Service-Learning with a Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign: Community and Student Benefits

Judith R. Porter
Bryn Mawr College

Mary Summers
University of Pennsylvania

Suzanne Toton
Villanova University

Hillary Aisenstein
Philadelphia Higher Education Network
For Neighborhood Development

We analyze a multi-campus collaboration in a Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign to demonstrate that a well-managed public benefits campaign, associated with broader advocacy-based community partnerships, can result in positive outcomes for the community that include measurable benefits for clients, data needed to make policy and administrative changes, and new institutional relationships that enhance existing capacities. Public benefits campaigns also provide effective service-learning experiences that enhance student learning and engagement in issues related to the study of poverty, policy, and social justice. Recommendations are offered for effective implementation of such service-learning opportunities with public benefits campaigns.

This study reports on the results of a Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign, led by the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger (the Coalition), staffed predominantly by service-learning and work-study students from campuses throughout the Philadelphia area. We use the outcomes of this campaign, together with an analysis of associated service-learning classroom experiences in three different disciplines on three different campuses, to demonstrate that service-learning students can play an important role in outreach campaigns that help determine client eligibility and offer application assistance for public benefits such as food stamps. Such campaigns can deliver significant, measurable benefits to targeted communities, an outcome infrequently evaluated in the service-learning literature. We provide evidence that partnerships between nonprofits, public institutions, and service-learning programs can help generate invaluable data for public benefits campaigns. These data can be used to improve campaign strategies, develop and support specific advocacy efforts to improve access to public benefits, and generate broader understanding of structural barriers for all participants, including the service-learning stu-

dents. Data collection and analysis can also facilitate the development of more effective campaign strategies, the identification of structural barriers that prevent participation in such programs, and the development of proposals for policy and administrative changes to address these barriers. We conclude with a summary of how the lessons learned from the implementation of this service-learning participation in a multi-campus Food Stamp Enrollment campaign can be applied to the development of other effective higher education service-learning and public benefits campaigns linkages.

Literature Review: The Community Impact of Service-Learning

Much research on service-learning in the U.S. focuses on the impact of service-learning activities on students, both academically and developmentally (Strage, 2000, Vogelgesand & Astin, 2000). Giles and Eyler (1998), in their summary of these effects, cite research that service-learning impacts personal development including building efficacy, self-esteem, and relationships, as well as increasing social responsibility. There is also evidence that service-learning affects complexity of thinking about social

issues and reflective expression, though the effect of service-learning on course grades is mixed. There is widespread agreement, however, that the impact of service-learning on the community has not been sufficiently studied (Benson, Harkavy, & Hartley, 2005; Bushouse, 2005; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Schmidt & Robby, 2000; Vernon & Ward, 1999). Giles and Eyler include community impact as one of the most important areas for future research on service-learning.

Studies of the impact of service-learning on communities focus on issues such as the nature of the partnership between universities and communities. Paradigms of service-learning differentiate the charity model from a social justice model. In the dominant paradigm, the specific service-learning opportunities offered most often represent more traditional forms of direct service or charity. The charity model is agency-based and relies on student volunteers providing client services controlled by the agency provider (Morton, 1995). A study of 599 college service-learning programs by the U.S. Department of Housing and Human Development (HUD) shows, for example, that 50% of all programs are in activities that offer direct services, 42% provide technical assistance (for instance, computer training), 7% were involved in physical revitalization, and only 1% were political advocacy programs (HUD, 1999).

This more traditional form of service has resulted in some sharp critiques of the service-learning movement. Crenson and Ginsburg (2004, pp. 6-8) say that students are learning to enjoy a more personal sense of efficacy, instead of the rules of engagement that structure citizen participation in politics and government. Susan Hyatt (2001) warns that service-learning can create "neo-liberal citizens" who see volunteerism as the answer to social problems, rather than working for changes in political and economic policies that will more fundamentally address these problems. She suggests that service-learning needs to be structured so that it intentionally works against these outcomes. Similarly, Robinson (2000) has described traditional service learning as "victim therapy" and argues for forms of service-learning that involve students in advocacy and social justice issues.

