

**Simmons** UNIVERSITY

The London Center for Community  
Engagement and Social Justice

# BONNER COMMUNITY PARTNER HANDBOOK

2024 - 2025 Edition



**ACCESS TO EDUCATION  
OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE**

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# BONNER PROGRAM HISTORY

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## WHAT IS THE BONNER FOUNDATION?

Started by Corella and Bertram F. Bonner, the original purpose of the Foundation was to help those who, like Mr. and Mrs. Bonner, came from underprivileged backgrounds. The Foundation aimed to provide access to education. In 1989, the Foundation began working with colleges and universities, seeking a way both to provide scholarships to students who could not otherwise afford to attend college and to catalyze students and institutions of higher education to participate in community service in their own communities.

What started with a small number of endowments at schools along the Appalachian Trail has now grown to a national movement of roughly 3,000 students at over 80 schools working to improve their communities through service, community-based learning, and an understanding of what it truly means to be an engaged citizen. The vision of the Bonner Program is to partner with campuses in order to catalyze campus-wide engagement in community service, build a culture and infrastructure for sustained campus-community partnerships, and to promote students' leadership and growth through civic engagement.



Our work is founded around six Common Commitments, including civic engagement, community building, diversity, international perspective, spiritual exploration, and social justice. Our vision is to see the service-based scholarship model advanced throughout higher education, so that service is recognized as a truly important component of education.



# BONNER PROGRAM VALUES & BELIEFS

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*"Access to education, opportunity to serve"*



The Bonner Foundation...

- Is committed to working with all people and institutions regardless of age, race, belief, or nationality.
- Believes that colleges and institutions have vital societal roles to play by nurturing and mobilizing thoughtful, caring, and diverse leadership dedicated to the public good.
- Recognizes that often the best way to help someone is to give them the opportunity to help themselves, and that the people best able to address the problem are the people whom it most directly affects.
- Recognizes that effective community service programs involve all stakeholders in their leadership.
- Recognizes that long-lasting partnerships are based on mutual respect and common commitments
- Supports innovative programs which have the potential to serve as models for other higher education institutions.

# NATIONAL BONNER NETWORK

The Bonner Foundation's Network is made up of 75+ participating colleges and universities, local and national non-profit organizations, and a thriving Alumni network. Collectively, we work towards transforming students, communities, and campuses through service.



# STUDENT TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

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The “5 E’s” (pictured below) are a framework for students’ ongoing growth as they develop, apply, and integrate service passions, career interests, leadership skills, and academic pursuits. Students move through stages of increasing responsibility, skill, and knowledge development that are put into practice through service.

## FOUR YEAR DEVELOPMENTAL PATH



## THE "FIVE E'S"

**EXPECTATION** : Students apply and prepare for participation in the program.

**EXPLORATION**: First-year students are involved in a variety of service sites and activities including short-term service trips.

**EXPERIENCE**: Second-year students are encouraged to focus on a particular issue within a single organization that enables them as Bonner Leaders to fully experience the operations and mission of a particular agency and to develop a better understanding of community issues. This approach also offers agencies consistent and reliable support to help run and manage their programs.

**EXAMPLE**: By the third year, Bonner students are expected to take on expanded roles and responsibilities both on campus and in their communities. For many, this initiative translates into leadership positions with a service organization and/or a community agency.

**EXPERTISE**: The Bonner Program works to identify interests and skills on the part of students and match them with community opportunities and needs. Students who have been involved in the Bonner Program are encouraged to integrate their academic pursuits and career interests with their service activities. As a result, sociology majors become involved in research projects, English majors write annual reports, and communications majors assist with agencies' public relations.

## BONNER PROGRAM COMMON COMMITMENTS

The Bonner Common Commitments represent the collective beliefs about the types of values and personal commitments that students in particular, but also others connected in the program encounter and explore. Each Bonner Program engages in different activities to explore these commitments, including discussions, reflections, and film screenings.

### Civic Engagement



Explore and participate in multiple forms of engagement including service, political engagement, social action, and public policy.

### Wellness



Employ positive strategies such as mindfulness, exercise, being in nature etc., to manage stress and support others in practicing the same.

### Community Building



Create and sustain a vibrant community of place, personal relationships, and shared interests.

### International Perspective



Develop an understanding of other cultures and countries to participate successfully in a global world.

### Diversity



Respect the different dimensions of personal and group identities (such as class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, physical and mental ability).

### Social Justice



Understand and support fairness, impartiality, and equity when addressing systemic social and environmental issues.

