



Learn and Serve America School and Community Programs

Learn and Serve America (LSA) provides grants to schools, colleges, and nonprofits to support programs that enrich learning through community service. This approach to education, called service-learning, helps address community needs while developing students' academic skills and the habits of responsible citizenship. In fiscal year 2001, LSA supported 2,500 service-learning programs that engaged approximately 1.5 million students nationwide.

School-Based Programs

Local schools may apply for service-learning funding through their state education agency or through nonprofits. These grants are used by schools to work in partnership with local organizations to implement service-learning activities for students ages 5 to 17.

For example, students in a fifth grade writing class may visit seniors at a local nursing home, gather their oral histories, write up the histories in class, and, at the end of the semester, present a book of the oral histories to the residents and their families. The students improve their writing skills, while the seniors benefit from interacting with the students and sharing their experiences. Schools also use funds for teacher training, program evaluation, and to support service-learning coordinators. Each project must provide 10 percent to 50 percent of the total program cost in non-federal matching funds; the percentage increases each successive year the project receives a grant. In fiscal year 2001, School-Based grants totaling \$27 million were distributed in 48 states.

Community-Based Programs

State service commissions or multi-state nonprofits may apply for competitive funds to distribute to local community organizations to support after-school service-learning programs. These programs engage youth ages 5 to 17 in

service activities that enhance learning and develop skills but are not necessarily part of a school curriculum. For example, youth in an after-school YMCA program may decide to improve the appearance of a nearby abandoned lot. They plan the project, contact city hall to learn about zoning laws, persuade a local nursery to donate plants, let residents know about the project, and generate community involvement. Students learn new civic skills and the community gains a public space. The matching requirements for Community-Based grants are the same as for the School-Based programs. In fiscal year 2001, Community-Based grants totaled \$5 million.

National Service-Learning Leader Schools Program

This program recognizes high schools and middle schools each year for excellence in service-learning. Leader Schools receive no cash award but are asked to help other schools start or improve their service-learning programs during their two-year tenure. In 2002, 16 schools from 13 states were designated Leader Schools, joining 200 other schools who have held this title since 1999. For more information, call 800-638-8442 or visit www.leaderschools.org.

Presidential Freedom Scholarships

Presidential Freedom Scholarships of \$1,000 are awarded to high school juniors or seniors who demonstrate outstanding leadership in service to their community
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FACT SHEET

and submit a brief essay on the significance of that service in light of the events of September 11, 2001. The recipients are chosen by school officials and must have given at least 100 hours of service in the past 12 months. All high schools in the U.S. are eligible to choose two recipients. The Corporation provides \$500 toward each scholarship, which must be matched by the school or local community. For more information, call 866-291-7700 or visit www.nationalservice.org/scholarships.

President's Student Service Awards

These awards recognize students who have contributed a substantial number of hours to their community. Any student in kindergarten through college who serves at least 100 hours within a 12-month period is eligible to receive a Gold Award, while Silver Awards are given to students in kindergarten through eighth grade who serve at least 50 hours during a 12-month period. Winners receive a pin and a certificate signed by the President. For more information call 866-550-PSSA (7772) or visit www.student-service-awards.org.

Service-Learning Resources

LSA provides a variety of resources to any school, higher education institution, or community organization interested in creating or improving service-learning programs. The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse hosts a library of materials, publications, and links on service-learning that can assist everyone from the beginner to the experienced practitioner. For more information call 866-245-SERV (7378) or visit www.servicelearning.org. The National Service-Learning Exchange is a peer network that provides practitioners with

one-to-one support to strengthen service-learning programs. For more information, call 877-572-3924 or visit www.nslexchange.org.

Budget

LSA's enacted budget for fiscal year 2002 is \$43 million. By law, School- and Community-based programs together receive 75 percent of appropriations, or approximately \$32.25 million.

LSA Network

Learn and Serve America also includes the Higher Education Program, which provides grants to colleges and universities to support service-learning activities for college students. In fiscal year 2001, LSA supported 62 higher education projects that provided funds to 250 campuses and involved approximately 80,000 students, faculty, staff, and community members. LSA is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that also oversees AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. Together, these programs engage more than 2 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service each year.

More Information

For more information about LSA programs or to find out more about service-learning, call 202-606-5000, ext.117 or visit www.learnandserve.org.

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