Reciprocity and collaboration with communities are the defining attributes of a different model of service-learning, the social justice or social change model, which integrates community engagement and advocacy with academic study (Ehrlich, 2000; Harkavy, 2004; Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005). Stoecker (2003) differentiates the radical social justice model, which stresses the centrality of social conflict, collective action, and social structural change, from the mainstream perspec-

tive, which shares the grassroots character of the radical perspective but emphasizes conflict resolution rather than addressing power differences. The mainstream model is characterized as well by an emphasis on advocacy, neighborhood revitalization, and community development.

Participatory action research is the preferred research model for both of these social justice perspectives. This method emphasizes community assets and university collaboration with the community at all stages of research, as well as the use of research in effecting social action. Although grassroots organizing is an important implementation strategy in both of these social justice service-learning models, the role of advocacy by experts and the goal of student organizing differ, with community empowerment and structural change more central to the radical model (Stoecker, 2003). Although Enos and Morton (2003) state that utilitarian relationships between communities and universities should move through stages resulting in a transformative relationship for communities, Morton (1995) states that the charity paradigm and the mainstream and radical social justice paradigms have their own world-views, strengths, and weaknesses and that, if done well, each paradigm can be meaningful as a service-learning enterprise.

Another area of research on the community impact of service-learning focuses on the benefits community agencies perceive from service-learning students. Several studies indicate that though community agencies generally have positive perceptions of service-learning students, the constraints of the semester time-frame, lack of staff resources and time to manage students are drawbacks (Bushouse, 2005; Ferrari & Worrall, 2000; Vernon & Ward, 1999). Due to these constraints, many agencies prefer utilitarian relationships with direct, tangible results from service-learning rather than complex, transformative relationships (Bushouse).

Gazley and Littlepage (2006) suggest that service-learning can have a direct impact on communities by building university-community relations, bringing new knowledge and resources to community institutions, providing agencies with volunteer labor, improving client services, and providing useful research findings that contribute to community development. However, the specific impact on communities of various types of service-learning projects has not been widely studied. The effect of university service-learning education projects on primary and secondary school students is the most widely researched area of community impact. These studies demonstrate higher gains in achievement test scores among tutored students (Schmidt & Robby, 2002), raising educational aspirations of

community partners and their children (Jorge, 2003) and resolving inter-ethnic tension in the schools (Calderon & Farrell, 1996). Benson, Harkavy, and Puckett (2000) describe the development of a university-assisted public school where service-learning students engaged in participatory action research resulting in the successful development of nutrition education and reading programs. Service-learning projects have collaborated with community organizations in areas such as addressing youth violence (Kinnevy & Broddie, 2001), services offered by the health professions (Gelmon, Holland, Seifer, Shinnamon, & Connors, 1998), and economic development (Reardon, 1998). Reardon is among the few researchers who have utilized quantifiable economic benefits to measure the impact of service-learning projects on the community. Although community needs have not always been fulfilled or the programs initiated by students brought to fruition, there are often positive unanticipated consequences from these efforts, such as facilitating networking among organizations (Gelmon et. al.; Kinnevy & Broddie) and creating positive interpersonal relationships among members of the target population (Calderon & Farrell).

Neither the paradigms of service-learning nor service-learning research specifically address public benefits campaigns, in which advocacy organizations, university coalitions, service-learning students, and community organizations work together to help community members receive government benefits. Data collected through action research in these campaigns can impact the community by changing the way these benefits are delivered by government agencies. Poppendieck (1999), in her critique of the emergency food system, suggests that promotion of effective public programs like Food Stamps be substituted for an institutionalized charity model that contributes to the erosion of social safety net programs. The Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign we describe demonstrates the potential of involving service-learning students in public benefits campaigns such as Food Stamps to effect sustainable change in the community, as well as engaging students in political, social, and economic issues. This model serves many of the aims of both the service/charity and the social justice models of service-learning. A well-structured public benefits campaign involves students in service and advocacy work with grassroots groups and established state agencies. It delivers measurable benefits to individuals in impoverished communities; it develops data that can be used in advocacy efforts to improve program implementation; and it engages students in analysis of the limitations of public policies in addressing issues related to poverty and social justice.

The Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign

The Food Stamp Program, administered through the states by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is the cornerstone of government programs intended to relieve domestic hunger and food insecurity. The USDA estimates that in 2005 the program provided benefits to more than 25 million people, but the program reaches only about 60% of those who are actually eligible for its benefits (USDA).

