Create opportunities for students to help with real community needs.

Organizations have real needs, questions, and projects. Students can benefit from opportunities to gain experience, practice communication and problem-solving, respond to feedback, and take responsibility.

When the fit is right and the work is appropriately scoped, students can help while gaining hands-on experience with an outside organization.

When an opportunity is presented as addressing a real organizational or community need, that need should genuinely exist.

Organizations may also intentionally design practice experiences for students when the purpose is clear and the experience provides genuine opportunities for practice, guidance, feedback, reflection, and appropriate responsibility. What GradPlanHQ should avoid is arbitrary busywork presented as something it is not.

When an opportunity is well-scoped, the organization can receive a genuine contribution, and the student gains practical experience working with an outside stakeholder. The goal is mutual value, not manufactured tasks or unguided student labor.

Three Community Partner jobs

1. Surface real needs that fit student involvement

Organizations identify genuine needs, questions, challenges, or projects that already matter. Possible areas include research, community outreach, event support, resource development, and communication.

2. Create well-scoped opportunities for student experience and responsibility

When the fit is appropriate, students can gain hands-on experience while communicating with outside stakeholders, asking questions, responding to feedback, solving problems, making decisions, and meeting commitments.

3. Create value for students and community organizations

When the fit is right, an organization can receive a genuine contribution while a student gains hands-on experience, feedback, reflection, and responsibility.

What makes an appropriate opportunity

- ✓ Genuine organizational or community need
- ✓ Understandable scope
- ✓ Clear expectations
- ✓ Realistic timeline
- ✓ Appropriate student responsibility
- ✓ Manageable partner involvement
- ✓ Student choice

The level of responsibility fits the student and the opportunity.

Possible outcomes may include: research summaries · informational resources · event support · outreach materials · community communication · project results · other genuine contributions where appropriate.

Not every opportunity needs to produce a formal deliverable.

Partner role vs. GradPlanHQ Practice Field

Community Partners are not responsible for operating the entire Practice Field or managing a student's overall development.

What Community Partners may provide

- ✓ a real organizational or community need
- ✓ real-world context
- ✓ clear expectations and questions
- ✓ timely feedback
- ✓ opportunities for appropriate responsibility

What GradPlanHQ provides

Growth Cycle — Connect. Build. Grow. Repeat.

Action & Momentum Meetups — Protected time. Support. Momentum.

Community App — Connect. Practice. Stay Visible.

Optional Project Launchers — Structured. Skill-Focused. Impact-Oriented.

Partner projects are one way for students to gain hands-on experience with an outside organization, but they are not required for membership.

Reflection remains part of the Growth Cycle. Students reflect on what happened, what they learned, what changed, and what they should do next. Community Partners are not academic assessors, and GradPlanHQ is not a portfolio or learning-assessment system.

Student choice and scoping boundaries

- ✓ Not every organizational need is appropriate for student participation.
- ✓ Student participation should be voluntary, expectations should be clear, and projects should be appropriately scoped.
- ✓ GradPlanHQ does not determine whether compensation or other employment requirements apply to a particular situation.

Students can begin with the Free Tools without an institutional purchase.

EXPLORING A FIT

One conversation. No commitment. We'll talk through whether and where this fits.

Share a Project Idea · **partners@gradplan.com** · gradplan.com/community-partners

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