

## **HANDOUT: DEVELOPING YOUR PHILLIPS SERVICE PROJECT IDEA**

### **In your pre-application “Letter of Interest” please address the following:**

- What unmet need in MN do you plan to address? Why? (Note: Projects must fall within the established theme: *Addressing the Achievement/Opportunity Gap in Minnesota*, with a race & equity emphasis or focus.)
- How did you identify the need?
- What MN communities do you intend to serve? How?
- Which specific organization(s) do you plan to work with? How did you go about choosing this specific organization?
- What preliminary contact(s) have you made?
- How does your previous participation and leadership in campus activities and community service demonstrate that you are qualified to design and implement your proposed project?
- Please provide a preliminary project timeline and plan. The plan should be ambitious enough to involve a minimum of 6 weeks of full-time service (40 hours/week, 320 hours over the summer). Please note: you will have an opportunity to further articulate or change your project if you are chosen for the scholarship.

### **Start where you have already been:**

Give your project a firm foundation by exploring your interests, strengths, skills and expertise. Think about your interests and past volunteer experience. Consider asking yourself some of these questions to give you direction:

- What organization or community-based event have I already volunteered with that could use improvements?
- What kind of volunteer or community-oriented work do I enjoy?
- What organizations have impacted me personally?
- What communities, populations, or groups are important for me to serve?
- What experiences influenced my commitment to community service?
- What is my dream job?
- What are my hobbies and interests?
- What are my favorite areas of study that I could build a service project around?
- What are my strengths? How can I use these strengths to create a summer service project?
- Have I come across specific needs in the community during my experiences doing volunteer work?
- Have I ever thought, “If only this organization could . . .”

### **Enhance and improve:**

The Phillips Scholars Program challenges college students to think of new ways to improve the lives of people in Minnesota. A proposed project can be “new” even if it enhances or improves an existing program. For example, if a nonprofit has a program for single parents, a student could propose adding a new mentoring component to the existing program. Whether you come up with a completely new idea or you propose to enhance an existing program, your proposal should show that you are doing much more than just volunteering.

### **About your project and site:**

- Will I be able to work with my target community during the summer?
- How many individuals will be served by my project?
- Is my project substantial enough to require full-time work throughout the summer?
- How will I recruit participants and/or volunteers?
- Will there be any concerns about transportation, costs or safety?
- How much time will be needed for planning, daily activities and administrative tasks?

### **Talk to people. Ask for help:**

Bounce your idea off as many people as possible. The best proposals are those that are well thought out and thorough. Ask a professor to help you develop your project idea. Have the writing center or your peers proofread your proposal and make suggestions. See if a current or former Phillips Scholar would be willing to give you a few pointers. Lastly, begin networking with people in the nonprofit community. You will be pleasantly surprised at the number of people who are happy to help!