Philadelphia has the highest poverty rate (24.5%) of the ten largest cities in the U.S. (Webster & Bishaw, 2006, p. 24). Using data from the 2000 census, the Brookings Institute estimated that in 1999, 73,000 individuals in Philadelphia eligible for food stamps were not enrolled in the program (Fellowes & Berube, 2005). Meanwhile, more and more people have been turning to soup kitchens and food cupboards. Both national and local surveys suggest that at least one in three of these clients are eligible but not participating in the Food Stamp Program (Mathematica Policy Research, 2006).

In September 2002, the USDA awarded the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger (the Coalition) one of 19 national outreach research grants to evaluate strategies for increasing food stamp enrollment among eligible populations. The Coalition is guided by a steering committee including representatives from community and feeding programs, local and statewide anti-hunger providers and advocates, and government programs. The Coalition was awarded the grant for a proposal to work with multiple state, higher education, and community partners to evaluate the efficacy of using service-learning students and community volunteers in a Food Stamp Enrollment campaign. The Coalition partnered with the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND) to make service-learning students a critical component of this campaign. An academically-based community service seminar at the University of Pennsylvania developed a model for student participation in food stamp outreach and screening in fall 2002. The Coalition worked with Hillary Aisenstein, the Director of PHENND, a consortium of 42 colleges and universities with a commitment to service-learning in the Philadelphia area, to make contacts with other service-learning programs and classes. With the official start of the Campaign in fall 2003, the PHENND office assigned a staff person to oversee the recruitment and training of service-learning students and volunteers, while a volunteer coordinator in the

Coalition office recruited volunteers from communities of faith, social service agencies, the emergency food system, and other community sites.

While various aspects of the staffing and organization of this campaign have changed over the last five years, the basic outlines remain much the same. Food stamp screeners (the majority of whom have been service-learning students) are trained by the Coalition to screen people for their eligibility for food stamps in low-income neighborhood sites. Potential clients are given estimates of their benefits and information about how to apply for the program. The Coalition also provides similar services through its Food Stamp Hotline.

Students, Hotline staff, and other volunteers fill out logs on all clients that include information on their income and expenses. The names of all screened clients are submitted to the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) to obtain data on actual client applications. The estimates of eligibility and benefit levels for the client are matched against DPW data on individual applications and enrollments. Service-learning students also share their perceptions of the Campaign and the food stamp application process with Coalition staff and faculty researchers through volunteer meetings, written reflections, and term papers.

The Participating Colleges and Courses

As of June 2006, more than 280 students from 14 campuses had participated in this campaign. We examine its use in courses taught by faculty in three disciplines at three institutions: the Politics of Food and Agriculture and the Politics of Poverty and Opportunity in the Political Science Department at the University of Pennsylvania; Sociology of Poverty in the Sociology Department at Bryn Mawr College; and Christian Ethics in the Theology/Religious Studies Department at Villanova University. All of these courses have been taught several times.

While there are some similarities among these institutions, there are also significant differences. Penn is an urban, Ivy League research university that has offered academically-based community service seminars for more than a decade. Bryn Mawr is a small, liberal arts women's college that developed its academic community service program (Praxis) in 2001, although individual service-learning courses were taught prior to that time. Villanova is a medium-size Catholic university located in Philadelphia's suburbs that has offered service-learning courses since the early 1990s.

Although previous service-learning opportunities in the two previously established courses at Bryn Mawr and Villanova focused on the delivery of direct services, most students emphasized the personal relationships they developed with clients as the significant outcome of their service-learning experience. The traditional charity or service-based model, however, did not encourage attention to structural problems, criticism of the system, or engagement in efforts to change it. The Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign provided us with a different model of service-learning that fit more closely with the specific policy focus in our courses.

Summers, a political scientist and Senior Fellow at the Fox Leadership Program at the University of Pennsylvania, served as the principal investigator for the Coalition's USDA grant. She worked with the Coalition staff to develop the initial model for engaging service-learning students in food stamp outreach and screening as part of her first academically based community service seminar. Her service-learning classes stress an institutionally-based approach to the study of politics. Students have a choice among several different community service opportunities. Students write reflections and an analytical paper on their community service experience.

