



Service-Learning Educator Guide





Welcome to WE Schools service-learning

Here's your guide to get doing.

Thank you for choosing to join our global movement to empower millions of young people to become active and engaged citizens. If the pandemic has taught us anything it's that we are all connected and that strategies such as resiliency, collaboration and problem-solving are critical to being able to deal with things that are beyond our control.

In fact, what sets WE Schools apart is our focus on providing both service-learning and social-emotional learning resources, which boost critical thinking, social consciousness and well-being. We believe that the best learning experiences happen when we contribute to making a meaningful difference in the world.

Thanks again for your participation. It demonstrates that you, too, believe anything is possible when we harness the power of coming together to do good and create social change.

WE VIRTUAL LEARNING CENTER

This is your one-stop shop for WE Schools curriculum, classroom resources and activities, video-on-demand library and awards and grants. Sign up and get access to all the resources for free today!



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The WE Schools difference

What is service-learning?

Service-learning is a proven pedagogy that combines classroom curriculum and instruction with meaningful inquiry, service and reflection, to enrich the learning experience.

Service-learning empowers students to apply what they are learning in your classroom in a real world setting to solve problems in their local community and the world around them. Students are able to develop a stronger understanding of local and global issues, while engaging in actions that help to make a difference, each experience reinforcing the other.



FACT:

Research shows a consistent set of positive outcomes for students participating in service-learning including:

- Improved social skills and well-being
- Improved university and workplace readiness
- Increased academic engagement
- Increased leadership skills and civic responsibility

Service-learning with WE Schools

We're leading the way in experiential service-learning! WE Schools is uniquely positioned to provide opportunities that merge service-learning with social and emotional learning (SEL), engaging youth in purposeful activities that facilitate learning, self-awareness and well-being.

Implementing SEL and service-learning together results in even better outcomes for positive youth development compared to SEL alone. WE Schools draws from a combination of experience and research indicating that quality service-learning can build SEL competencies, while SEL can strengthen the ability of students to be capable service providers.

Social and emotional learning

There's a growing emphasis on developing caring classroom environments and promoting social and emotional learning. SEL is a way of learning that allows students to gain the skills and knowledge to identify and manage their emotions, understand different perspectives, show empathy for others, set and achieve positive goals, develop and sustain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

SEL is becoming increasingly important since it supports academic learning, promotes well-being and addresses the changing needs of today's and tomorrow's students.

WE Schools supports SEL through our service-learning, as well as our comprehensive WE Well-being programming, designed in collaboration with leading mental health professionals. It helps youth and educators in Grades 4 to 12 to improve their own emotional, social and physical and mental well-being and the well-being of others.

WE SERVICE-LEARNING + SEL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	
Empathy and perseverance are just scratching the surface of skills that your students will develop when combining SEL with service-learning through WE Schools.	
Empathy	Through service-learning, students increase their exposure to social justice issues in their local and global environments, increasing social awareness and building respect and understanding for others.
Communication	Working as a volunteer in diverse and potentially unfamiliar environments is a fast track way to improve communication skills and increase students' ability to foster positive, healthy relationships with others.
Collaboration	In a volunteer setting, students are called upon to work as a group and build skills like conflict resolution.
Resilience	Showing up for others is not always an easy task. Through service-learning students will gain practice goal-setting and self-motivating.
Problem-solving	Chosen from The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning's (CASEL) list of core competencies and SEL skills.

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SEL RESOURCES

Visit us online to access SEL resources, including our [Foundational Module](#), WE Well-being Professional Development sessions, campaign highlights and more.

» [WE.ORG/WVLC](https://www.we.org/wvlc) «

Creating real change

A study from our evaluation partner, Mission Measurement, identified a number of educational and behavioral impacts on participants in a WE Schools service-learning experience.



Source: Mission Measurement ME to WE Social Enterprises Impact Report (2018)

FACT:

- **7.0X more likely to be agents of positive change in their local and global communities**
- **2.9X more likely to actively look for ways to improve their communities**
- **1.6X more confident to discuss complex topics with teachers and peers**
- **2.5X more likely to actively look for opportunities to lead others**
- **2.0X more likely to bring people together to solve problems**
- **2.3X more confident when speaking in a public setting**

Service-learning in action

Service-learning in action

WE Schools service-learning provides a framework for students to meet their learning objectives while engaging with and addressing the needs of their community. Participating teachers will foster broader academic discussions via the interactive nature of service-learning and, through our resources, enable students to learn about local, national and global issues and become agents of change.

