**Service Hour Guidelines**

At Northeastern State University community engagement opportunities bring student organizations, student leaders and student volunteers together for a common purpose. Involvement in community engagement programs allows students to enrich their academic and social experiences at NSU. In order to ensure students are completing meaningful and impactful service, we have implemented the following guidelines. To find opportunities already approved for [service](https://nsucommunityengagement.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/).

Community Engagement acknowledges there will be many situations where it is difficult to determine whether or not an activity counts as service. Students are encouraged to email commengage@nsuok.edu with any questions or concerns.

These guidelines will apply to all service hours submitted after July 1, 2021.

**General Requirements**

All community service hours must be submitted for approval on [Hawklife](https://nsuok.presence.io/form/apply-for-opportunity). Submissions must include contact information for the contact at the site. Students cannot count time spent on activities for which they received compensation as service hours. A free meal, t-shirt, or place to stay do not count as compensation. There are both on and off-campus opportunities for service hours, and students are encouraged to participate in a variety of service projects. If you are unsure of whether or not your activity counts as service, please email commengage@nsuok.edu.

Activities that generally do not count as community service include:

* Philanthropy (exceptions listed under Philanthropy)
* Student organization activities (exceptions listed under Student Organizations and Student Leadership)
* Work for which you receive compensation

**On-Campus Service**

On-campus service is service directly conducted through NSU activities or organizations.

Examples of on-campus service include but are not limited to:

* Participating as a volunteer or site leader in the Big Event
* Volunteering with the Rowdy’s Resource Room
* Participating in a Day of Service Event (9/11 Day of Service, MLK Day of Service, etc.)
* Serving as a volunteer for on-campus events such as NAB events, homecoming events, etc.
* Volunteering or participating with Angel Tree

**Off-Campus Service**

Off-campus service is a service that benefits entities other than NSU such as non-profit organizations, community agencies, local schools, community members, etc.

Examples of off-campus service include but are not limited to:

* Volunteering at the humane society
* Volunteering at the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma
* Visiting the elderly members of a nursing home
* Building a house with Habitat for Humanity
* Highway Clean Up
* Other events listed throughout the year on [Volunteer Local](https://nsucommunityengagement.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/)

Off-campus service is not limited to the area. Service hours can be completed all across the country and even internationally.

*\*Please note that time spent traveling to and from the service location or sleeping and eating on a service trip cannot be counted as service hours.*

**Philanthropy**

Philanthropy is the act of donating or raising money and differs from service. In order to earn service hours, a student must give time rather than funds.

Participating in or attending a philanthropy event does not count as service. Examples of what cannot be counted are:

* A charity run/walk
* Relay for Life
* Attending philanthropy events hosted by a student organization
* Purchasing a T-shirt for a fundraiser
* Donating money to Organizations

There are a few exceptions such as:

* Time spent performing an essential function at a philanthropic event can be counted as service (ex. handing out water during a race, crowd management, checking people in, etc.)
* Time spent planning/organizing a philanthropy event can be counted as community service if your role is not tied to an on-campus student organization leadership role.

**Student Organizations and Student Leadership**

Time spent on activities that are a part of being a member of a student organization cannot be counted as service hours. Examples include but are not limited to:

* Attending meetings
* Tabling for your organization
* Attending events or fulfilling requirements for your membership
* Preparing materials such as agendas or flyers
* Marketing for your organization

Time spent on activities that benefit a wider population can be counted as service hours. Examples include but are not limited to:

* Performing an off-campus service project as a student organization

Time spent in a student leadership role for a student organization or campus program can be counted as service hours with the following limits per role:

* 30 Hours: High Level Leadership Position (i.e. President, Executive Director, Board of Directors, Top Leaders/Director of an Executive Board), etc.
* 15 Hours: Mid-Level Leadership Position (i.e. Chair that reports to a Director, Cabinet Member, Organization Officer, etc.)

