

Service Learning Bethel Public Schools

Bethel Public Schools are striving to make volunteering and community service opportunities accessible and available to all students. Community service has been proven to increase personal and social responsibility, social competence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy and leadership skills. Volunteerism can also enhance problem-solving skills, the ability to work in teams, and planning abilities. It also increases awareness of social needs in the community.

Below you will find information regarding the Presidential Volunteer Service Award and Bethel High School's Service Learning graduation requirement.

Presidential Volunteer Service Award

Bethel Public Schools are also taking part in the President's Student Service Challenge. Students from all Bethel Public Schools, who meet or exceed the requirements for the Presidential Volunteer Service Award, will receive a Presidential Service Award certificate. All students are encouraged to apply. Presidential Service Award criteria, eligibility, and BPS requirements are as follows:

Criteria

Individuals that meet the criteria are eligible for the PVSA (Presidential Volunteer Service Award.)

- Recipient(s) must be a United States citizen or a lawfully admitted permanent resident of the United States.
- **Awards are issued for service hours served within a 12-month time period (April 1- April 1 for Bethel Public Schools)**
- Awards are issued for volunteer service only; additional levels of participation with the organization (i.e., charitable support)

are not a factor considered for the award.

- Court-ordered community service does not qualify for the award.

Eligibility

Hours are measured over a *12-month period* (April 1- April 1) and awards are designated based on cumulative hours within that year. The awards are offered in multiple levels and are designed to recognize each milestone of your service achievement. Levels include bronze, silver, gold.

| Hours by Award | Bronze | Silver | Gold |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Kids (5-10) | 26 – 49 | 50 – 74 | 75 + |
| Teens (11–15) | 50 – 74 | 75 – 99 | 100 + |
| Young Adults (16-25) | 100 – 174 | 175 – 249 | 250 + |
| Adults (26 and older) | 100 – 249 | 250 – 499 | 500+ |

BPS Requirements

- **Students** must completely fill-out the Community Service Tracking Form.
- Service of more than 20 hours for an organization should have a letter from the organization attached.
- Service must be completed with a certified non-profit organization or approval from School Administration.
- Students may attach letters in lieu of signatures on tracking form.
- Parents/ Guardians may not sign for their child’s community service hours.

- Bethel Public Schools tracks hours for the Presidential Award from April 1- April 1. Forms must be handed in by April 1.
- For Bethel High School students: your 60 hours of community service you do to receive .5 credit at BHS may also be used towards this award (within the 12 month period.)

All Student Service Tracking Forms must be submitted to Linda Anderson or Kathleen DeMarco: Internship Office, Bethel High School by April 1.

Please call 203-794-8600 ext 375 with any questions you may have about the Presidential Volunteer Service Award.

Bethel High School

Service learning is a graduation requirement at Bethel High School. To meet this requirement students must complete and document 60 hours of service learning with an approved organization by June of their junior year. An approved organization is any not for profit organization, or organization approved by the school. Service completed for a for-profit organization, for relatives and family friends, or for individuals, although admirable, **will not receive credit for graduation.**

All 60 hours do not need to be done with the same organization, nor completed in a single year. Students who have graduated eighth grade may begin their service hours in the summer before entering Bethel High School.

In order to document Service Learning hours, students must turn in their hours on the Service Learning Tracking Form and must provide a signed letter, on official letterhead, verifying the total number of hours completed, from each organization in which service was completed. Both the tracking form and the verification

letters are to be turned in to the Bethel High School counseling secretary, Mrs. Hook.

Please see the Bethel High School Program of Studies for further information and speak with your guidance counselor if you have any questions.

Volunteering Opportunities

Students are encouraged to visit the websites below to obtain general information on volunteerism and to develop volunteer possibilities.

www.volunteerdanbury.org (provides general information on volunteerism and opportunities to volunteer in the greater Danbury area)

<http://www.volunteermatch.org> (provides general information on volunteerism and resources to find volunteer opportunities)

www.volunteer.gov/gov (provides resources to find volunteer opportunities with government organizations)