

MSW Student Community Project

The proposal and completion of a community project is required in the first year (ScWk 230 & 231) AND second year (ScWk 232 & 233) of field education. From a social work perspective, the community project provides students with hands-on experience in identifying and addressing a social problem or issue, and in finding a solution or response.

Because it is part of field education, the community project is done in partnership with the agency where students are assigned for their internship. With field instructor (FI) and faculty field liaison (FFL) approval, second year students may complete their community project outside of their internship, such as independently within the community, partnering with another agency, or in cooperation with certain events and needs related to the School of Social Work.

Although each year the goals of the community project are the same, the level of complexity and expectations increase in the second. In the first year, the community project is part of the gradual exposure to the delivery of community social work services. In the second year, the community project is a continuation of this learning experience with added development in leadership skills, understanding of community social work practice, and demonstration of advanced practice intervention from a multi-systems perspective.

Both first year and second year students are expected to obtain feedback and evaluation from their FI and FFL, on their community project proposal and final paper. The community project proposal outlines the needs assessment and intervention process. There are similarities between first and second year proposals, however, the second year includes more thorough dissemination and sustainability plans.

Dissemination involves the distribution and sharing of information and is an essential part of the community projects. All students must include their plan for disseminating the information, e.g. circulating a brochure, reporting to stakeholders, or delivering a training. Second year students are required to implement their dissemination plan. Sustainability includes plans to maintain the intervention beyond the student's internship, such as a process to update materials or handbook to plan similar events in the future. Sustainability may be an essential part of all community projects; it is required of all second year students.

The basic components of the community project include the following:

I. Community Project Proposal (*see* attached proposal guidelines)

- Identification of the community need, problem, or social issue;
- Identification of the population(s) affected and concerned;
- Identification of an intervention and implementation plan, including how it will benefit the population, and a model or theory that serves as the basis for the intervention;
- Anticipated timeline, resources, and budget needed for the project;
- A brief description of your agency, its role in your community project, and your role as an intern in this project; and
- A community project proposal approval form signed by the FI and FFL.

II. Final Community Project Paper (Final paper guidelines forthcoming)

- Introduction and Description of your Community project:
- Model or Theory from which Intervention was Based
For example, explain how your project is based on a needs assessment, community or grassroots organizing strategy, social work theory, and other pertinent models and theories.
- Method and Procedures of Implementation
- Results and Outcomes of your Project
- Discussion and Recommendations for the Agency and the Social Work Profession
- Relevant documentation or materials pertaining to your project and intervention (e.g., pamphlets, journal, poster, brochure, guide, resource list etc.)

The following are examples of community practice assignments:

- Conduct a needs assessment regarding the clients and community served by your agency or regarding the agency staff.
- Conduct a program evaluation.
- Devise a strategy to increase the awareness of services, resources, and support offered by your agency
- Devise a strategy to promote professional development within an agency or professional organization. This may include the development of teamwork and interdisciplinary cooperation within the agency and/or among other related professionals and service providers, coordination of a conference, or participation in a social work or related professional organization.
- Design and implement effective strategies for staff development, in-service training, promotion of diversity and cultural competence, or improvement of service delivery.
- Advocate for particular at-risk individuals, groups, or communities affected by a particular social issue or problem. You could serve as the voice of an at-risk population or agency by assuming the role of a formal representative and by presenting oral or written information at meetings, hearings, or other official functions at which a forum for such advocacy exists.
- Participate in a political process (i.e., policy analysis, social action, PR campaign, or election involvement) related to the promotion of the welfare of at-risk individuals, groups, or communities affected by a particular international, national, state, or local policy, law, social issue, or problem.
- Act as an arbitrator or mediator to address a particular problem or resolve conflict affecting the quality and performance of the agency or the well-being of a community.
- Assist a committee, advisory board, or a board of directors in their functions related to the administration and management of the agency or organization
- Develop or participate in media projects documenting the problems or issues affecting the community, i.e., producing an audiovisual presentation, publishing a major article in the newspaper or professional journal, or writing a newsletter. Other areas of media involvement include participation in a radio or TV talk show or preparing a public service announcement for agency outreach.
- Plan and implement a strategy to increase resources or improve service delivery at the agency, i.e., recruitment and training of volunteers, writing and securing a funding grant or fellowship, procuring donations, etc.)
- Create opportunities for clients or those at-risk to access services, or attend available classes, workshops, or seminars addressing a particular need in their community.
- Create opportunities for clients or those in the community to participate in social action addressing a particular need, (i.e., voter registration, demonstration, town meeting, conference, vigil, or march).
- Organize neighborhood groups in relation to agency or community needs.
- Plan and organize programs and activities with clients to help the community access tangible financial, recreational, educational, and/or cultural resources.