

## **Making Service Learning Meaningful and Effective**

The state of Maryland has long-term success with service learning in the public schools. The following have been adapted from Maryland's Best Practices for Service Learning, and can become a part of any service learning in any state. Service-learning projects allow students and teachers to:

### **1. Meet a recognized need in the community**

Students work as a team to identify vital community needs and plan, participate, and implement projects that address those needs. These community needs are related to health, education, environment, and public safety.

### **2. Achieve curricular objectives while performing service learning**

Service learning presents opportunities for classroom knowledge to be applied and implemented in real-life settings.

### **3. Reflect on the experience**

Reflection activities, such as discussions, journaling, role-playing, or writing, provide students with the ability to connect curriculum learning to the service being provided.

### **4. Develop student responsibility, critical thinking, and decision-making skills**

Students learn teamwork, problem solving, time and energy management, as well as, leadership skills when they own the service learning.

### **5. Establish community and business partnerships**

Networking with community and business professionals provide students with ideas for career possibilities and the opportunity to work with diverse individuals.

### **6. Plan**

Using the LEADERS Model of Service or the FCCLA Planning Process provides students the opportunities to plan and collaborate in order to implement service-learning projects and showcase the knowledge through marketing and competitive events.

### **7. Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service**

Research and understanding of an issue must be completed in order for students to effectively engage in a service-learning project. Students learn project specific skills, practice citizenship, and civic engagement.