



Service Learning at Riverdale High School

What is the Riverdale graduation requirement for service?

Students are responsible for 90 hours of community service. The intent of this graduation requirement is:

- To give students an opportunity to experience the pleasures and maturing impact of “other-centered” thinking and activities.
- To promote engagement with educational experiences in the broader community.
- To inform students about social issues, the political process, and how institutions and individuals seek solutions to problems.

What counts as “service”?

- Any activity with a philanthropic organization that can sensibly be called “service” qualifies to fulfill the basic 90-hour requirement.
- You cannot claim service hours for paid experiences or those that earn academic credit. Service done for family members does not count.
- Professional internship hours usually do not count as service.
- No more than 40 hours can be earned for any one activity unless an exception is approved by Ms. Robinson.
- No more than 30 hours can be earned for *school-related* activities, including *Wildhorse*, student orientations, Grade School Carnival, neighborhood events and fundraising.
- Hours done as part of the National Honor Society do not count toward the 90-hour graduation requirement because that violates its national bylaws.
- Hours done as part of Senior Exhibition DO count.
- Hours done with Advisory do not count if done during the school day, but DO count if done after school hours.
- Hours awarded for some popular activities: Outdoor School is awarded 40 hours. *Wildhorse* food crew members earn 35 hours. Team leaders earn 15 hours. *Wildhorse* directors earn 25 hours. India Trip: 40 hours. Summer camp counseling: 30. Ambassador: Two hours per day when being “shadowed” by a visitor.

What about service hours earned prior to this year?

For the 2014/2015 school year only: All “old” hours, earned prior to Sept. 1, 2014, MUST BE CLAIMED BY NOV. 1. Students cannot claim these hours after Nov. 1, 2014. Forms are available from Sam Ziff.

ALL service hours earned prior to Sept. 1, 2014 will count toward the 90-hour graduation requirement. After November 1, all hours must be claimed by the yearly deadlines to be valid. These deadlines will be well publicized.

Can you complete all of your hours in one year?

Students may complete all 90 hours in one year, but spreading experiences throughout the four years is highly recommended by college counselors. The recommended sequence is:

- Grade 9 – 15 hours
- Grade 10 – 20 hours
- Grade 11 – 30 hours
- Grade 12 – 25 hours

Do summer service experiences count?

Yes. Even hours earned during the summer between 8th and 9th grades.

How do students submit their service hours?

There are two steps to this process:

- 1) Students will take a paper Service Hour Claim Form with them to their service experience. These are available from Sam Ziff. The form must be signed by the service supervisor and then returned. (Emails from agencies confirming service will also be accepted as confirmation.) There is a clearly labeled basket at Sam Ziff's front desk where forms must be deposited.

Parents may NOT sign forms to confirm service. There have been legitimate exceptions, and these can be negotiated with the principal or the counselor.

- 2) Students will then go online to fill out an additional form that requires a thoughtful reflection about the work performed.

The form can be found at www.riverdaleschool.com/ServiceLearning, or by visiting the high school section of the Riverdale website and selecting "Service Learning" from the blue menu to the left of the screen.

Hours will not be accepted if there is no valid supervisor signature or if the online form is poorly done.



Service Learning at Riverdale High School

What are the due dates?

- Forms for summer work must be submitted by Sept. 15 of each year.
- Forms for work done during the school year will not be accepted after June 10.

If students fail to submit forms by these due dates, their hours will not be accepted.

How can students check their hours?

Ask Sam Ziff.

Are some service hours “better” than others?

Absolutely. Service experiences with substantial educational value are better for students and their resumes.

Here are some examples from recent student service projects:

Service Learning: Complex, long-term and highly challenging:

- Director of own non-profit
- Long-term contribution to OHSU research project
- Long-term engagement with medical project in Africa
- Service Learning coordinator at Riverdale
- Long term commitment to a Montessori School
- On student board of Planned Parenthood
- Teacher at NW Children’s Theater for 15 hours a week

Helpful but *less* educational service projects:

- Showing around prospective Riverdale students during the school day
- Single visits to Oregon Food Bank
- Selling donuts for fundraising
- Volunteering for the Grade School Carnival

Is there a “best way” to do service hours?

Students who do substantial, long-term service with a significant learning component will find that their experiences will inspire tremendous growth, lead to a deep sense of satisfaction and boost their chances of being admitted to a selective college.

Ideally, service experiences should happen throughout the four years, and include one long-term, in-depth project.

Experiences in which students show little sincere interest are not useful, of course.

A student's service activities are always detailed in the school report that is sent to most colleges with his or her transcript.

What happens when a student does more than 90 hours?

All service is beneficial. Students should claim ALL hours on the official forms, even if they have already fulfilled the 90-hour graduation requirement. This information will be noted in their school reports to colleges, who admire demonstrated other-centeredness. We also love to advertise the total number of service hours that our students do each year.

How can clubs and service teams help?

Many organizations at Riverdale High School have a service component, and these will actively offer service opportunities to the entire student body.

Students and parents should check the Service Bulletin Board at the far west end of the building, near the lobby, to see what projects are available. Opportunities will also be announced during Community Meetings.