HOW TO CONTACT COMMUNITY PARTNERS

using the Service Listings

www.binghamton.edu/cce/ccedatabase

Using the Service Listings

The Service Listings database is an online tool that provides students with information about current community-based opportunities in which they can get involved. Students can select to search by project category (Internship, Research, Service, or Group Project) or by any of the 25 different fields of work, including education, health, politics and government, environmental issues and more. Search results will provide an in-depth description of the project along with a contact form to reach community organizations.

Tips for using the Service Listings

1. Don't be afraid to keep your search broad. Sometimes the best opportunities to get involved are outside of your comfort zone. Trying something new might be a great way for you to expand your interests. Plus, you'll be helping others, so it's a win-win!

2. Contact more than one organization. Don't bank on just one opportunity. Try contacting at least 2-3 organizations to increase your likelihood of a response. Community organizations are generally responsive and excited to have students involved.

3. Follow-up by phone if you haven't received a response. If you don't hear back within a week, follow up with a telephone call. Nonprofits are often juggling several things at once and emails can easily get lost in the shuffle.

"Do"s and "don't"s

When contacting a community partner:

DO:

- ✔ Use a polite greeting such as: "Hello," or "Dear,"
- ✔ Address individuals in a formal manner, using Dr., Mr. or Ms. when appropriate. When in doubt use the contact person's first & last name or their title.
- ✔ Be clear and concise. Your email should be short and to the point, with a clear message stating why you are contacting them.
- ✔ Include your name or a signature with contact information.

DON'T:

× Use an ambiguous subject line.

× Forget to spell and grammar check your message.

× Use abbreviations, symbols or slang.

Following up

Occasionally an organization may not respond to the first email you send. These are two ways you can follow up appropriately

1. Call the organization. A personal connection over the phone can be much more effective than an email. Consult the organization's website for their hours of operation and call during those times for the best chance of making a connection. If no one is available to take your call, be sure to leave a polite and clear message that provides your name, purpose of your call and contact information.

2. Go visit in person. Speaking with someone face-to-face during business hours will help you get a better feel for the organization and demonstrates your dedication to volunteering there. Dress business casual, bring along a resume, and ask to speak with someone who coordinates volunteers.