### Spiritual Exploration



Consider different ways of understanding the meaning and purpose in life. Explore how our search for a calling can help us discover our purpose.



## BONNER PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Over the past decade, the Bonner Foundation and colleges and universities in the Bonner network have begun to formalize a set of learning outcomes connected to the co-curricular, curricular, and integrative experiences associated with its four-year civic engagement program.

**The goal is that when students graduate from the Bonner program, they demonstrate the following post-graduate learning outcomes:**



### **Civic Agency**

Acts as an agent of change, working collaboratively with the community to positively impact a social issue or for the public good.



### **Integrative Learning**

Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom to deepen understanding of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.



### **Civic Identity**

Provides evidence of civic engagement activities and describes what they learn about themselves and their commitment to public action in the process.



### **Leadership**

Demonstrates initiative in *multiple and complex civic engagement activities* and applies reflective insights about the aims and accomplishments made.



### **Communication**

Effectively communicates with others to express themselves and actively listens to others.



### **Place-based Knowledge**

Applies knowledge and skills to implement workable solutions in a local or a global setting through community engagement



### **Critical Thinking**

Evaluates and applies diverse perspectives to complex subjects within natural and human systems in the face of even conflicting positions



### **Social Justice**

Collaborates with relevant stakeholders to analyze and take constructive actions to effectively address injustices.



### **Diversity**

Demonstrates adjustment of own attitudes and beliefs because of working within and learning from diversity of global communities and cultures.



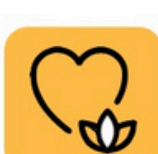
### **Team Work**

Completes assigned tasks by deadline, maintains positive attitude about the team, the work accomplished is thorough, and helps other team members with their tasks.



### **Empathy**

Reflects on an experience from multiple perspectives and draws connections between self and the feelings, perspectives, or life experiences of *different* others.



### **Wellness**

Advocates for their own and other's needs and locates resources to meet those needs. Employs positive strategies to manage stress and supports others' resilience.



# THE LONDON CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL JUSTICE

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The Stephen D. London Center for Community Engagement and Social Justice facilitates and promotes community-based learning and develops strategic partnerships to advance learning, promote civic engagement, and enhance community leadership in order to create a more just society.

Through reciprocal partnerships with community-based organizations, the London Center aims to:

1. Promote and support community engagement and pedagogically sound community-based learning, grounded in inclusive and equitable practices.
2. Develop reflective and socially responsible leaders with a readiness for civic action rooted in the value of social justice.
3. Through strategic partnerships:
  - a. support organizations that advance women's and girls' leadership and success.
  - b. support organizations in our local community of the Fenway/Mission Hill/Jamaica Plain.
4. Advance social justice on issues that meet community needs and speak to Simmons student, faculty, and staff interests and strengths.

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Service, volunteering, and philanthropy are parts of a broader ecosystem of activities for working towards social justice. These activities can provide much needed resources for marginalized communities. They do not on their own create the social change needed to bring us closer to social justice (and on their own can serve to reinforce the status quo).
- To work towards social justice, service activities need to happen alongside advocacy, activism, and organizing, and need to be contextualized in the systemic context which creates the need for service in the first place.
- We discourage saviorism and a sense of noblesse oblige as guiding motivations for service, volunteering, and philanthropy. Instead we emphasize a sense of solidarity and community-oriented responsibility. As members of the Simmons community, we are also members of many other communities, both geographic and identity-based. We have a responsibility to contribute to our communities and in turn the privilege from learning in and with those communities.
- When we engage in service, volunteering, and philanthropy, we recognize the responsibility of care and mutuality when working with any given community, and work to educate ourselves on the systems of power and privilege which create injustice within that community.

# CENTER CONTACTS



## **London Center for Community Engagement & Social Justice**

Lefavour Hall, Student Success Center  
Rooms E080-D  
[communityengagement@simmons.edu](mailto:communityengagement@simmons.edu)



## **Dr. Meghan Doran**

Director, London Center of Community Engagement & Social Justice

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## **Courtney Kramer**

Assistant Director, London Center of Community Engagement & Social Justice

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## **Dara Starkman**

Jumpstart Site Manager

Room E080-A  
[dara.starkman@simmons.edu](mailto:dara.starkman@simmons.edu)

