



## 2025-26 Service-Learning Institute

ServeOhio, in partnership with America 250-Ohio Commission, seeks to increase the capacity of schools, school districts, afterschool programs, and school-based programs in Ohio to engage K-12 youth in service-learning. Inspired by the spirit of the American Revolution, this program encourages young people to become modern-day revolutionaries, addressing the challenges in their communities with creativity and resilience. Just as the American revolution was driven by passionate young leaders, we invite students to ignite their own revolution through service-learning.

The Service-Learning Institute will engage up to 20 organizations who will participate in flexible virtual training to learn the fundamentals and best practices of service-learning implementation. After successful completion of the training and submission of a service-learning plan, participants will be eligible for up to \$5,000 to support service-learning activities with their students during the 2025-26 school year. No previous service-learning experience is necessary to participate in the program.

*The 2025-26 Service-Learning Institute is funded and supported by America 250-Ohio, the Ohio Commission celebrating Ohio's contributions to the U.S. 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2026. [Learn more about America 250-Ohio.](#)*

### What is Service-Learning?

Service-Learning is a strategy to help youth understand a topic they learn about in school, after school, or a club through hands-on experience. Service-learning projects are youth-led; students identify community issues that align with the topic they're learning about in the classroom, develop a project to support the issue, and implement the project to create an impact in their community while deepening their learning.

### Why Service-Learning?

A variety of studies show that youth who participate in service-learning exhibit positive outcomes including improved attendance, better grades, and higher graduation rates. Service-learning also produces positive impacts in prosocial behaviors, acceptance of diversity, connection to cultural heritage, development of ethics, and greater resilience. Additionally, service is linked to higher self-esteem, increased social support, and fewer depressive symptoms and feelings of isolation. Service-learning has been shown to help reduce the achievement gap in historically underrepresented areas, with low-income students who serve doing better academically than students who do not serve.

# Service-Learning Institute Components

The Service-learning Institute will have 3 components. Participants will be expected to participate in all program components throughout the 2025-26 school year.

1. Service-Learning Training
2. Professional Learning Community
3. Funding Support

## Service-Learning Training

The Service-Learning Training is a professional development experience for programs who want to use service-learning as a youth engagement strategy. Participants will get a grounding in service-learning, understand the difference between community service and service-learning and why that's important. They will have access to resources and handbooks to launch their own service-learning experiences. Participants will leave with:

- Deeper understanding of high-quality service-learning and the impact of service-learning on students' academic, social and emotional growth;
- A service-learning plan for next steps in implementation;
- Increased knowledge and skill in elevating youth voice;
- Access to activities, tools, and templates for service-learning implementation;
- Ability to draw parallels between the challenges faced by revolutionaries and those in their own communities;
- Ability to think critically about sustainable solutions and how to empower youth to lead their own movements for change.

**The Service-Learning Training will be a series of pre-recorded webinars (estimate 4-6 hours in total) that participants will complete at their own pace. Participants will have at least 30 days (the month of November) to complete the training series.**

## Professional Learning Community

Service-Learning Institute participants will be required to attend monthly Professional Learning Community webinars where they will share challenges, successes, questions, and tips with other practitioners in the field. The monthly webinars will last 60 minutes and will be virtual. Dates for Professional Learning Community webinars are TBD.

## Funding

Participants who complete the Service-Learning training will be eligible to receive a grant up to \$5,000 to support service-learning activities in the 2025-26 school year. In order to receive the funds, participants must submit a service-learning plan for the 2025-26 school year. Grant funding may be used for staff time, curriculum development, supplies for service-learning projects, or other costs that are directly allocable to the service-learning activities.

Grant funding will be disbursed in two installments:

1. After the service-learning plan is submitted and approved by ServeOhio (due on or before 12/1/25): 60% of grant amount
2. After submitting Final Progress Report (due on or before 5/15/26): 40% of grant amount

To receive grant payments from ServeOhio, participants must:

- Have an Ohio Pays Supplier ID, which can be obtained through the [Ohio Pays system](#).
- Submit an invoice that includes the date, address, and services rendered (service-learning grant deliverables).

## Reporting

Participants will submit one progress report due on or before May 15, 2026 covering service-learning activities that occurred between 12/1/25 – 4/30/26.

## Project Timeline

- **RFP Released:** September 3, 2025
- **Technical Assistance Webinar:** September 8, 2025 4:00 PM
- **RFP Deadline:** September 28, 2025
- **Notifications Out:** October 3, 2025
- **NOGAs Due:** October 17, 2025
- **Service-Learning Institute Grantee Kickoff Call:** October 22, 2025 4:00 – 5:00 PM
- **Service-Learning Training Window:** November 1 – 30, 2025
- **Service-Learning Post-Training Call:** December 1, 2025 4:00 – 5:00 PM
- **Service-Learning Plan Submission Deadline:** December 1, 2025
- **Service-Learning Plan approvals Out:** December 5, 2025
- **Professional Learning Community Calls:** Monthly January – April 2026; dates/times TBD
- **Final Progress Report Due:** May 15, 2026

## Application Process

Schools, school districts, educational service centers, and school-based after school programs that serve K-12 students in Ohio are eligible to apply. ServeOhio intends to ensure geographic representation across each region of Ohio. The application deadline is Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM.

Please refer questions to Rebeccah Verhoff-Kiss, Director of Strategic Engagement, at [rebeccah.verhoff-kiss@serve.ohio.gov](mailto:rebeccah.verhoff-kiss@serve.ohio.gov).