WE SCHOOLS SERVICE-LEARNING FRAMEWORK

1. Investigate and learn

Students explore topics related to a real-world challenge or opportunity.

2. Action plan

Students develop an achievable plan to implement their service-learning project.

3. Take action

Students implement their action plan involving direct service, indirect service and/or advocacy.

4. Report and celebrate

Students highlight their project to showcase their learning and outcomes.



Record and reflect

Students maintain a log of activities and complete written reflections throughout their project.

SERVICE-LEARNING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Your students will gain the following skills while participating in WE Schools service-learning campaigns, which can be helpful in both their schoolwork and future careers.



ARGUMENT
FORMATION



INFORMATION
LITERACY



LEADERSHIP



ORGANIZATION



ACTION
PLANNING



RESEARCH
AND WRITING



CRITICAL
THINKING



REFLECTION



SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL
LEARNING

Benefits to students

Participating in service-learning gives students the opportunity to build and demonstrate skills such as:

			
<p>Communication and collaboration</p> <p>Students work collaboratively within teams and with community members to research, plan and execute service projects by expressing opinions, clearly communicating ideas and defending a position with evidence.</p>	<p>Critical thinking and analysis</p> <p>Students complete a needs assessment of the problem, draw conclusions and evaluate project impact.</p>	<p>Leadership</p> <p>Students perform a role within the project team to own their respective work and present results to community members to motivate further action.</p>	<p>Civic engagement</p> <p>Students build an understanding of their active role and ownership in solving today's local and global problems and are motivated to be agents of change.</p>

Teacher POV on WE Schools service-learning

Participating teachers foster broader discussions through the interactive nature of service-learning and enable students to become agents of change.

85% said they felt a renewed inspiration for teaching and engaging with young people	87% said that students demonstrated more leadership among their peers
85% said students felt a greater connection to their local community	84% said that students were more likely to stand up for others who are treated unfairly because of their gender, race, religion, ability or sexual orientation

Source: 2018–2019 Year in Review Report

WE SCHOOLS FOUNDATIONAL MODULE

Not sure where to start? The WE Schools [Foundational Module](#) can help you create the optimal learning environment for your students before working through our service-learning campaigns and programs. It provides a sequenced approach to foster engagement and develop supportive instructional practices.

How to implement service-learning

WE Schools service-learning programs and campaigns are very flexible. Our resources are designed to complement and intersect with one another seamlessly regardless how you decide to implement service-learning.

Curricular and co-curricular

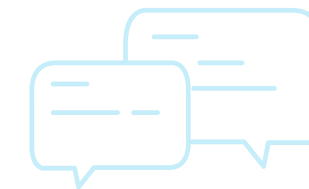
Incorporate experiential service-learning lesson plans and campaign guides on topics from the environment to human rights. You can also build action plans around curriculum use.

Through our elementary and high school curriculum, you can enhance students' learning with programs that focus on character traits and skill development such as empowerment, problem solving, team building and a greater understanding of the world.

Extracurricular

For after-school groups and student clubs, service-learning campaigns challenges students to tackle important issues and empowers them with the tools to take action.

Our programs cover a wide range of local and global issues and include issue background materials, discussion questions, enrichment activities and a robust video-on-demand library to support student learning with tools to help create an action plan.



SHARE YOUR STORIES!

We'd love to hear how you and your students are activating service-learning. Tag @WEteachers or use #WESchools so that we can share what you're doing!



Service-learning framework

Getting started

Follow the four steps of the WE Schools service-learning framework to help ensure your students are able to make an impact in your local community and beyond.

Step 1: Investigate and learn

It's critical that we take action on important social issues within our communities, across the country and around the world. The first step is for your team to understand the issues you're trying to address and how society impacts them—in both positive and negative ways.

Think about what matters to you and your students most. We're all energized by our passions and when we apply them to a cause to create change, the impact is extraordinary. If you're not sure where to begin, start with these ideas to help identify an issue.

1. Make it personal

A personal connection to a cause can supercharge your commitment and fuel your desire to make things better. Start by thinking about issues affecting those around you—family, friends, neighbors or colleagues, and what you can do to help.

2. Explore your community

Look for issues close to home. You may notice something that's missing, like wheelchair accessibility or a safe place for kids to play. Are there people who are experiencing homelessness or are in need? Reach out to community resources to find out how you can help.

