

Northwest ISD

“Green Cord” Community Service Award Program

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What is the NISD “Green Cord” Community Service Award Program?

The “Green Cord” Community Service Award Program is an initiative designed to help high school students gain a sense of community service, pride, and ownership. The program is a way to encourage 9-12 grade students to contribute at least 100 hours of approved community service per school year. Those students meeting these requirements will be recognized as Green Cord award recipients in each high school year they complete **100 or more hours.**

- Students can be recognized all four years.
- Students meeting and/or exceeding requirements for community service (100 hours/year) will be awarded a Green Cord certificate or patch for each year of participation.
- During the senior year, graduates will have the option to purchase a “Green Cord” for each year of achievement (100 hours/year) to wear during the high school graduation ceremony.

Who should participate in the program?

This program is for any student who wants to complete community service hours for personal satisfaction, community service recognition, and to enhance their college admissions and scholarship opportunities. Any student who wants recognition for completing 100 or more community service hours per year should participate in the “Green Cord” program.

Why volunteer in your community?

- Through volunteer service, people can strengthen and improve the quality of life within their communities and help themselves and others to live happier, healthier and more productive lives.
- Volunteering is beneficial because it builds self esteem, passes on social values and instills the responsibility of a personal commitment by giving back to the community through service.
- Community service hours can be used for college and work applications.
- Volunteer work can introduce you to a future career and give you valuable experience and insight.

How does the process work?

1. Apply for enrollment into the Green Cord program by submitting an enrollment form to the sponsor **before October 15, 2015**. Once the enrollment form is received by the sponsor, the sponsor will either approve or deny the request.
2. Once you are admitted to the program, pick up a Green Cord community service log form (printed on green paper) in the Counseling Center or download the form from the Eaton Counseling website.
3. Consult the list of approved non-profit organizations (also known as 501(c) 3 organizations) and make contact to introduce yourself and arrange for an interview/orientation, if required. (If you do not know if the organization is approved, contact the Green Cord sponsor BEFORE you volunteer).

REMEMBER: Volunteer work is just like a paid job. Dress appropriately and be on time.

4. Make sure you ask your adult supervisor to sign your form each time you volunteer; one signature for different dates is unacceptable. Parents cannot sign as a sponsor signature.
5. Make a copy of your completed form for your records. Return the original copy of the completed form to the Green Cord sponsor. Use the front and back of the form, pick up another form, if needed. Fill out the form completely (dates, sponsor signature, description of work performed).
6. The Green Cord sponsor will review and log your hours. If there is a question about your hours after they are reviewed, the sponsor will contact you. If you do not respond in a timely manner, those hours will be forfeited.
7. Students may begin accruing community service hours the summer after their 8th grade as long as their enrollment form has already been submitted to their high school Green Cord sponsor.
8. Students who earn 100+ community service hours during a school year will receive a Green Cord patch for his/her letter jacket. A new patch can be earned each school year, allowing each student to earn up to four Green Cord patches during their high school education.
9. A Green Cord can be earned and worn at the graduation ceremony by any student who has completed 100+ community service hours in at least one of the four years of high school. Special mention will be made in the graduation program for students who complete the Green Cord program all four years of high school.

What types of service will qualify as community service?

Only those hours performed by a student **without compensation** will qualify for community service approval. Any community service hours performed as a part of a court order, or similar judgment, will not be counted toward the student's Green Cord hours. There is an almost endless list of volunteer opportunities for students. For a list of examples that could be approved community service activities, please refer to the chart on page 3 of this document.

Transfer Students

A transfer student may participate in the "Green Cord" program. The 100 required community service hours may include approved hours earned while attending the previous high school. It is the student's responsibility to provide adequate documentation of the approved hours.

Submitting Hours

- Keep track of your hours on a Green Cord community service log form (printed on green paper) available in the Counseling Center and on the Eaton Counseling website under the Green Cord tab.
- Each time a volunteer activity is completed, an adult supervisor must sign the log form; one signature for different dates is unacceptable. Parents cannot sign as a sponsor signature.
- The signed, verification sheet must also be turned in for final approval.
- Make a copy of your completed form for your records. Return the original copy of the completed form to the Green Cord sponsor. Use the front and back of the form, pick up another form, if needed. Fill out the form completely (dates, sponsor signature, description of work performed).
- The Green Cord sponsor will review and log your hours. If there is a question about your hours after they are reviewed, the sponsor will contact you. If you do not respond in a timely manner, those hours will be forfeited. Remember that students are responsible to clear up questions and check their hours, not parents.

When do the 100 hours of community service need to be completed?

To be counted toward the annual “Green Cord” award, hours must be turned in **by April 15** of each academic year. Hours can be earned from **June 1 to April 14**.

Do activities need to be pre-approved?

