect of your project, let your community partner or the Center for Community Engagement and Service know of your concerns.
- Maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude, and keep things in perspective.
- Enjoy, celebrate, and build on small successes. We are “rooting” for you too!

**Be accountable.**

- Think about the purpose of your Service Advocate project and work to generate an outcome that will contribute to the work of your community partner organization.
- Set goals that are realistic and address the needs of the organization.
- Ask questions and listen to what is being said. The people who work and live within the Newport community can help you to become a more effective participant.
- Be clear in your communication. Set personal boundaries that are appropriate and comfortable for you.
- Keep appointments and commitments that you set with your community partner, and let your community partner know when you are not able to be present on site.
- Be accountable to other members of the Service Advocate program. Make sure that you are carrying your share of the load.
- Recognize your limits. If you are given something that you think you cannot handle, make sure you discuss the situation with your community partner and The Center for Community Engagement and Service.

**Be aware of your rights and responsibilities.**

- Approach your Service Advocate position as you would any job. Learn any policies, procedures, and expectations that you must follow while working with your community partner.
- Community partners are informed that they must abide by Salve Regina University’s Non- Discrimination Policy, found in the Salve Regina University Student Handbook.

**Keep an open mind.**

- As a Service Advocate, enter your community partnering site with an open mind, show respect for differences and avoid imposing your culture and value system on others.
- Observe and respect cultural differences in language, expectations, and values.
- Expect uncertainty at first. Your level of comfort and responsibility will increase as the project progresses.
- Be flexible and adapt to changing situations

# TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE DURING COVID-19

## Communication

- It is important that if you cannot follow through with your commitment to volunteer that you communicate this to the contact at your organization as soon as possible. If you are unwell, have a fever, or suspect that you have been exposed to COVID-19, please let your contact person know.
- Ask for clarification – if you are unclear about any of the tasks that are being asked of you, make sure you ask for the support you need to avoid performing unnecessary or duplicative tasks. Try to be flexible and adapt as things make likely change.
- Be respectful of the guidelines set by your community partner site. They are faced with multiple priorities and changes are happening at a rapid pace. Your role is to support the effort to assist in making it as effective as possible in an uncertain environment.

## Safety

- Volunteering or working during a health crisis can be stressful and have an effect on your own mental health and well-being. It is important to set boundaries as possible, practice self-care, and reach out for help as needed.
- If you are uncomfortable about anything that is being asked of you, please let your supervisor know.

## Opportunity to Learn

- Take advantage of the opportunity to see how your personal skills are useful and needed during a public health crisis. This may help clarify what skills you have and what you may want to work on developing.
- Observe how the organization you are working with communicates, manages, and leads during this time and how the coordination of numerous stakeholders unfolds.
- Reflect upon the knowledge and skills you gain through this experience and how it may inform your future career interests and goals.

### Service Advocate Program

#### *Center for Community Engagement and Service & Community Partner Agreement*

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Partner & Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum required hours of service per student per semester: \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Community Partner Roles:*

- Designate a representative from the Community Partner Site to work with the Center for Community Engagement and Service and act as a Service Advocate Site Supervisor.

- Provide training, supervision, feedback, resources and sufficient information about the organization to aid in the success of students' service projects.
- Provide opportunities that are significant and/or challenging to the students, relevant to service objectives, and address the Community Partner's goals.
- Participate in the evaluation processes of the student and the service experience.

*Service Advocate Roles:*

- Arrange to meet with the community partner to discuss service hours and projects.
- Be aware of the organization's needs and provide assistance where and when needed.
- Adhere to organizational rules and procedures, including confidentiality of organization and client information.
- Reflect upon and re-evaluate the service experience keeping in mind the objectives of all parties involved.
- Operate with integrity and professionalism at all times; which includes being punctual, meeting deadlines and being open to supervision and feedback which will facilitate learning and personal growth.
- Log service hours as required
- Obtain appropriate signatures and end-of-service letter from community partner

*Center for Community Engagement and Service Roles*

- Evaluate student's judgment and skills before matching students with potential agencies to begin service as soon as possible.
- Ensure that students understand their duties to the partnership and prepare them for their service with an overview of the Community Partner.
- Act as a liaison between the Community Partner and Service Advocate, ensuring clear communication and that the needs of each partner are met equally.
- Address concerns and problems identified by community partner administrators and Service Advocate supervisor.
- Manage an evaluation process at the end of each semester.

**Primary Service Goals:**

Completed in agreement by the Community Partner/Service Advocate site supervisor, Service Advocate, and Director of Center for Community Engagement and Service.

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Project ideas:

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**Additional comments:**

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