3. See the bigger picture

We're all connected through our shared humanity. Each day, the headlines shine a light on some of the world's most challenging issues: human rights, sustainability, natural disasters, poverty, gun violence, racism, access to education and food insecurity.

ISSUE EXPLORATION

You can support your students as they explore (a) the causes and effects of the problem/issue and (b) the goals and outcomes of the solution they are working on through their service-learning. Refer to the worksheets in the Service-Learning Student Toolkit, available to download at [WE.org/WVLC](https://www.we.org/WVLC).

PROBLEM: CAUSES & EFFECTS

Dig deeper into the issue(s) you are trying to address. By understanding and evaluating which actions are most appropriate to support your cause, your students can make a more meaningful impact.

SOLUTION: GOALS & OUTCOMES

Setting goals and planning for outcomes is critical to mapping out the sustainable actions needed to achieve the solution on behalf of your issue. It's important to look beyond the short term and address not only the symptoms of the problem but the root causes as well.

RECORD AND REFLECT

During step 1, have students maintain a log of activities related to the project and ask them to reflect on what they've learned about their chosen local or global issue.



Issue Cards



Classroom Resources



S.M.A.R.T. Goals

HELPFUL RESOURCES

To explore local and global issues to help find your “why,” download WE Schools issue cards, worksheets and classroom resources.

» WE.ORG/WVLC «



Nipmuc Regional High School bee pollinator garden

Campaign in Action

At Nipmuc Regional High School in Upton, Massachusetts, teacher Jennifer Field used the WE Are Innovators program to inspire her students' ingenuity and passion for service, the environment and science. In the past three years, they created a bee pollinator garden, a schoolwide composting initiative and built birdhouses and bat boxes on the campus, all with the support of community partners.



PRACTICE SAFE SERVICE-LEARNING

When conducting service-learning in person it's important to recognize everyone's safety and well-being. While health and safety policies and practices vary, here are a few suggestions:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm.
- Avoid touching surfaces people touch often.
- Keep a distance of six feet from others, if possible.
- Use any necessary personal protective equipment, as directed.



WE Schools service-learning campaigns

Once you decide on the issue you want to take on, then you're ready to choose your service-learning campaign and turn your passion into action. WE Schools has a number of ready-made service-learning campaigns that align with the themes of Education, Social Vulnerability, Equity and Human Rights, Environment and Health and Well-being. Access all of the resources and campaigns below at the WE Virtual Learning Center. Register for free or sign in [here](#).



WE Are Innovators

Take action against today's pressing social issues by creating innovative solutions through the use of STEM skills and raise awareness on the issues that you're passionate about.



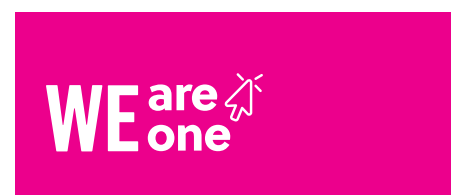
WE Scare Hunger

Come together to collect food to help scare away hunger. Hold a food drive to contribute to your local community food bank and raise awareness of the root causes of hunger.



WE Volunteer Now

Rally your peers to take action on an issue in your community. Inspire others to volunteer and create a ripple effect of volunteerism.



WE Are One

Technology is a powerful tool for social change. Use it to imagine and develop ways to make your school and community more inclusive for everyone.



WE Are Silent

Use your voice. Speak up, go silent and fundraise to amplify the voices of those who go unheard around the world.



WE Go Green

Commit to a sustainability pledge in your school or community and watch how everyday actions can turn into sustainable impact.



WE Promote Respect

Help build understanding of the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships and provides tools to form bonds with others that will enrich your life.



WE Walk For Water

Clean water is a basic human right that not everyone has. Walk for all women and children around the world who spend hours each day walking to collect water for their families.



WE Embrace Anti-racism

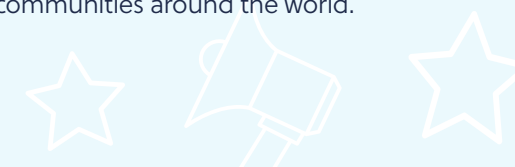
Create a more inclusive world and break the cycle of racism. This resource uses tangible examples and tools for students to understand and recognize diversity and inclusion, while promoting awareness, advocacy and behavioral change.



Lakewood High School food drive

Campaign in Action

At Lakewood High School in Lakewood, California, Irma Magana and her students organized a food drive and collected 10 boxes for the Long Beach Rescue Mission and Midnight Mission in downtown Los Angeles. For the WE Walk for Water campaign, her students put together a video to educate others on what women and children experience collecting safe water for their communities around the world.



