

The President's Volunteer Service Award Best Practices

The President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) was created to honor Americans whose demonstrated commitment to service inspires other to engage in volunteer service.

What is the Purpose of the PVSA?

Students are encouraged to get out into their community, to benefit others less fortunate than themselves, to inspire others in the call to service, and to be not just leaders in their community, but to be game changers who make a difference in the world.

What counts as Community Service?

- *Allowed service hours are for the benefit of the community with no direct or indirect benefit, financial reward, or teacher grade.
- *Cannot be self-serving
- *Cannot be paid hours
- *Cannot be court ordered hours
- *Cannot be more than 8 hours in a 24 hour period
- *No in-kind or monetary charitable gifts (ex. 3 cans of goods for 1 hour of service, \$100 for 1 hour)
- *No bonus, extra, or inflated hours even if granted by your organization – back out these hours to get true hours volunteered
- *Routine club/school service does not count – because it does not benefit the community at-large
- *Can be club organized activity specifically to serve a function of the community or if it is integral to the mission of the club/requirement of the club (ex. NHS volunteer service)
- *Can be with profit/nonprofit organizations benefitting the community
- *Can be with national, international organizations
- *Can be with religious affiliations but only if they benefit the community (ex summer camps)
- *Individual hours only; no Group category awards

No/Yes examples

No - Routine club activities; Yes – club goes to soup kitchen, clean White Rock lake

*School service is not the same as community service and not valid for SEM's PVSA hours – must be external, ie – routine club activities such as building robot, yearbook layout/snapping pictures – these benefit your own club or only SEM, not the community at large.

No – fundraising for your school/club; Yes – fundraise/solicit donations for Goodwill

*Cannot benefit itself

No – regular club meetings, competitions; Yes – taking Robotics product to senior citizen center for demonstration

*Cannot be school club only; must benefit or enrich the community/those less fortunate

No – helping a friend study; Yes – tutoring as part of a sanctioned group (NHS, youth group)

*Must benefit others; serve the community

No – helping a teacher during class or for a grade; Yes – helping teacher during non-school time and APPROVED BY TEACHER specifically indicating these as COMMUNITY service hours.

No - volunteer at a booth to recruit new members;

*No, because it only serves itself.

No – preparing for or conducting religious worship, preaching, proselytizing; Yes – Church based camp counselor volunteer, mission trips for the time performing service (not travel, eating, sleeping, worshipping)

*Again, must benefit entire community, many church based programs benefit the community

No – Meetings, fundraising, nonservice Scout activities; Yes – Scout service projects

*Cannot count regular scouting activities, only those specific to community service

No – helping able bodied dad mow the yard; Yes – mow lawn for wheelchair bound elderly next door neighbor (for free)

*Provide service to those less fortunate than yourself

Signed Supervisor Logs

Please keep in mind that you MUST have all hours signed by a supervisor, with printed name, telephone, email and/or other contact information. You should expect not only the supervisor to be contacted, but in selected cases, the organization itself may be contacted for verification of your hours and service description.