



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Guidance: Community Service Graduation Requirements

Background

The state sets certain minimum requirements for students to graduate from high school, including pertaining to the completion of community service.

Scope

This document describes the community service high school graduation requirements for District of Columbia public and public charter schools.

Effective Date

The changes outline in this guidance were approved by the State Board of Education on Nov. 16, 2022. Pursuant to this authorization, OSSE is promulgating an emergency and proposed rulemaking to codify these changes in 5-A DCMR 2203. This policy, issued on Jan. 3, 2023, takes effect in the 2022-23 school year.

Definition of Community Service

The proposed regulation will state:

“LEAs shall approve unpaid community service conducted in person or virtually that is intended to provide a societal benefit through activities organized by the school, organized by students, or organized by individuals outside the school, including through a government, non-profit, or for-profit entity.”

Thus, community service must be: 1) unpaid¹ and 2) intended to provide a societal² benefit.

It is acceptable for the service activity to be completed in person or virtually (e.g., online tutoring) and for the service activity to be completed as part of a school service project or through an outside organization.

Hours Requirement by Year of Graduation

Per graduation year, students are required to complete the following hours requirements:
2022-23: 12 hours

¹ Travel stipends are acceptable and shall not count as paid. “Unpaid” means that the student does not receive a salary or wage in exchange for their services.

² “Societal” means that the service is directed to benefiting the community rather than for an individual’s family or personal benefit. Serving as a school tutor or at senior home may largely benefit an individual student or senior, but the intended benefit is societal rather than personal or familial.

2023-24: 50 hours

2024-25: 75 hours

2025-26 and thereafter: 100 hours

Transfer Students

If a student transfers from a District public or public charter school from another District public or public charter school, the receiving school must accept community service hours approved by the student's prior high school.

If a high school student transfers to a District public or public charter school from a school outside of a DC LEA, then the student must be provided with the following community service hour flexibilities:

- (1) Students who transfer during their senior year shall have the community service graduation requirement waived;
- (2) Students who transfer during their junior year or as rising seniors shall have to satisfactorily complete twenty-five (25) hours of community service;
- (3) Students who transfer during their sophomore year or as rising juniors shall have to satisfactorily complete fifty (50) hours of community service; and
- (4) Students who transfer during their freshman year shall have to satisfactorily complete seventy-five (75) hours of community service.

As applied for the 2022-23 school year:

Any student transferring into a District public or public charter school from a non-DCPS or DCPCS in the middle of the year shall have the requirement to complete 12 hours of community service to graduate waived.

Questions?

If you have questions related to this guidance, please contact Deputy Chief of Staff for Legislative Affairs and Policy Andrew Gall at Andrew.Gall@dc.gov.