Step 2: Action plan

By bringing meaningful service into the classroom through WE Schools campaigns, students deepen their understanding of local and global issues.

However, before your students start taking action, they're going to need a good plan. Without a plan, they won't have a reliable way to reach their goal and without a defined goal, they won't know if they've achieved it.

Setting S.M.A.R.T. goals

S.M.A.R.T. goal-setting (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound) is a technique to help you succeed in reaching your goals. It gives a focused direction for actions by breaking them down into manageable steps, tracks your progress and keeps you on target.

- S Specific** Plan a precise course of action and specify how and where.
- M Measurable** Set a goal you can measure so you know when you've reached it.
- A Attainable** Make sure that your goal is something realistic and reasonable.
- R Relevant** Ensure your goal will truly help address your chosen issue.
- T Time-bound** Set an exact timeline for when you want to achieve your goal.

Assigning roles and responsibilities

Teamwork is a success when tasks are divided equally among team members and based on individual strengths and interests. It's important to remember that no single role is more important nor should it be more work than any other.

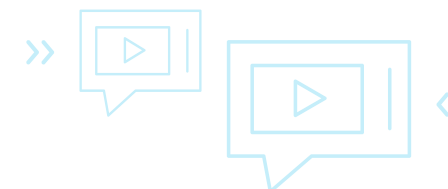
Each member should reflect on their personal strengths and weaknesses as well as those of their teammates. Roles should coordinate with strengths but also allow for skill-building throughout the process of the service project.

As students consider the different roles for their team based on the specifics of the service project, they can begin with the following list of roles that may include, but are not limited to:

- Logistics
- Finance
- Volunteer coordination
- Communications and public relations
- Design and content
- Administration and tracking timelines
- Liaison with community partners and vendors

RECORD AND REFLECT

After step 2, have students describe their experience working as a member of a team and reflect on how their action plan addresses the issue they identified.



GET INSPIRED!

Read more inspirational stories of youth, teachers and service-learning at [WE.org/stories](https://we.org/stories). You can also learn more about issues and how students have activated with our Global Classroom series. These 45-minute sessions are available on demand at <https://weschools.we.org/video-content>.

"It makes a big difference when you acknowledge somebody. Maybe they've not been acknowledged all day."

- STEFANIE NELSON



Campaign in Action

Using resources from WE Well-being, Stefanie Nelson, a High School Youth Services Coordinator, and students from Coon Rapid High School in Coon Rapids, Michigan launched the Kindness Matters Campaign. They created kindness messages on magnets and buttons, started a reading club at the elementary school and led a school-wide service day. During COVID, they also sent messages of encouragement and thanks to senior homes and hospital workers in the community.

Step 3: Take action

It's time to get out there and make it happen! Even small actions can make a difference. You can implement your action plan using direct service (e.g., volunteering), indirect service (e.g., fundraising) and/or advocacy (e.g., raising awareness).

Types of action

Taking action comes in many forms—students can raise awareness, donate money or needed goods or volunteer their time and skills. Here are six different ways to make an impact.



Advocacy

Educate others about topics that affect the public. These include projects that aim to create awareness and inspire action on issues that impact your community, your country or the world.

Example: Collect signatures for a petition and send it to your local or national government official.



Awareness-raising

Focus the attention of others on a cause in the community or in the world. Regardless of the action you take, the objective is to increase others' understanding of broader issues.

Example: Host a movie night by screening a documentary that touches on a topic you are passionate about and have a discussion afterward to find out how much everyone learned.



Behavioral change

Directly impact individuals by helping to turn their bad habits or routines into positive ones like educating others about an important issue.

Example: Take a sustainability pledge to pack no-waste lunches, plant a garden or walk to school.



Fundraising

Working on broader issues, collect donations of money from individuals, businesses, charitable foundations or government agencies for a project that will benefit others.

Example: Organize a coin drive and ask friends and family to donate their loose change for a cause you care about.



Material support

Collect donations or items like canned goods, second-hand clothing and books for a charitable cause.

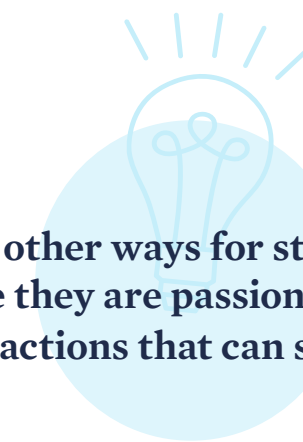
Example: Hold a food drive and get a team together to collect non-perishable items for your neighborhood food bank.