# SERVICE SITE EXPECTATIONS & GUIDELINES

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## KEY PROGRAM FEATURES

- **Site Supervisor:** In order to facilitate an effective relationship between your organization and a Bonner student, it is highly recommended that someone from your staff is assigned to the student as a manager and mentor to their service. The site supervisor will work with the student in creating a Community Learning Agreement (CLA) and sign off on hour logs. It is preferred that the site supervisor be present for the majority of the time that the student is on-site with your organization.
- **Community Learning Agreement (CLA):** A CLA is a thoughtful way for Bonners to establish service goals and learning objectives in conjunction with the site site coordinator. The purpose of the CLA is to represent the Bonners' commitment to not only fulfilling their service hours but working toward measurable developmental goals. See the CLA planning form & sample guide on page 14.
- **Time Commitment:** Students are asked to commit 8–10 hours each week to community service activities (8 hours with community partners and 2 in training and development provided by the London Center). It is this intensity of the commitment, the four-year nature of the Bonner Program, and the cohort learning model that makes the program both distinctive and transformative.
- **Financial Matters:** The Bonner Program's mission is "Access to Education, Opportunity to Serve". The program serves students who have high financial need as well as a commitment to serving the public good. It is designed to heighten students' overall education by providing an opportunity to engage in sustained community service work during their four years of undergraduate education and receive financial compensation for their time and effort. Students receive Federal Work Study funding, up to \$2,500 for the year as determined by the student's financial aid package, as well as a stipend of up to \$2,000 each year in the program.
- **Ineligible Activities:** The following activities will not count towards meeting a Bonner Leader's service requirement:
  - Service on behalf of a private, for-profit company or organization;
  - Service on behalf of a political organization or campaign;
  - Activity whose primary focus is to support worship, as well as, proselytizing activities within a church or para-church organizations. These activities include but are not limited to service that focuses on religious instruction, indoctrination, or conversion.

# SERVICE SITE EXPECTATIONS & GUIDELINES (cont.)

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## YOU CAN EXPECT FROM STUDENTS

- Dependability in serving an average of 8 hours a week at your organization during the academic school year.
- A complete Community Learning Agreement that indicates their schedule of hours and service objectives for the semester.
- Respect for the policies and expectations of your organization, especially in regard to confidentiality and participation in required training sessions.
- Professional behavior in carrying out the tasks assigned to them.
- 24 hour advance notice if they expect to be absent.
- 2 week advance notice if they must end their services with your organization.

## STUDENTS WILL EXPECT FROM YOU

- Meaningful tasks related to developing their service and learning objectives.
- An environment free of discrimination, harassment, or other obstructions to full participation.
- A position description accurately identifying what is expected of them.
- Adequate supervision and continuous feedback to facilitate growth.
- Recognition that they are a student and young professional who will benefit from your mentorship.
- An orientation to the site and training for the position.
- Respect from other workers and clients at your organization.
- An opportunity to make suggestions, receive feedback and develop a sense of being an integral part of the program.
- An evaluation of their efforts at the end of the semester.

## ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTNERS

- Supervisors will structure activities so that Bonners contribute 140 hours per semester. Semester breaks will be observed. See timeline for those dates.
- Communicate regularly with Simmons University and the Bonner Program including reporting changes in personnel, hours, and other relevant information.
- Keep a record of Simmons University students' hours which will be furnished to the Bonner Program upon request.



# GUIDELINES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES

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Despite everyone's best efforts, problems sometimes arise. If you experience a conflict with a Bonner Leader, please observe the following procedures for handling problems:

- **Address the student directly.** Usually a face to face meeting is sufficient to clarify expectations and clear up any miscommunications.

If the problem persists after addressing the student directly—

- **Contact Courtney Kramer, Assistant Director for Community Engagement at [courtney.kramer@simmons.edu](mailto:courtney.kramer@simmons.edu) or 815-670-0445.** Staff can mediate between the student and your organization. If necessary, the London Center for Community Engagement & Social Justice can arrange to place the student with a different partner.

If the student is consistently late or frequent absent—

- **Address the student directly. Then, contact Courtney Kramer, Assistant Director for Community Engagement at [courtney.kramer@simmons.edu](mailto:courtney.kramer@simmons.edu) or 815-670-0445.** Record all absences and tardy arrivals by date on the student's record and report if excessive.

In the event of a serious abuse of your organization's policies—

- **Document the problem in a letter** and send this to the London Center. This letter may serve as a request to terminate the student from the organization. The Center Staff and other University officials will consult with your organization to determine the appropriate action to be taken.



# REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

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## POSITION DESCRIPTION

The position description explains the opportunity that an agency is offering to a Bonner. It is important that this description is accurate and detailed for the students to understand the nature of the work they will do with your organization.

**Due August 5** with application

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an agreement between Simmons University, the London Center, and the local community agency. It is legally binding and requires a signature from a representative from the agency.

**Due August 22** after Orientation

## COMMUNITY LEARNING AGREEMENT

The CLA is an extension of the position description. This form is found on the BWBRS system, and will be done alongside your student. This will require you and the student to create learning outcomes and project outcomes for the year.

**Due Oct 11** and updated during second semester by **Feb 3**

## HOUR LOGS



# POSITION DESCRIPTION

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Position descriptions are used both by Bonner staff and students to better understand the work the agency does and the role a Bonner Leader will play. We completely understand that the needs of organizations may change over time, but please keep the tasks outlined in the description as close to what students will be doing as possible. If major changes are planned after this is submitted, please reach out to Courtney Kramer, Assistant Director at [courtney.kramer@simmons.edu](mailto:courtney.kramer@simmons.edu).

Position descriptions will be submitted via Google Forms. You can access this form here: <https://bit.ly/BonnerPartnerApplication>

**Below is the information you will be expected to provide:**

1. Name of Organization
2. Supervisor Name
3. Supervisor Email
4. Supervisor Phone Number
5. Address to site
6. Service Method (in person, hybrid, virtual)
7. If in person or hybrid, is your site accessible via public transportation from Simmons University (300 the Fenway, Boston MA 02115)?
8. Organization Type (Non Profit with 501(c)3 designation, State or Local Agency, LEA ( Local Educational Agency) / School or School District, Other)
9. What is your organization's focus area? (Arts, Economic Justice, Education, Environment, Health, Women's Rights, Other)
10. Are there particular times/days that a Bonner must be able to work in order to be placed with this site? If so, please list those times/days.
11. Organization Mission/Vision:
12. Position Description (summary of job duties)
13. Necessary and ideal qualifications:
14. Brief vision of the partnership: How will you be able to create a developmental progression for the student should they stay with your organization for multiple years? How will you meet student where they're at as well as provide responsibilities that progress over time?
15. Is a background check required or any other step the student needs to take in order to work with your organization? I.e. vaccination, clearances, CORI process, etc. If o, is there a cost associated to the student?
16. Number of students you are willing to host for the 2024/2025 academic year.

# COMMUNITY LEARNING AGREEMENT

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The Community Learning Agreement is a tool that acts as a reference point for the Bonner Leader to define their learning goals and intentions for the semester. The Agreement allows them to document their service in such a way that they can reflect on their accomplishments and challenges.

## **With your guidance, the student should articulate the following:**

### Basic Info

- Position Title
- Commitment Period: The days/hours have they agreed to work.
- Service Description: A concise yet descriptive statement about what they are doing. 1-2 sentences should state the type of work they are doing, for whom, and for what overall purpose. Use an active tense to describe the work and how it benefits specific individuals or the community.

### Service Objective

- This section is about the impact on the community – not the student. It's recommended they use SMART goals for creating these (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Reasonable, Time Bound).

### Learning Objective

- Learning objectives should focus on a skill, knowledge area, or learnable trait that they will need to do the best possible work. This objective can focus on themselves and what they learn. The 1-2 sentences can start with an "I" statement, such as "I want to learn classroom management techniques," or "I want to understand how sustainable farming works."

### Competencies

- At least three skills they would like to develop and can realistically realize from the position. These skills should be mutually beneficial for the student and the organization.

At the midpoint (end of first semester) and at the end of the year, both the Bonner and supervisor should come back to review the Community Learning Agreement. This opportunity for reflection and self-evaluation will help the Bonner consider the level of responsibility they have at the organization, plan for future service, and consider future career goals. It additionally helps the organization think about the bigger picture of the impact that the Bonner has already made for the organization and the opportunities for growing that impact in the future.



# REPORTING HOURS

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**COMING SOON**

# BONNER COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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The London Center will be hosting Community of Practice meetings for Bonner Community Partners. We invite each organization's supervisor to attend these meetings as available. They will be casual spaces to connect with other agencies who host a Simmons Bonner Leader. We'll host these 1-hour sessions once a month covering a variety of topics.