Established 501(c) 3 organizations need no pre-approval. However, if the student doesn't know whether or not the intended organization has a 501(c) 3 status, he/she should check with the Green Cord sponsor prior to volunteering to guarantee approval. Questions can be addressed by e-mail or in writing. If the organization has not been pre-approved, a student may count hours only if and after the organization receives approval as a community service site from the Green Cord sponsor.

It is recommended that students consult the list of pre-approved community service opportunities, which is made available through the Green Cord sponsor. This ensures that the volunteer organization/activity is acceptable. In any volunteer situation, it is important to adopt certain safety practices. Never allow yourself to be left alone or placed in compromising situations. If you feel your safety may be compromised at any time, excuse yourself from the volunteer activity and report the occurrence to your sponsor. If there is an immediate emergency, call 911.

Examples of Community Service (what is/not acceptable toward hours)

Acceptable:

- All non-profit organizations, some church activities that do not involve worship or religious instruction, helping at a campus other than their own, local hospitals, etc.
- Hours earned the summer after 8th grade; and turned in on time
- Hour-for-hour volunteer time
- Church support related activities – (mission trips, singing with choir at nursing homes, etc.).
- Volunteering outside the student's scheduled school day, hours done after senior release (seniors must attach copy of schedule to verify).
- Teen Court – youth volunteer, not serving as a resolution for a ticket and consequence.
- Hours that are properly documented (that include the date, description of activity, organization name, contact name and information) submitted by the **April 15 deadline**.

Unacceptable:

- Individual fund-raising, babysitting your neighbor's child for free, working as an intern without pay, working at church that involves religious instruction.
- Hours earned K-8th grades; hours turned in after the April 15 deadline
- Double hours promised by sponsor
- Teaching religion, singing or playing an instrument in the church choir during worship, instruction, VBS or mission trips.
- Helping a teacher during class; volunteer time that is part of the course requirement, work done during the school day (9 a.m. – 4:10 p.m.)
- Teen Court – time served for breaking the law.
- Hours with incomplete information that cannot be verified, or that were submitted after the **April 15** deadline.

What is expected of you as a volunteer by the organization?

- To be reliable to your commitment
- To work within the guidelines and standards of the agency
- To accept and follow directions of the agency staff
- To make sure you understand the directions given to you and seek clarification, if needed.
- To actively perform tasks to the best of your ability
- To provide feedback to the agency staff
- To report any problems to the agency staff
- To represent the school and yourself in an exemplary manner

What should you expect from the organization as a volunteer?

- To be advised of the agency's standards, guidelines, and expectations
- To be given meaningful assignments
- To be given a clear statement of tasks to be performed
- To be informed of organizational policies and procedures
- To be given effective supervision
- To be recognized for work performed

Approved Community Organizations

- Agape/Slab – Soup kitchens, shelters, blanket drives
- American Cancer Society
- Beam Foundation
- Cancer Prevention Organizations
- Christmas is for Children
- Church Activities – Non-religious in nature, e.g. building churches or homes, blankets for homeless shelters, general office work, etc.
- Community Storehouse
- Food pantries – Roanoke Food Pantry, N. Texas Food Bank, Tarrant Area Food Bank
- G.R.A.C.E. – Sorting clothes, canned food drives
- Habitat for Humanity – Carpentry, repair of houses
- Health Organizations – American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, etc.
- Hospitals – Youth volunteer programs such as candy stripers
- Libraries – Shelving, check out books, summer reading programs for children
- Local City Departments – Parks & Recreation, general office work, festivals, visitors center
- Meals on Wheels – Delivering meals, volunteering at fundraisers
- Political Campaign (excluding relatives) – Stuffing envelopes, phone banks, distributing signs
- PTA – Project Graduation, registration
- Schools (must be done outside of school day) – Moving furniture and supplies, manning booths for open house, assisting teachers, tutoring, etc.
- Scouting – Eagle Scout programs, assisting pack leaders, helping at camps
- Teen Court (excluding mandated service) – Juror, Bailiff, Attorney
- Women's Clubs and Community Organizations
- Ronald McDonald House

To receive credit for other community service activities not mentioned above, students may seek written approval from the Green Cord sponsor.

Green Cord Guidelines

- Fill out Green Cord log form completely (date, adult supervisor signature, description of work performed and your contact information, including e-mail address)
- No more than 10 hours can be completed at your campus (unless there are extenuating circumstances)
- Do not turn in old hours (hours can only be accepted for current school year)
- Hours MUST be turned in **by April 15** (no exceptions)
- Parents cannot sign as sponsor signature
- Community Service must be for a non-profit group (group must have 501c3 status)
- Hour for hour service (no double hours as promised by teacher or sponsor)
- Leadership Training does not count
- Students are responsible to clear up questions, not parents
- If it is found that you have falsified any part of your form/service, you will be dismissed from the program
- Students are responsible to check their hours and report any problems at that time