

# Service Guidelines

Community Service is one of the most recognizable aspects of the National Honor Society, and it is also one of the most rewarding experiences of membership in this organization. These guidelines are provided to help you choose service projects that will fulfill this obligation.

The minimum number of hours for each NHS member are as follows:

Returning Seniors-	32 hours
“New” Seniors -	24 hours
Juniors -	16 hours

According to the National Constitution, each chapter must plan and carry out at least one major service activity. Every member is required to participate in **at least one** chapter project. There are no exceptions to this requirement; please plan wisely. The hours spent on these chapter projects count towards your service hours requirement.

Our chapter will undertake multiple projects this year on behalf of our school community. You will also be invited to participate in projects that are hosted by other organizations that request volunteers. These projects will be reviewed before being posted to ensure that they meet the expectations of community service.

## Individual Service Activities

The following guidelines should be followed by any member who wishes to earn hours through **individual** activities.

**If you have any questions about whether an activity will count as community service, please ask *in advance*.**

- Community Service must fulfill a need within the community (school, city, etc.).
- Members should make an effort to vary the nature of their service. No single project can count for more than 25% of a member’s service requirement.
- Service **must not** involve compensation of any kind (monetary, school credit, etc.).
- Unpaid work (volunteering) at a business or institution that does not directly benefit the community, as determined by the adviser, will not count towards service.
- Activities that benefit family members, neighbors, or other individuals or small groups are not generally considered community service. Helping others is certainly a wonderful character trait, but it cannot be used to fulfill the service criterion of NHS.

Examples that do NOT count for service:

- Mowing the yard for a neighbor or watching children (even without pay)
- Helping a teacher to grade papers, file, etc.
- Tutoring outside of school.
- Tutoring other students can count for service as long as it was performed on campus and under the supervision of a teacher.
- Activities that occur during a school day (excused or unexcused absence) will not be considered as community service.
- Members who wish to organize and conduct an Individual Service Project may count their planning time.  
**All ISPs must have prior sponsor approval.**
- NHS members who are Diploma Candidates for International Baccalaureate may not count more than 50% of their CAS requirement as service for NHS. Not all CAS projects, however, qualify as community service. Please see the adviser before you participate in an activity to make sure it will be considered.

- Service that is done in conjunction with a member's involvement with another organization or activity (cheer, band, athletics, ROTC, etc.) must not be part of a required activity and must benefit a group outside the organization.

Example:

- FFA students do not get service hours for work at the barn/events that are required as part of their involvement in FFA.
- Cheerleaders do not get service hours for cheering at any school event (even off campus) or for their participation at clinics to benefit cheer.
- Officers in other organizations cannot count time spent on officer duties.
- Fundraising for another organization to which you belong is not considered service.
- Returning members may not earn more than 50% of their senior service hours in the summer.
- Members who have not met their service requirement will not be considered "in good standing". Juniors who are not in good standing will not be eligible to run for office; seniors will not receive recognition as members of NHS at graduation.

### Special note about faith-based activities

Participation in faith-based activities for many members is extremely important and meaningful, and much of this participation fulfills the expectations of "leadership" rather than community service.

As a reference, the Presidential Volunteer guidelines (2002) for service have been used to determine whether or not an activity will count towards fulfilling the service requirement:

**Activities that take place during the normal worship service are considered outside the guidelines. This means that ushering, participation in the choir, playing music, babysitting in the church nursery, or other activities that are practiced during worship hours are not counted.**

However, activities that are undertaken to help the community as an outreach sponsored by that organization (for example, volunteering at a nursing home with the choir) can count as community service, though these hours cannot exceed 25% of the required NHS hours for one project.

### Documenting Service Activities

- All service hours must be verified by an adult (non-relative) who is a supervisor of the activity. This should be someone who represents the organization that sponsors the service project.
- Documentation can be provided through a letter on official letterhead of the agency/organization that sponsors the activity. The following information must be included: the name of the NHS member, a description of the project and its intended beneficiaries, the date of the activity and the total hours served by the member. An original signature must be provided; photocopies will not be accepted.
- A "Service Verification Form" (available on the campus/sponsor's webpage) may also be used. The member will fill out his/her information before presenting it to the supervisor for verification. The supervisor, *not the member*, must fill out the date, times, and total hours of the project in ink; pencil will not be accepted. Only the supervisor is allowed to sign; under no circumstances is the member or any other person allowed to sign by proxy. Any corrections made to information require the supervisor's signature next to the correction.

All verification for service hours must be turned in no later than 30 days after the date of the event/project. All documentation for hours earned during the summer must be turned in by September 15<sup>th</sup>; all hours for the academic year are due by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Any exceptions require previous approval by the adviser.