The faculty members at Bryn Mawr and Villanova had extensive experience with service-learning prior to adopting the Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign in their courses. Porter, in the Sociology Department at Bryn Mawr, teaches a course on the Sociology of Poverty. Beginning in the early 1990s, she added a service-learning component to the course, with service-learning placements in drug treatment programs, shelters, teen pregnancy and domestic abuse centers, and social service agencies. For their term papers, students had to choose an issue concerning one aspect of the service experience and supplement published literature with informal interviews and participant observation. Involving students in providing direct services, however, did not adequately complement the course's focus on structural correlates of poverty. None of these internships involved advocacy until 2003, when the Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign became a service-learning option.

Toton's course at Villanova University, "Service-learning: From Charity to Solidarity," is a Christian ethics course in the Theology/Religious Studies curriculum. For the course's service-learning component, the instructor has had a long-standing arrangement for the entire class to participate in an adult literacy tutoring program at a Philadelphia inner-city church. Students seemed to intellectually grasp the structural and systemic reasons why the 25 adults they tutored were illiterate, but in the end the learning outcomes were clearly personal closeness to the person tutored and the gratification of doing one's part in society by helping one per-

son at a time. Less evident was a sense of the injustice of the situation of the poor and a resolve to enlist in addressing the structural roots of illiteracy.

Toton decided to add participation in the Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign because it required new, in-depth knowledge and research skills that held the promise of producing change on both the individual and systemic levels. Given the established commitment to the adult literacy tutoring program, her class participation in the Campaign involves only one screening activity: organizing a supermarket fair to promote food stamps and screen interested shoppers. The food stamp training, however, has been integrated into the course on many levels.

Although the way food stamp screening was incorporated into these courses varied, in all of these courses community members were assisted in acquiring a public benefit and the data collected provided useful information to the Coalition and was used to effect change in the way food stamps are delivered.

Outcomes for the Community

Through their partnership with the state of Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare (DPW), the Coalition obtains data on how many of their clients apply for food stamps, whether or not these applications are approved, and if denied, the reasons for denial. Estimated benefits for clients whose applications were approved during the first 18 months of the campaign suggest that it brought in more than $3.2 million a year to low-income residents of Philadelphia. The USDA's calculation of food stamps' multiplier effect—the benefits food stamps bring in increased business for grocery stores and their suppliers—brings this early estimate of the total economic benefit of the Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign to the local economy to $5.9 million a year (Hanson & Golan, 2002; Summers, 2006).

The Campaign's data indicated the important role students played in generating these outcomes. Community volunteers also played an important role in the Campaign, but many tended to refer potential clients to the campaign Hotline rather than conduct screenings themselves. Thus, the Hotline and students' screenings represented the chief campaign data sources (Summers, 2005). On the basis of initial findings, the Campaign decided to concentrate on developing more relationships with service-learning classes where students would receive academic credit for committing several hours a week to screening, as opposed to investing significant time in efforts to recruit non-service-learning student volunteers, many of whom found

extensive training and weekly commitments to screening daunting. Now in its fifth year, the Campaign continues to use non-service-learning students and community volunteers, but more than 60% of the screeners are service-learning students. About 20% of service-learning students return to volunteer during another semester, especially important to the continuity of the Campaign.

Most strikingly, the data collected from screened clients challenged the widely held view that undergirded most food stamp outreach efforts around the country: under-enrollment in the Food Stamp program was due to the poor's lack of knowledge about program eligibility and benefits. This hypothesis was based on national phone surveys of non-participating households and experimental data that indicated that if clients knew they were eligible for benefit levels over $40 a month, they were far more likely to apply for the program (Daponte, Sanders, & Taylor, 1999).

The Campaign's findings, however, showed that only about 40% of the clients who were screened as eligible actually applied for the program. Surprisingly, anticipated benefit levels did not appear to be a decisive factor in generating higher application rates. The estimated median monthly benefit for clients who completed an application for the Food Stamp Program was $141; for those who did not, it was $139. In short, large numbers of very low-income people who had expressed interest in the program and knew that they were potentially eligible for significant benefits did not complete applications for the program, despite careful instructions and at least some application assistance from volunteers.

