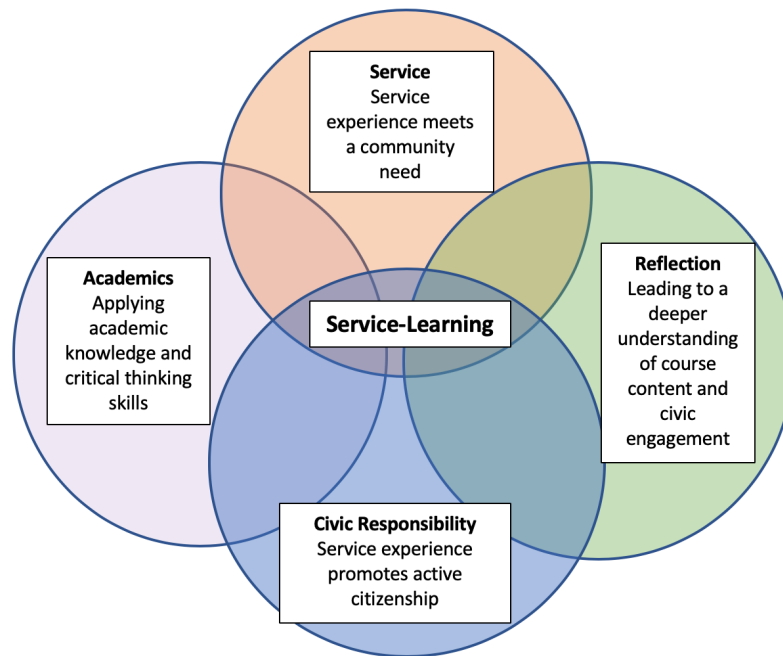


West Chester University
Center for Civic Engagement & Social Impact
www.wcupa.edu/impact



What is Community-Engaged Learning?

West Chester University and the Center for Civic Engagement & Social Impact defines academic community-engaged learning as a teaching method that combines community service with curricular goals as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Community-engaged learning differs from other forms of experiential education because it benefits both the service providers (i.e., students and faculty) and the recipients (i.e., community members).

Students benefit because community-engaged learning:

- Creates academic, professional, and personal opportunities
- Increases understanding of academic topics
- Provides hands-on experience
- Develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills

Faculty benefit because community-engaged learning:

- Encourages interactive teaching and reciprocal learning between students and faculty
- Adds new insights and dimensions to class discussions
- Provides opportunities to tap into expertise of community agencies as co-teachers

- Helps identify areas for research and publication related to current trends and issues
- Community partners benefit because through community-engaged learning partners:
- Gain access to university skill, knowledge, and resources
 - Have an opportunity to contribute to the educational process
 - Play a strong role in solving pressing local needs

West Chester University benefits because community-engaged learning:

- Enhances teaching, research, and outreach activities
- Enables faculty and staff to become active participants in the community
- Promotes positive community relationships and collaborations
- Equips university graduates to develop creative solutions to today's most pressing issues

Getting started: Creating a Community-Engaged Learning Course

The Center for Civic Engagement & Social Impact offers resources to assist faculty with the creation of community-engaged learning courses through:

- ❖ One-on-one consulting around implementing and designing community-engaged learning projects
- ❖ Assistance in identifying community partners interested in collaborating with students and faculty
- ❖ Workshops and professional development opportunities
- ❖ A community-engaged learning resource library of journals, books, articles, sample syllabi, practitioner guides, etc.
- ❖ **The Community-Engaged Learning Faculty Work Group**, comprised of faculty from a range of disciplines who promote community-engaged learning by engaging with new faculty who are interested in this teaching method. For Fall 2024, the faculty work group meetings are on *Zoom from 3-4pm on 9/18, 10/16, and 11/20*. Please contact Dr. Tina Chiarelli-Helminiak (CCHIARELLI@wcupa.edu) for the Zoom link.
- ❖ The CCESI Community-Engaged Learning Faculty Associate, who coordinates community-engaged learning efforts while educating faculty on the benefits of community-engaged learning. The 2024-2025 Faculty Associate is Dr. Tina Chiarelli-Helminiak (CCHIARELLI@wcupa.edu).
- ❖ Associate Director for Civic Engagement & Social Impact, Katie Clay, who is available to support faculty interested in the pedagogy of community-engaged learning (kclay@wcupa.edu).

- ❖ Participation in the Ram Corps Community Engagement Scholars program. Faculty apply to work with community engagement scholars who are paid to assist with support for new or ongoing community-engaged learning courses for 1 semester while the student community engagement scholars also participate in leadership training through CCEI.

WCU Resource Pantry

The Center for Civic Engagement and Social Impact houses the WCU Resource Pantry. Access to the pantry is free for all WCU students. The Resource Pantry is located on the ground floor of Commonwealth Hall.

Here is a statement you may consider adding to your course syllabus:

WCU Resource Pantry

West Chester University faculty and staff want to see all students succeed, and we know that financial needs can be a significant barrier to success. We are working to address economic and basic needs insecurity among our students in several ways. The WCU Resource Pantry is a key hub for these efforts. The WCU Pantry is located on the ground floor of Commonwealth Hall and is available for students to access shelf stable and fresh food, personal care items (soap, toothpaste, etc.), and school supplies. Staff at the pantry can help students with applying for local, state, and federal assistance programs. For more information on the pantry, please visit: www.wcupa.edu/pantry, email the pantry at pantry@wcupa.edu, or follow the pantry on Instagram [@wcupantry](https://www.instagram.com/wcupantry).