Volunteering

Make a meaningful, direct impact in the lives of others by giving your time to a cause you care about. This could mean staying within your neighborhood and helping out locally or helping a community in another country.

Example: Spend time at a local soup kitchen or seniors' residence or lend a hand to an international development project. The possibilities are endless!



There are many other ways for students to get involved. Depending on the issue they are passionate about, you can help them brainstorm other actions that can support their campaign.

BE ACCOUNTABLE

For complete transparency, create a campaign page or a fundraising page to track progress and update your team and supporters with regular reports.

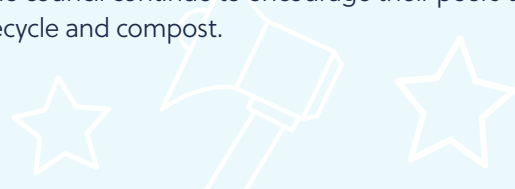
RECORD AND REFLECT

After step 3, have students reflect on their experiences of taking action as a team and describe how they may continue the work that you and your team started with this project.



Campaign in Action

Twelve-year-old Tadeo Figueroa and the student council at Aptakisic Junior High School in Buffalo Grove, Illinois committed to reducing waste in their cafeteria by implementing a recycling and composting initiative. Through research, trash auditing and a determination to create an eco-friendly environment at school, Tadeo and the council continue to encourage their peers to recycle and compost.



“Everyone can make a change, big or small—in the home, in their school, in their community, anywhere.”

TADEO FIGUEROA

D.I.Y. Campaign

Take action with your own custom campaign.



TAKE ACTION WITH YOUR OWN CAMPAIGN

With the D.I.Y. Campaign, you can create positive social change for a cause you care about, your way! Download the guide [here](#).

Step 4: Celebrate and share

Your team did it! Congratulations on completing a successful service-learning action. Now it’s time to celebrate the group’s hard work and share the results of making a difference in your community and the world around you.

Here are a few ideas to get you thinking:

- School-wide assembly
- Display for the whole school to visit
- Cinema-style documentary screening
- Poster exhibition
- Project social media page or website and tag @WEteachers so we can share, too
- School website or newsletter

Educate and inspire

Share impact stories, photos, activity updates and campaign results through social media. Consider bringing in a guest speaker, a community leader or someone from your chosen cause to share their knowledge and experience with your group.

Thank everyone who participated and let donors and other supporters know how their efforts made a difference. Don’t forget to share and celebrate over social media!

RECORD AND REFLECT

After completing your group’s service-learning campaign, it’s important for your students to reflect on their experiences. When they engage in reflective thinking, it gives them a framework on how to move forward into future endeavors with a clearer understanding of what they’ve learned and how it may have impacted their goals. Use the questions from the Student Toolkit to guide your discussion. The Student Toolkit is available to download at WE.org/WVLC

Educator resources

Educator resources

We have everything you and your students need to succeed in your service-learning experience. From teaching modules and issue exploration materials to forms, activities, templates and worksheets, you'll find the resources to help support your students on their journey.

- Lesson packages aligned to Common Core Standards
- Campaign guides
- Discussion cards
- Action planning resources
- Video-on-demand library offering professional development and global classroom programming for students
- Service awards and grants



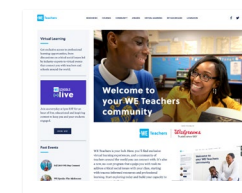
Issue cards

Explore local and global issues and identify what issues your group is passionate about. Use the questions to engage in discussion and quiz each other using the fast facts.



Worksheets and activities

Enhance the experience by using our specially-designed activities to help guide you through service-learning and add structure to your group.



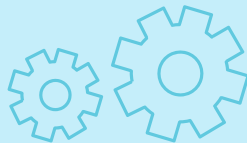
VISIT THE WE VIRTUAL LEARNING CENTER

» WE.ORG/WVLC «



Thank you

It's because of change-makers like you that we are able to empower young people with resources that create sustainable impact and make a better world possible. We couldn't do it without you!



SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

Have any questions or need any help putting your group's plans into action?

To access opportunities for live streaming, videos, professional development and curricular resources, sign up at:

>> [WE.ORG/WVLC](https://we.org/wvlc) <<

You can also email us at weschools@we.org

@WEteachers