These data led to another possible explanation for the problem of relatively low food stamp enrollment rates: significant structural barriers, such as the burden of forms to be filled out, documents to be collected, and trips to the welfare office required for a successful food stamp application. This was supported by data on the 24% of applications filed by Campaign clients who had their applications denied but were potentially eligible when screened. Of the top five reasons for denial, four (failure to furnish required information, failure to keep appointments, voluntary withdrawal, and application entered in error) suggest obstacles to the food stamp application process rather than clients' ineligibility. The fifth reason, failure of the net income test, may also represent a problem with the document collection necessary to prove net income. Together these categories comprised more than 70% of the denied applications (Summers, 2005).

These results, generated in large part through data collected by service-learning students, guided

subsequent campaign and advocacy strategies. The data demonstrated that Career Link centers and health centers were the most productive sites for screenings of clients who subsequently applied for the program; most of the screening activity now takes place at these sites. Over the last two years, volunteers have engaged in much more intensive application assistance, helping eligible clients fill out applications to take or mail to their local County Assistance Offices (CAOs). The Campaign's Hotline and other sites with appropriate technology began making intensive use of the state's online COMPASS (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Access to Social Services) site to help every eligible client submit a food stamp application. By 2006, these efforts had raised the number of potentially eligible clients applying for the program by 17% and the number successfully enrolling by 10% (Summers, 2006).

Even more significantly, the Coalition, with assistance from its faculty and student partners, has used campaign data to document barriers to the food stamp application process in a way that has won the attention and respect of their Department of Public Welfare (DPW) partners. The Coalition's staff is using application and denial rates and feedback from clients gathered by students and community members to work with DPW staff for changes that will facilitate the application process at the state, county, and CAO level. Students with significant campaign experience participate in making follow-up phone calls to clients who have applied for food stamps online, helping to troubleshoot problems with this application process for individual clients and collect data for the Coalition. The Coalition is using this information to work with DPW on a task force to improve the online application and streamline the accompanying steps needed to complete the application process.

Once the data made the limitations of the outreach campaign clear, the Campaign's staff and service-learning faculty and students initiated efforts to work more closely with CAO employees and a community organizer in a "Building Bridges" project. The aim of this project was to develop a model for promoting mutual understanding, support, and referrals between a CAO, the Food Stamp Campaign, and community organizations. Service-learning students helped interview employees at a CAO to identify barriers to the food stamp application process, as well as explore the extra work these barriers created for clerks and caseworkers in the form of multiple client appointments and resubmitted applications. They brainstormed ideas with CAO staff for making the application process more pleasant, and initiated an effort to refurbish the

waiting room with magazines, children's books, and toys. Students developed a manual of emergency feeding sites and other services for welfare workers to share with their clients and helped participate in community outreach efforts, taking materials about the Food Stamp Program and contact information for the CAO to community groups, agencies, and businesses.

The Campaign's findings have also resulted in a variety of other ongoing efforts to improve the food stamp application process. In Pennsylvania, it is now possible for most clients who find it difficult to make a trip to the welfare office to apply online or through the mail and then be interviewed by phone. Most Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients (the low-income, elderly, and disabled) have been enrolled in the Food Stamp Program, and new SSI applicants automatically have their information shared with DPW for a food stamp application. A new call-in center offers a wide variety of services to low-income clients, again saving many a trip and a long wait at the county assistance office. Ongoing efforts are also being made to clarify and simplify the client letters and forms that so often derail the application process. Documenting the barriers to participation, based in part on the input of service-learning students, helped make these and other significant changes possible.

This service-learning project reflects impacts on both individuals and the community. Its success can be measured not only by its value to the number of new clients receiving food stamps, but also by changes in the food stamp and delivery system that were in part a result of student participation in the Campaign data collection and analysis.

Outcomes for Students

Although conclusions about the Campaign's impact on students are based on qualitative and anecdotal evidence such as class discussion, student written work, and course evaluations, the similarities in our observations are striking. Both instructors and students in all three institutions saw participation in the Food Stamp Campaign as qualitatively different from other service-based placements. Student evaluations described screening for food stamps as like "no other experience I've ever had… I felt the potential to help a needy individual was far greater through the Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign than through other food distribution programs." Students became engaged in a discrete and structured task that made a difference beyond individual relationships. The use of the data they gathered enhanced the broader pedagogical goals of our classes. Campaign findings helped direct student attention beyond their personal experiences with

clients, as valuable as they were, to the politics and policies that shape the Food Stamp Program.

