

President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Q: Do applicants have to be grantees or sub-grantees of CNCS?

A: No. All accredited, degree-granting institutions of higher education in the U.S. are eligible to apply.

Q: Are for-profit/proprietary schools eligible to participate in the Honor Roll?

A: Yes, as long as they are degree-granting and accredited.

Q: Can a law school apply for this separate from the university as a whole?

A: No. The Honor Roll recognizes the whole institution. We encourage you to work with other parts of your institution that do community service.

Q: Can we submit individual volunteer information and receive recognition?

A: No. The Presidents Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll only recognizes accredited higher education institutions. No individuals are recognized.

Allowable Projects

Q: May institutions include in the application student projects that began prior to the academic year 2014-2015? How about those that were in planning but did not begin operations until after June 30, 2015?

A: All student service projects that were active at any time during the period July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 may be included. For projects that started earlier than the reporting period, please only report on service completed during the program year. Activities that were in planning during that period, but not operational until after June 30, 2015 should not be included in this year's Honor Roll application.

Q: May institutions that applied in the past using an on-going/long-term project as an example, use the same project again as an example in the 2016 application?

A: Yes, as long as the project description details how the project has changed during the current program year.

Q: If an institution collaborated with other institutions of higher education on a community service project, should we include our participation in that project as part of our application?

A: Yes. Each institution should include its students' contributions to such a collaborative community service project both in the service statistics and in the project description

sections of the application. However, please include only data about/descriptions of your student's contributions.

Q: Are service projects that benefit communities located in foreign countries qualified for inclusion in the Honor Roll application?

A: Yes, as long as the higher education institution itself is located in the U.S.

Q: Do summer bridge programs for incoming freshmen to our institution count as Education?

A: Yes, but the project that is reported needs to be community service.

Q: In my review of past finalists and awardees, I see plenty of references to community service / community-based research integrated into the academic curriculum - is this a requirement to move up into the award level?

A: No.

Q: Do the projects all have to involve students? We have a number of Engagement programs that successfully deal with many of the criteria by direct community connections. We also have a very strong Extension program, but it does not necessarily include students.

A: No, the projects do not have to necessarily have to involve students. You can count the projects suggested in the question.

Q: What are considered measurable outcomes?

A: Measureable outcomes are those measures that quantify the intended outcome of a project. If you are doing a literacy project, the number of students that increased their literacy skills by a certain percentage would be considered a measureable outcome. This is different than outputs, which are things like the number of participants, the number of hours served, the number of books read, pounds of trash collected, etc. Though these numbers are indicators of the outcome, they do not show the outcome.

Reporting Students Hours

Q: May internship and service hours, required as part of academic courses and programs, be included in the reporting of student community service hours and projects?

A: Yes. However, only hours spent in community service projects (not classroom hours) may be included.

Q: May we include service activities of graduate and professional students in the Honor Roll application?

A: Yes.

Q: May health care related clinicals, psychology and counseling practica and student teaching/practica hours be included in the total hour count for the university?

A: Yes they can be included, but the work must be community service and not classroom work. If these students are out in the community doing service while also learning, these can be used in your application.

Q: We participate in a number of community service activities, and several of our students are also involved in community projects through their areas of study. Can these latter projects be included in the application?

A: Yes they can be included.

Q: I have a student worker that assists me in community related activities, would her time served also count?

A: Yes as long as she is not getting paid.

Q: Does a full time person who works a 9 or 10 month contract count as yes?

A: Yes, so long as they are full-time during that timeframe.

Q: As in the past, we will need to submit numbers and documentation of service that occurred during the 2014-15 academic year?

A: Yes.

Q: May we count hours for those who were student teaching or doing nursing clinicals?

A: Yes.

Q: Since reflection and using part of the experience towards the curriculum are components of service-learning, would that time count for hours of service?

A: Yes.

Q: Could the service that our college is providing this year (as of right now) be documented and on the application for next year?

A: Yes for the 2017 Honor Roll.

Q: If you have a group of 5 that each volunteer 10 hours, do you count this as 50 hours or 10?

A: 50 Hours.

Q: We do not have a full-time director of community service/service-learning, but we have two half time coordinators and student staff. Will this preclude us from applying for recognition beyond the basic community service category?

A: You may apply so long as the sum of the hours worked by the individual half-time coordinators and student staff equal a full-time position.

