



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

FAQ for Community Partners *How we work with community partners, faculty and students to facilitate and support civic engagement projects*

Q. What kinds of partnerships and projects does the Office of Civic Engagement support?

The Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships facilitates partnerships that bring students, faculty, and external partners together to collaborate on real-world projects that address some of our communities most pressing challenges. Community partners, faculty, and students identify a need or a problem and work collaboratively to design a creative solution to a community need. Some projects are integrated into coursework by faculty where others are designed and led by students and student organizations. Students also pursue independent research projects in partnership with community organizations. Projects between Colby and community partners vary based on the needs of the community partner. One-day direct service events, such as the South End Clean-Up and the Cantastic United Way Food Drive, mobilize Colby student volunteers to accomplish a service task in the community. Additionally, many Colby students serve in long term volunteer positions at local organizations including the Waterville Public Library and the Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter.

Q. Who do I contact if I want to partner with the college?

The Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships wants to hear from you! Our office created an [intake form](#) for community partners to share information about their organization and partnership ideas. We ask that all community organizations use this form as a centralized resource to communicate with our office. This helps us to determine your needs and identify the next best steps to explore a partnership. For further questions, please don't hesitate to email our Program and Outreach Coordinator, Kristin Bishop, at kristin.bishop@colby.edu or call 207-859-4155.

Q. What does the planning process look like after a request has been submitted to the Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships?

After completing the online intake form, individuals or organizations meet with the Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships staff to discuss the initial idea, the mission of the organization, and the community need or problem the organization wants to address through a civic engagement partnership project. Our office will connect a community partner with individuals best suited to serve the community need.

- **For projects that encompass an academic or curricular component**, our office presents project ideas to Colby faculty and connects faculty expertise to the community need. Civic Engagement staff facilitate introductions and initial communication between interested faculty members and community partners. Faculty and community partners schedule a meeting for further idea development and planning. The Office of Civic Engagement continues to provide support and feedback for faculty and community partners and brokers questions or concerns throughout the duration of the project.
- **For projects that request student leadership**, the Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships will connect the community organization to the appropriate Colby student organization to explore opportunities. If a service project is identified, our office will facilitate and support community partners and Colby students in developing and realizing the initiative.

Q. When can I expect a project to begin and end?

The length of a project depends on a number of factors, such as the nature of the project and how many students are involved. Typically, civic engagement projects that encompass a curricular component are designed and planned at least one semester in advance and take place within an academic term. The scale of the project is determined by the faculty member and community partner and scheduled to accommodate the syllabus and learning outcomes for the course. The faculty member and community partner define clear outcomes and deadlines for deliverables and/or final projects. Episodic service opportunities are scheduled to accommodate the needs of the community partner and the student volunteer academic schedules.

Q. What happens at the end of the academic term or project?

The Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships works with faculty, students and community partners to document the project and share it with the community. This can take the form of student presentations, community gatherings, or web-based storytelling. At the end of each semester, civic engagement staff also meet with the community partners and faculty to assess the partnership and project outcomes and determine the potential for future collaboration, upcoming opportunities, and the sustainability of partnerships.