As class discussion and written work showed, participation in the Campaign increased student knowledge of poor populations and the institutional barriers they face. Our students learned to approach a wider range of clients than they would typically meet in a service-learning project focused on a single population. Because they had a legitimate reason for asking questions about income, expenses, and household composition, students learned a great deal about the circumstances shaping low-income people's lives: their income, rent, utility costs, and struggle to survive on a limited budget. Students saw the impact of rising fuel prices and rents, and a minimum wage job as insufficient to provide basic necessities.

Stories of clients holding down two and sometimes three jobs to make ends meet, or taking three buses to clean hotels in the suburbs, challenged the stereotype that the poor are basically lazy. Federal assistance programs lost their abstractness. Students no longer saw the Food Stamp Program as a course requirement but as an opportunity to help poor people buy groceries and still pay the rent. They began to understand what income inequality means at the level of lived experience and to question their own privileges and assumptions.

Students were struck by their client's expressions of shame and embarrassment for having to resort to government assistance. They tried to empower people by giving them information about the system, helping them fill out the applications, and explaining how the system works, as well as de-stigmatizing the program. A West African student, for instance, translated documents for eligible West African immigrants, helped them with their applications, and collected information on the fears these immigrants had about applying for food stamps.

Students came to see the Food Stamp Program as an inadequate means to address the causes and consequences of the poverty they saw among the clients they screened. They were frustrated by the limits and indignities involved in what they had to offer: the number of documents clients must collect and the type of information clients must share with caseworkers to apply for the program; the complex and rigid rules; and the often inadequate benefits to which clients were entitled. Students mentioned the assets limit as a particular source of frustration for them: at the Career Link, for instance, they had to tell men and women who had lost their jobs that they had to spend all but $2,000 of their savings before they could be eligible for food stamps. If an immigrant family had saved more than $2000 for a trip home, or an elderly woman more than $3000

for her funeral, they were ineligible, no matter how low their incomes. Students also told many stories about clients' past experiences with long waits and repeated visits to County Assistance Offices, incomprehensible letters from the Department of Welfare, and difficulties in contacting caseworkers. Many student papers critiqued eligibility criteria, especially the assets limitation and restrictions on participation for minors, students, immigrants, and workers on strike (whose households are not allowed to apply for the program). Some students found it incomprehensible that benefits would be denied to people who clearly needed them. One student commented, "It all boils down to the right to eat in the richest nation on earth."

Even when they were most frustrated, students stated in their written work and class discussions that they had a role to play in documenting the barriers, the inadequacies, and the injustices for the Coalition's ongoing advocacy efforts to improve the Food Stamp Program at the local, state, and federal levels. They felt that their conversations and interviews with clients produced valuable qualitative data that illuminated the Campaign's statistical findings about the obstacles that prevent program participation. Their observations generated class discussions, informed other students who were in different types of internships, and provided a critique of various theories of poverty. These placements engaged students in an effort to improve public policy and program implementation.

Lessons Learned for Public Benefits Campaigns as Service-Learning Experiences

One key lesson of the Philadelphia Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign is that for a public benefits campaign to provide a good service-learning experience, it must be adequately staffed and funded. Effective campaigns require significant community partners and resources. Service-learning students have much to contribute and much to gain from such efforts, but their training and supervision is difficult to staff and sustain on a single campus. The participation of multiple campuses can, however, make a crucial difference in bringing such campaigns to a scale that justifies an investment in adequate staff support for student participation. Institutions that have offices and staff dedicated to promoting service-learning activities play a crucial role in putting such multiple-campus, community, and government partnerships together.

This campaign also demonstrates that service-learning faculty and student participation in data collection, evaluation, and research efforts can result in improved outreach and advocacy strate-

gies, relationships with state agencies, and student learning outcomes. Campus support for service-learning helps with such issues as providing transportation funding and assistance to get students to their screening sites.

It is useful for service-learning faculty who assign students to public benefits campaigns to have some direct experience with this work. Porter trained as a screener, screens on a regular basis at a health center, and finds this experience very helpful in answering her students' questions about their experiences. Students at the University of Pennsylvania benefit from their instructor's role as the campaign's evaluator and, therefore, from more meetings with the Coalition staff and access to Campaign data.