Q: Can you speak to international service vs. domestic service?

A: Service that is conducted outside of the United States can be counted on an application so long as the service is tied to the institution like alternative spring breaks, service conducted by students/faculty who study at the campus of U.S. institution located in another country.

Q: If you are a distance learning institution and most of the community service is done by staff and faculty in your categories can you apply?

A: Yes, though your institution should work to engage students too.

Q: Can we count institutionally-created and supported alumni service learning events?

A: Yes.

Federal Work Study

Q: Could we count the FWS Community Service hours that are paid (e.g., campus service in our libraries, campus safety, child care) where service may be to both campus and community?

A: Only the FWS that is done off campus can be considered.

Application / Technical Issues

Q: May a state-wide or other multi-campus university system apply on behalf of all of its associated campuses/institutions?

A: No, the Honor Roll program is designed to highlight community service support by individual college or university campuses. The individual institutions must apply separately.

Q: Must the student service projects and numbers included in the application involve only volunteer, not paid community service?

A: No. Federal Work-Study, pre-professional internships and other forms of paid community service activities should be included as long as they meet the definition of community service and took place during the eligible academic year.

Q: What should I do if I don't have exact data to answer a particular question?

A: Estimates are acceptable if exact data are not available; but please make your best effort to estimate accurately.

Q: Is there an option for me to save progress on my application so that I may quit the screen and return to the same place on the application at a later time or different location?

A: Your application is saved to the system automatically as you advance through the application. You may also save at any time by clicking on the "Save" button at the bottom of every page.

Q: Once I hit the "Submit" button, may I go back in and change/improve our institution's application?

A: No. You can only make changes to your application BEFORE you hit "Submit." Once you have submitted the application you may not re-open it. Thus, please be very careful to ensure that all questions are answered completely BEFORE submitting the application.

Q: How will I know whether our application has been received?

A: You will receive a confirmation email within one hour of submitting your application. If you do not receive a confirmation email within 24 hours, please send an email to: HonorRoll@cns.gov.

Q: If our Institutional Commitment to Service has not changed since last year, does our statement need to be revised (other than populating it with 2014-15 data)?

A: Yes you need to provide the information again.

Q: My university applied several years ago, and has not reapplied since. Is it possible to review our 2010 application - I do not have it?

A: You might be able to access your application if you have the username and password from the last time you applied. In general, applications from a previous year are not saved in the online system.

Awards / Benefits

Q: What are the benefits of Honor Roll membership and Presidential Awards?

A: Honor Roll members will be listed on CNCS's website, as well as being eligible for other media and publicity opportunities. In addition to being listed on the Honor Roll, Presidential Award winners will be presented with Presidential Award trophies and certificates signed by the President of the United States. As service programs and initiatives grow, colleges and universities are reaping the benefits of service --- attracting high quality faculty and students, enriching learning, and building stronger alumni and community ties.

Q: Is there a financial benefit?

A: No, the benefits to those higher education institutions who are recognized by the Presidents Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll are set forth in the previous Q&A.

Q: Are students, faculty, college staff, or community service directors being recognized by the Honor Roll program?

A: Honor Roll membership and Presidential Awards are designed to recognize higher education institutions as a whole. There are no explicit awards for students, college/university staff, or other individuals. However, the institutional awards indirectly reward, and are a positive reflection upon, all individuals, offices, and agencies involved.

Q: Once you have received the Presidential award, are you eligible for that award in future years?

A: Yes.

Q: How many institutions generally apply for the Honor Roll, and of those that apply for the Honor roll, what percentage typically gain recognition at the Honor Roll level?

A: Typically, we receive about 800-1,000 applications. Approximately 90% of applicants make it on to the Honor Roll.

Q: If an institution applies for Honor Roll status with distinction but doesn't make the final list, will they automatically be considered for the regular Honor Roll?

A: Yes.

Categories

Q: How do I get more information about each of the four categories?

A: Please click on the resources tab in the left navigation section of the application website.

Q: Regarding the four categories: Do institutions apply for recognition in all four categories, or do they apply for any one or combination that best represent them?

A: Your institution can apply for all of the categories or any combination.

Q: How many projects can you submit in each category?

A: You must submit three projects in each category you apply to.

Q: Does it weaken an application if it doesn't include information about interfaith projects?