## TOPICS INCLUDE

- Troubleshooting any issues
- Brainstorming projects for current and future Bonner Leaders
- Professional Development regarding best practices for student supervision

Sessions will take place on the following dates/times:

- Sept. 26th, Oct. 24th and Nov. 21st at 1pm (Zoom)



# COMMUNITY PARTNER RESOURCES



## ACCESS TO BONNER STAFF

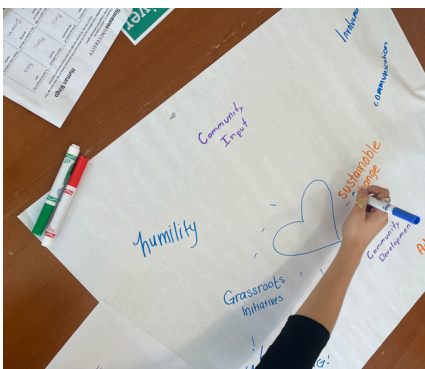
If you have any questions or concerns, you can email the Assistant Director, Courtney Kramer, at any time!

We will also host check-ins once a semester to ensure you feel supported & have everything you need for success with your Bonner student.



## OTHER BONNER PARTNERS

Partners are encouraged to connect with each other! The Bonner staff will arrange times where all partners meet together (community of practice, London Center events, etc.) We also encourage you to contact each other for advice, sharing, etc.



## PARTNER GOOGLE SITE

Once you are a Bonner partner, you'll have access to the Partner Google Site. This website has all the information you need for the Bonner Program, including hours tracking information, documents, feedback forms and more!



## GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Within the London Center team, we have a Graduate Assistant supporting community partnerships specifically for Bonner. She sends out regular communications, assists with partner check ins, and runs the Community of Practice. She's a wonderful resource!

# IMPORTANT DATES

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Date	Information
8/5/2024	Community Partner host site application deadline
8/22/2024	Virtual Community Partner Orientation (& MOU due)
9/4/2024	Virtual Community Partner Introduction Session 3 – 5pm
9/5 – 9/18/24	Bonnors interview with prospective partners
9/18/2024	Deadline to submit top choices for matches
9/20/2024	Matches announced
Week of 9/23	Bonnors start working with Community Partners
10/11/2024	Community Learning Agreements due
11/11/2024	Veteran's Day (Simmons closed and students not expected to work)
11/12/2024	Simmons follows Monday Schedule (may impact student's volunteer schedules)
11/27 – 11/29/24	Fall Break (Students not expected to work)
12/13/2024	Last day of classes and last day students are expected to work. Mid-Year Evals due.
1/21/2025	Classes resume and students return to service
2/3/2025	Updated Community Learning Agreements due
3/3 – 3/7/25	Simmons Spring Break (students not expected to work)
4/21/2025	Patriot's Day (Simmons closed and students not expected to work)
4/22/2025	Simmons follows Monday Schedule (may impact student's volunteer schedules)
TBD	London Center Community Engagement Showcase
5/5/2025	Last day of classes and last day students are expected to work. End of Year Evals due.



# CONTACT INFORMATION

## **Simmons** UNIVERSITY

The London Center for  
Community Engagement  
and Social Justice

### **The London Center for Community Engagement & Social Justice**

Simmons University

Lefavour Hall, E-080D

300 The Fenway, C230B

Boston, MA 02115

[communityengagement@simmons.edu](mailto:communityengagement@simmons.edu)

[Website: https://bit.ly/SimmonEngagement](https://bit.ly/SimmonEngagement)



### **Bonner Community Leaders Program**

Courtney Kramer (she/her/hers)

Assistant Director of Community Engagement

[courtney.kramer@simmons.edu](mailto:courtney.kramer@simmons.edu)

[Website: https://bit.ly/BonnerInfo](https://bit.ly/BonnerInfo)



THE CORELLA & BERTRAM F.  
BONNER FOUNDATION

### **The Bonner Foundation**

10 Mercer Street

Princeton, NJ 08540

Phone: (609) 924-6663

[Website: www.bonner.org](http://www.bonner.org)



### **Bonner Wiki**

The [Bonner Wiki](http://bonner.pbworks.com) is an online platform that provides free access to training guides, handouts, and other resources pertaining to community engaged learning.

[Website: http://bonner.pbworks.com](http://bonner.pbworks.com)



### **Instagram Accounts to Follow**

The London Center Instagram

[instagram.com/simmonsengage](https://www.instagram.com/simmonsengage)

Simmons Bonner Program Instagram

[instagram.com/simmonsbonnerleaders](https://www.instagram.com/simmonsbonnerleaders)

Bonner Foundation Instagram

[instagram.com/bonnerfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/bonnerfoundation)