



High School Community Service: Where do I start?

Understanding Bright Futures Community Service Requirement

Per the state of Florida, eligibility for a Florida Bright Futures Scholarship award requires that students meet grade point average minimums, take certain courses and meet testing requirements. For specific requirements concerning grade point average, courses needed and minimum SAT or ACT scores, please see the [Florida Bright Futures Website](#) and/or contact your high school counselor.

Scholarship eligibility also requires that students complete community service as approved by the local school district for Florida Bright Futures Program. Students must be a high school student, enrolled in grades 9 – 12. (NOTE: Summer before 9th grade is acceptable once the student has been promoted to the 9th grade and IF the Community Service Plan has been approved.)

The community service hours for the Bright Futures Scholarships are as follows:

- Florida Academic Scholarship – 100 hours of community service
- Florida Medallion Scholarship – 75 hours of community service
- Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship – 30 hours of community service
- Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholarship – 30 hours of community service

Amendments to Florida Statute 1009.531 regarding the Bright Futures Community Service Hours will be in effect starting July 1, 2016. From the statute:

“The student must complete a program of community service, as approved by the district school board, the administrators of a nonpublic school, or the Department of Education for home education program students, which must include a minimum of 100 hours of service work for high school students for the Florida Academic Scholarship, 75 hours for the Florida Medallion Scholarship or 30 hours for the Florida Gold Seal or the Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholarships. The student, must identify a social or civic issue or a professional area problem that interests him or her, develop a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the issue or learning about the area, and, through papers or other presentations, evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience. Except for credit earned through service-learning courses adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497, the student may not receive remuneration or academic credit for the community service work performed. Such work may include, but is not limited to, a business or governmental internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization, or activities on behalf of a candidate for public office. The hours of community service must be documented in writing, and the document must be signed by the student, the student's parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization for which the student performed the volunteer service work. “



Steps to document approved High School Community Service:

1. Community service should be something you enjoy! Think about your interest, career goals, and passion as you search for community service opportunities.
2. Contact the organization to share your interest in serving and request information about their volunteer requirements.
3. Complete the **Community Service Plan**, making certain to include all necessary signatures.
4. Submit completed **Community Service Plan** to the community service coordinator at the high school for **approval**.
5. Log the community service work hours on the **Community Service Hours Log**. The agency or organization contact person or supervisor must sign this documentation after each logged entry.
6. Submit the completed **Community Service Hours Log**, and typed self-evaluation, to the high school community service program coordinator. Keep a copy of paperwork for your records!
7. The completed forms shall be placed in the student's official cumulative file at the high school and the community service work hours will be documented on the student's official high school transcript.
8. All community program paperwork (Community Service Plan and Community Service Hours Log) must be completed, signed, and submitted annually by April 15th for student award ceremony recognition and prior to the Senior's last day for hours to be updated on their final transcripts.

Commonly asked Questions:

- a. *When can I start earning High School Community Service Hours?* Students may start earning high school community service hours as early as the summer before 8th grade. Students must have hours approved by their High School Community Service Coordinator prior to logging hours.
- b. *Do I have to submit a new community service plan for each agency or organization?* YES. A community service plan must be completed for each agency/organization. This documents that your hours logged are approved by your parent and the community service coordinator.
- c. *Do I have to submit a new community service log for each agency?* No. the Community Service log may be used for multiple agencies, however, the self-evaluation, submitted with the log, must summarize all service opportunities indicated on the log.
- d. *When should I turn my community service hours in?* It's good practice to submit community service hours to the community service coordinator at the end of every semester. This prevents students from misplacing documents and procrastinating until senior year.



What Hours Cannot Count for High School Community Service Hours?

1. Court mandated community service.
2. An activity for which a student benefited financially or materially for the volunteer service worked
3. Family related activities or service to family members (ex. babysitting, completing assigned chores, etc.)
4. **Religious activity which can be interpreted as proselytizing (definition: to advocate, promote or attempt to convert (someone) from one religion, belief, or opinion to another.) This does not include religious education or service.**
5. Donations, such as Locks of Love or giving blood
6. Service work that earns the student academic credit (except for credit earned through an approved service-learning course).
7. An activity where there is no responsible adult or supervisor on site to evaluate and confirm student performance.

Examples of Approved Community Service Opportunities:

- American Cancer Society
- American Diabetes Association
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- American Red Cross
- Big Brother/Big Sister
- Elder Care facilities
- Environmental Cleanup
- Goodwill Industries
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hospital
- Hospice
- Humane Society
- Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
- March of Dimes
- Meals on Wheels
- Make a Wish Foundation
- Race for Cure
- Salvation Army
- Special Olympics
- Tutoring
- Volunteer Polk
- United Way
- YMCA

Note: *This is not an all-inclusive list but rather just a list of agencies that have provided opportunities in the past and is provided for your convenience. The school district neither endorses, guarantees, nor makes any representation regarding the listed agencies; parents and adult students are strongly encouraged to investigate the agencies and make their own personal decisions regarding the sites.*