

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q In the face of budget cuts, what capacity will we have to implement these practices?**
- A** The service-learning office on each campus should make its best effort to implement as much of the best practices as is feasible during the current budget situation. Each campus should determine what is feasible now, and what can be implemented over time.
- Q Who is going to implement the Service-Learning Risk Management Best Practices? Is there someone specifically identified?**
- A** Each campus will need to decide who is responsible for implementing the risk management best practices. There is not one specific person on each campus that has been given this responsibility. Campuses have the flexibility to make the process work best in the context of their campuses.
- Q How is the Service-Learning Agreement (SLA) negotiated?**
- A** The SLA is officially negotiated by the campus contracts and procurement office. In some cases, this office will delegate authority to a service-learning professional who knows what pieces of the SLA are negotiable and which are not. The contracts and procurement office deals with these types of contracts every day, and will likely take the lead in negotiations. Have a conversation with your contracts officer about the process.
- Q How can you find out what is already in place for risk management on your campus?**
- A** The easiest way to find out what types of risk management procedures are already in place on your campus is to contact the risk management office.
- Q Will managing risk in service learning become self-sufficient?**
- A** We hope that over time the risk management best practices will become so much a part of the work that you do when building partnerships with community agencies that it will be seen as a natural part of the process.
- Q What is absolutely required from the best practices manual?**
- A** As a result of Executive Order 849, it is required that a Service-Learning Agreement be signed by the university and the community-based organization. When the university has agreed to cover students as CSU Volunteers, thus providing the students with workers' compensation coverage, the students **must** also sign in at their service site using some type of form similar to the "Community-Based Organization Sign-In Sheet."

The other best practices in the manual are offered as a way to begin working on reducing the amount of risk exposure of the students, the university, the faculty member and the community-based organization, and should be implemented as soon as it is feasible to do so on each campus.

- Q What is just recommended for implementation from the best practices manual?**
- A** All the forms and discussion in the best practices manual are offered as recommendations that will help each campus' service-learning program operate in a risk-reduced environment. The recommendations can be used alone or in combination when beginning this process.
- Q How long do documents need to be stored? In what format?**
- A** Ask your risk manager to be sure of your campus' policies about keeping records. Generally, keep emergency contact forms signed by students, only for the term of service. Other forms may have to be kept for up to 5 years in order to cover the statute of limitations.
- Q How should a service-learning office present this to faculty so it isn't overwhelming?**
- A** Each campus can determine the best way to present this information to service-learning faculty members. The learning plan and service logs can be presented and used as much as teaching tools and pedagogical material, as they are risk management tools.
- Q Can the Service-Learning Agreement (SLA) go beyond just a semester/quarter?**
- A** The SLA can go beyond a semester or quarter. It is a good idea to create a SLA for a period of two to three years, especially with community-based organizations with which the campus consistently partners. Your contracts office will be able to recommend a reasonable length for your agreement terms.
- Q What if more than one professor wants to work with same community-based organization? Can we use only one Service-Learning Agreement (SLA)?**
- A** It is ideal to work with only one SLA per community-based organization. When multiple faculty members or courses work with one organization, the SLA can be drafted in a more general way, and then different scopes of work for each course can be attached.
- Q What are the most overlooked risk issues that we should alert students to?**
- A** The most important thing to remember when preparing students to work in the community is to ensure that the student and the community-based organization are both aware of the type and scope of work that the student should be participating in. This can also mean making the student aware of what he/she should NOT be doing while at her service site or working with the service recipients. The Learning Plan can spell out the scope of work for the student in a clear and easily understood way.
- Q How can we ensure that the Service-Learning Agreement (SLA) does not hold up placements?**
- A** When working with a large organization, or one with a lot of "red tape," it is best to start as far ahead of the placement as possible. It may be possible with smaller organizations to have the SLA agreed upon quickly and easily without ever

holding up a placement, but the best practice is to have SLA's in place with all the site placements prior to the start of that semester or quarter.

**Q Is there a gradual phase-in of these processes?**

**A** Do as much of the process as is feasible on your campus. It may be easiest to begin service-learning agreements with new partnerships first, and then determine a phase-in process for existing partnerships. The best practices do not all have to be implemented immediately, however we hope that in the future these practices will become a normal part of the service-learning process at your campus.

**Q How do we involve the contracts office without overwhelming them?**

**A** Begin to build a working relationship with your contracts office so that a plan for implementing these best practices runs most effectively. Discuss the ways that your offices can work together so that neither one is overwhelmed in the process.

**Q How much of this can be done over the computer/electronically?**

**A** This largely depends on the level of communication you feel comfortable having with your community partners via electronic means. The Checklist for Community-Based Organization Visit can be answered via e-mail for the sections that don't require an in-person site visit. However, an in-person site visit is highly recommended before any student is placed at the site. Other forms can certainly be exchanged electronically as well to streamline the process.

**Q How can the university support community-based organizations in the contracting process given their limited resources?**

**A** The university wrote the Service-Learning Agreement (SLA), but it does include a cross-indemnification clause, which gives equal weight to the negligence of both parties. This was done to continue the CSU's efforts to foster reciprocal partnerships. The first two pages of the SLA should not be hard for any community-based organization to agree to because the details will have already been discussed with them.

**Q How are sexual harassment policies addressed in the best practices?**

**A** Sexual harassment policies will be addressed in the same manner now as they always have been by your campus.

**Q To what degree do we have to comply with fingerprinting and background checks? What are the affordable options?**

**A** We must comply to the same degree that the community-based organization (cbo) must comply with the legal requirements for fingerprinting and background checks. Any CBO you work with should be aware of their legal obligations. The California Department of Justice website offers lower cost alternatives for non-profit organization that must fingerprint their volunteers.