A: No. You can apply in one of the four categories or all four.

Q: Do you award separately in each of the categories? Can you get awarded distinction or the presidential award if you do not apply for all of the sections?

A: Yes it is possible to receive the Presidential recognition by applying for only one category.

Q: Could the VITA program be highlighted under Economic Opportunity?

A: Yes.

Interfaith Community Service

Q: Although the Honor Roll application lists Interfaith Service as a separate recognition category, the instructions for each of the other categories require us to include Interfaith Service information. Is that information required?

A: No. Providing that information is not required.

Q: Can you define the parameters of 'interfaith community service'? Does the service provided specifically need to be religious?

A: The service that is provided should be community service in the sense that it meets a need in the community. Interfaith community service shares the same definition for community service as is used for all categories in the Honor Roll. What makes community service interfaith is that there is an intentional component of interfaith engagement. It is possible for the service itself to include interfaith engagement. For example, a group of students might work with immigrant families that are Buddhist. However, in most cases the interfaith engagement will be the result of intentional engagement that is either part of a program at the institution of higher education, involves sharing or reflection during a community service project, or includes interfaith engagement or reflection following a community service project. The interfaith engagement may also be the result of partnering with a community organization that is interfaith.

Q: How would you convince university administration on a secular campus that we need to participate in interfaith service when they have concerns about doing anything within the framework of faith?

A: More than 40% of the participating institutions in the Presidents Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge during the first two years were public colleges or universities. Many of the remaining schools were private secular institutions. Yet, some administrators have legitimate concerns about activities within the framework of faith. Private colleges and universities may promote a particular faith tradition. However, the Presidents Challenge and Honor Roll are not intended to promote one faith tradition over another. Rather they encourage the development of commitment to community service. In addition, the interfaith category promotes the development of commitment to and skills of working across faith and cultural lines. This is only possible in an environment where there is equal respect for all faith and non-faith traditions. So, it is important to help reluctant administrators understand that the interfaith community service category of the Presidents Honor Roll is not about promoting one faith position over another. It is about providing students with a set of experiences and skills to successfully participate in a multi-cultural America.

Q: Would providing services to the homeless in the context of practicum training at a faith-based organization qualify for the Interfaith category?

A: Practicum training related to homelessness certainly qualifies as community service. What would make this activity and any community service qualify as interfaith

community service is the inclusion of a clear interfaith engagement component. For example, if the faith-based organization is of a different faith tradition than most of the students then the engagement might include having the organization discuss to the student the connection between their faith and the work they do with the homeless. Even if the majority of students share the same tradition as the organization, interfaith engagement might include a time of reflection on why serving the homeless is a value that connects with an individual's faith or non-faith traditions. As with all community service activities this activity would qualify as interfaith community service if there is a broad connect before, during or after to intentional interfaith engagement.

Q: Especially with religious aspects -- service such as coordinating a worship service... does that count as service?

A: No. The service must be community service as defined by all the categories of the Honor Roll.

Q: Would a team of Catholics and Protestants be considered interfaith or would you need additional secular and other religious groups in the mix? How particular will this be?

A: Yes, a team of Catholics and Protestants working together is interfaith as long as there are opportunities for them to learn from each other, either formally or informally, about their faith traditions.

Q: Interfaith Challenge - Do participating institutions have to pay all expenses, including travel to any training or conferences?

A: The Interfaith Challenge does not charge registration fees for any training or conferences, however the participating institution is responsible for all travel and other expenses.

Q: Does on campus educational interfaith study contribute to making a stronger application for the interfaith community service category of the Honor Roll?

A: Yes, as long as the study is part of a larger program of helping students understand differences and apply what they learn to their participation in community service.

Q: If you don't already do Interfaith Community Service but you are planning to, can you still participate in the Challenge in the future?

A: Yes, by signing up for the Presidents Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge you become part of a community of learning that will greatly benefit you as you plan and develop programs in interfaith community service. The sign-up form is available at www.ed.gov/EdPartners.

Q: If you have a diversity committee on campus does that tie into interfaith award?

A: Yes, if recognition of different faith and non-faith traditions are part of the work of the diversity committee.

Resources / Webinars

Q: Can we see samples of winning applications?

A: Yes. You can view past Honor Roll recipients from 2008-2014 by visiting: www.NationalService.gov/HonorRoll