*\*Note: Hours of service from student leadership roles in an NSU program or student organization (ex: Executive Director, President, officer positions, etc.) will be accepted as service hours with a limit of 100 hours (in total) counting towards the NSU Service Award*

**Academic Activities, Service-Learning, and Internships**

Students may count service hours that are completed outside of the classroom in conjunction with the course. Hours spent actively student-teaching can be counted as service hours. Unpaid internships completed at a 501(c)(3) can be counted as service, even if they are a required component of a student’s coursework. Practicum hours completed at a 501(c)(3) or in a service-based setting can be counted as service, even if they are a required component of a student's coursework.

Academic activities, service-learning, and internships that do not count as service hours include experiences such as:

* Time spent job shadowing without performing a task
* Observation Hours spent learning about a profession

*\*Note: Hours of service from a required academic activity linked to a course or graduation requirement (i.e. required internship hours, required student teaching or required observation/rotation hours, etc.) will be accepted as service hours with a limit of 100 hours (in total) counting towards the NSU Service Award. Any hours performed outside of the required hours can also be counted towards this award if logged separately.*

**Summer Camps**

Unpaid hours completed while working for a summer camp can be counted as community service.

Being an adult leader or chaperone for a group that attends camp cannot be counted as service.

**Religious Organizations**

Time spent on activities benefiting the membership of a religious organization can be counted as service hours if you are not being compensated for your role. Examples include but are not limited to:

* Working with youth groups
* Acting as a host or greeter
* Teaching a religious-based class
* Religious-based service trips (i.e. Mission Trips) can be counted as service

*\*Please note that time spent traveling to and from the service location, sleeping, eating, and time spent in religious study on a service trip cannot be counted as service hours.*

Time spent serving with a religious organization on activities that benefit a wider population can be counted as service hours (ex. serving dinner to hungry members of the community through your church).

**Civic Engagement**

Time spent actively promoting or campaigning for a political candidate/party/ideal (i.e. canvassing, knocking on doors, serving on a campaign team, phone banking, speaking at events, etc.) can be counted as service hours.

Time spent passively promoting or campaigning for a political candidate/party/ideal (sharing or posting a social media post) cannot be counted as service hours.

Voter registration drives can be counted as service.

**Blood Drives**

Donating or attempting to donate blood counts as one service hour.

Assisting with the functioning or marketing of a blood drive can be counted as service hours.

In the event that hours are denied and a student believes those hours should have been approved, students should contact Community Engagement. While there is room for discussion, CE reserves the right to approve/deny hours at the office's discretion based on the above guidelines.

Students that have questions about where their hours fall may contact Community Engagement by email at commengage@nsuok.edu.

**Recording Your Service Hours**

As a member of the NSU and Tahlequah Community we encourage you to get out and be active members of our surrounding community. This is useful when applying for jobs, scholarships and to just be involved in the community around you.

Programs hosted by the Student Engagement office such as Big Event, Angel Tree, and Days of Service will be imputed by HawkLife when you swipe into the event.

For all other service opportunities, you can track your hours via HawkLife.

<https://nsuok.presence.io/form/apply-for-opportunity>

**NSU Service Award**

The NSU Service Award is a recognition for graduates from Northeastern State University, who have dedicated a large portion of their time to service to NSU and surrounding communities.

**Award Requirements**

Community Engagement has determined that any student who has dedicated at least 400 hours of time to volunteer activities during a four-year college career will qualify for this distinction.

For transfer and nontraditional students, the number of hours required to receive the NSU Service Award will be prorated based on the number of years a student has been a student at NSU. The prorated years and corresponding hours are as follows:

* Three years: 300 hours
* Two years: 200 hours
* One year: 100 hours

Those who achieve this award will be given a Stole (*pending approval*) to be worn for graduation. If you qualify for this award, or would like to work towards achieving this award, begin the process by logging your service hours on HawkLife.

*\*Please review all guidelines and if you have any questions regarding service please email* *commengage@nsuok.edu**.*

**How to Apply**

If you are a graduating senior and would like to be considered for this award, fill out the NSU Service Award Application by the following deadlines:

* Fall 2021 Graduates: 5 p.m. Dec. 3
* Spring 2022 Graduates: 5 p.m. April 22

<https://nsuok.presence.io/form/nsu-service-award-application>