

Fostering Public Service by Linking Benefits to Community, Campus, and Students: A Case Study

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Experiential education can take many forms and is now common throughout undergraduate and graduate curricula; in part, because of the presumed public benefits of connecting an educational curriculum to community problem solving (Kuh, 2008).

Given the joint involvement of university and community institutions in experiential education and the diverse motivations for encouraging student community involvement, this academic practice can be viewed through three lenses: (1) for the student as a form of student learning, (2) for the campus as a public policy instrument to promote civic engagement, and (3) for the community as a service delivery tool for community organizations (Littlepage, Gazley, & Bennett, 2012). Most of the research about student service learning has focused on the first two aspects (Bailis & Ganger, 2006; Imperial, Perry, & Katula, 2007; Jones, 2003).

This poster will examine all three sides of the relationship through the lens of a service learning class called *Do the Homeless Count*. Since 2007, the Indiana University Public Policy Institute, part of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs, has partnered with the Coalition on Homeless Intervention and Prevention (CHIP) to conduct the point-in-time count of the homeless population (referred to hereinafter as “the count”) in Indianapolis, Indiana. The length and nature of this relationship has fostered benefits for the community through providing trend data and analysis to policymakers, raising awareness of the issue of homelessness and homeless serving agencies among the students, and providing volunteers for agencies.