Service and Citizenship Programming Guide

This document provides an opportunity for reflection for College Panhellenics, creates a framework around service, citizenship and philanthropy and provides ideas for community building and best practices for programming.

As one of the Advocacy Building Blocks for the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), service to others and citizenship is one of our guiding principles. Through this building block, our goal is to instill the understanding and value that good citizenship is important for caring for others, respecting the law and improving community. We also believe that volunteering teaches women of all ages compassion and understanding. Ultimately, an appreciation for citizenship and service helps one advocate for causes for which one is personally passionate.

When establishing a service and citizenship framework for your Panhellenic community, one must first understand the different approaches to giving. While they are often used interchangeably, service, philanthropy and citizenship have different methods and goals.

Let's examine their definitions:

Service (noun): the action of helping or doing work for someone.

Philanthropy (noun): the desire to promote the welfare of others, expressed especially by the generous donation of money to good causes.

Citizenship (noun): a membership in a community (such as a college/university).

While service, philanthropy and citizenship are three different concepts, they all work in tandem to create a giving community. Your College Panhellenic's efforts should not be isolated to a one concept. While service and philanthropy focus on giving to others, citizenship is about your membership in the community and being a good neighbor. It is important to give back to others through service, and engage in the community surrounding your college/university.

As you consider a community framework and community needs on the next few pages, think about what being a good neighbor means and what involvement in your college/university community might look like. Do your chapters engage with community members outside of formal university events? If your chapters have houses, are they engaged with their neighbors? These are a few questions for consideration as you think about what meaningful service and citizenship could look like in your community.

Creating a Community Framework

The first step to take as a College Panhellenic is to create a community framework around service, citizenship and philanthropy. This is something that should be closely tied to the values of your Panhellenic community and serve as a guidepost for decision making about service and citizenship opportunities. This reflection is best completed in a group to build consensus and bounce ideas off of one another. Try completing this exercise with delegates at a College Panhellenic Council meeting!

Ask these questions to begin:

1. What are the values of our Panhellenic community?

2. What are the strengths and skills within our Panhellenic community? (Think about common threads across your Panhellenic members: Are there a number of education majors who can provide tutoring services to students in the area, are there political science majors who are familiar with organizing and can create bipartisan efforts to increase voter turnout?)

3. What are ways in which we want to serve?

Before moving on, make sure to establish a consensus around the values of your community and the ways in which you want to serve. These will become key parts of your community framework. Now that you have identified your values, strengths and ways in which you want to serve, you will want to craft this framework into a statement.

For example, if you identified your values as good scholarship, inclusivity and service to others and noted that your Panhellenic community wanted to provide meaningful and relationship-driven service, your framework might look like:

Panhellenic University College Panhellenic Council is dedicated to inclusivity and service to others. We believe that engaging in meaningful and relationship-driven service to our community enriches not only the community around us but also our own college experience.

This is one example of what a community framework could look like for your Panhellenic. This framework is important as it is what you should compare future opportunities for service, citizenship and philanthropy against.

Community Needs Assessment

As your College Panhellenic plans its service activities for the term, assess what needs the community has in order to create meaningful change. The perceived needs of the community may be different than the actual needs of the community. Below is a reflective exercise that will allow your College Panhellenic to focus on actual needs of the community surrounding the college/university and not perceived needs.

Now that you have created a community framework as a College Panhellenic, you will want to assess the needs of the surrounding community to make sure you are providing aid where needed most. The first step you will take in this process is to identify campus and community partners who are knowledgeable of community needs. These partners might be an on-campus Community Service office, the local Boys and Girls Club or other university/community partners.

Brainstorm here who those partners might be for your campus:

Some questions to ask campus/community partners might be:

- How can the Panhellenic community be more involved with service projects in our community?
- Are there any meaningful and long-term opportunities that we could engage in?
- Are there resources we can use for reflection after completing service activities?
- How can we be better neighbors as temporary residents of this community?

After you've consulted with campus/community partners, identify community needs or programs that benefit the community surrounding your college/university here:

What are the key components of your community framework as a College Panhellenic?

Taking the last two questions into account, how do the two compare to each other? Is there overlap between community needs and the identified community framework?

If there was overlap between the community framework and identified community needs, great! It sounds like you've found an opportunity to give back to your community in a meaningful way. If not, reflect on what you learned through this exercise and ask the members of your College Panhellenic community what other opportunities they would like to engage in. You may even need to repeat this exercise again based on new information. Gaining buy-in from members in your Panhellenic community is a crucial step to building a service framework for your community.

Now that you've identified some opportunities for your Panhellenic community that identify filling a community need, you should be able to move forward with planning and executing service opportunities for your Panhellenic.

Best Practices

As you plan your service/citizenship events, keep these best practices in mind:

- NPC recommends avoiding "philanthropy weeks" or Greek Weeks to avoid over programming and burnout. Try to spread events out over a term or longer period of time if your community is committed to this style.
- Create a subcommittee/position within your College Panhellenic Executive Board that is focused on planning and coordinating service and citizenship opportunities.
- Try meshing groups together to form teams that are mixed between chapters if engaging in a competition format. This way, competition between chapters will not be the focus of engaging in service.
- Make sure to expand collaborations with other fraternity/sorority councils. Try collaborating with IFC, MGC, NALFO, NAPA and NPHC leaders on your campus to create true community-wide service projects.
- Set appropriate expectations as a Panhellenic for involvement in service.

Additional Resources for Service, Philanthropy and Citizenship Planning

[AmeriCorps Volunteering in America Resources](#)

[Rock the Vote](#)

[Vote.org](#)

[Volunteer Match](#)

[Questions for Reflecting on Service – Indiana University](#)