Finding potential partners and support for such an endeavor can itself become the subject of a service-learning class. Many cities and states have their own versions of a Hunger Coalition, networks of emergency food providers and individuals concerned with issues of hunger, who would be appropriate institutional partners for establishing such a campaign. FRAC (the Food Research and Action Center) provides links and contact information for state and local anti-hunger groups. These groups often have developed relationships with relevant state agencies as well as with local foundations, grocery stores, and businesses interested in poverty, health, and nutrition issues. Regional USDA offices also may be of assistance. The USDA and FRAC both provide sources of statistics on food stamp participation rates in various states and cities and information on outreach and enrollment efforts in other states.

Many of the advantages of this Philadelphia Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign as a service-learning experience can also be duplicated in other public benefits campaigns. Students in Summers' and Porter's courses have had similarly positive experiences with campaigns to help clients file for their Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites. Many nonprofits across the country are working on a variety of efforts to increase access to other publicly funded forms of assistance: the Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); Medicare and its various drug programs; Medicaid; and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP). Our collaboration with advocacy organizations, university initiatives, community members, and federal, state, and local institutions provided an ideal environment for this type of service-learning, but advocacy service-learning can also be organized with individual nonprofits and government offices. Community service offices in many colleges and universities can help arrange appropriate linkages and assist with logistics.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates the potential of public benefits campaigns involving student service-learners to both impact the community and engage students in political, social, and economic issues. The fact that three of us, who originally did not know one another and developed our courses independently, had similar service-learning course experiences in different disciplines at three very different institutions indicates that a potential model for service-learning emerged from this public benefits campaign.

This campaign demonstrates the power of a multi-school collaboration, which also may be applicable to collaboration among multiple courses on one campus. The large number of students involved justifies a far greater investment of staff time in training and supervision by community partners than any individual service-learning class project would typically receive. Commitment to a public benefits project also allows colleges and universities to be a partner with the government and community, and a "critical friend" engaged in research to improve program implementation.

The benefits this campaign provides to clients, the governmental resources it brings into the local economy, and the opportunity to develop data on how to improve program implementation make this type of project worth a significant investment for community partners and funders. In short, service-learning participation in a well-organized public benefits campaign can result in multiple positive outcomes for community partners, communities they serve, and student learning as well.

Note

nificant number of funders have contributed to its ongoing work: The Boeing Company; Citigroup Foundation/Smith Barney (Philadelphia Branch); Claneil Foundation; Lincoln Financial Group Foundation; MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger; McCormick Tribune Foundation; Pennsylvania Department of Welfare; The Philadelphia Foundation; Sovereign Bank; and the William Penn Foundation.

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Authors

JUDITH R. PORTER is professor of Sociology at Bryn Mawr College. Her research interests focus on the sociology of AIDS and injection drug use. She is currently working on a study funded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse on the role of needle-exchange programs as a bridge to service acquisition. She has authored multiple research studies presented at International Conferences on AIDS. She is the author of *Black Child, White Child: the Development of Racial Attitudes*. She has published articles in *Journal of Drug Use and Misuse*, *Contemporary Drug Problems*, *Medical Anthropology*, *Teaching Sociology*, *Annual Review of Sociology*, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale*, *Sociological Forum*, *Journal of Aging Studies*, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, and *Harvard Educational Review*, and several edited volumes.

MARY SUMMERS is a senior fellow in the Robert A. Fox Leadership Program and a lecturer in Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. Summers' research interests focus on the intersection between social movements and government institutions. She has published articles in *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, *Agricultural History*, *The Nation*, and several edited volumes.

SUZANNE C. TOTON is an associate professor of Christian Ethics in the Theology/Religious Studies Department of Villanova University. She is the author of *Justice Education: From Service to Solidarity* and *World Hunger: The Responsibility of Christian Education*.

HILLARY AISENSTEIN is the director of the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND), a consortium of 44 institutions of higher education in the Greater Philadelphia region seeking to help campuses connect to their communities through mutually beneficial service-learning partnerships. She serves as president of the Penn State Cooperative Extension for Philadelphia County and on the local advisory board of the West Philadelphia office of National Student Partnerships.