

These JEP Reflective Questions are designed to help you reflect upon your experiences as a volunteer so that you can make the most of your community experiences. Please use these prompts to help you think about the practical applications of your USC course work in a 'real world' context.

**Please read through all of the Reflective Questions prior to beginning your JEP assignment.** The questions are related to and build upon one other. In addition, some of the assignments depend on your observations over the course of the semester (vs. during a particular week). We encourage you to refer back to previous responses and to take seriously your PA's feedback each week. Doing so will help you to learn more from your experiences.

**\*Please refer to the PA agreement you received in training for instructions regarding journal due dates and format requirements.**

**Week One:** Describe your initial experience at your JEP assignment. What are your most vivid impressions from your first day at your site? What are some of the notable social and physical characteristics of your JEP site (for example, the number, age, sex, race, and ethnicity of the people, and the size, space, decor, noise level, etc., of the classroom, buildings, and grounds)? What are your goals and expectations for the next eight weeks?

**Week Two:** Describe the social and physical context of your JEP site. Try to be as specific as possible about the number of people that are there, as well as the age, sex, race, ethnicity, and any other significant characteristics of all those involved in your JEP assignment. Walk or look around your site and take in the environment; specifically, provide details about the size, space, decor, noise level, etc. of the classroom (or meeting room), the building(s) making up the site, its grounds, the neighborhood (or whatever you could see of the neighborhood on your way to your site). How do the aesthetics and overall feel of the site and neighborhood compare with the USC campus and/or other places you have worked or attended school? What are some of the main difference and similarities? Do you think that these differences or similarities (e.g., of the physical context of the class room) have any impact on the learning experiences of students at the site?

**Week Three:** Describe the responsibilities of your assignment. What are the particular issues, tasks or problems have you been working on? How have you attempted to address these so far? What do you hope to learn and accomplish over the next few weeks?

**Week Four:** Go to the "American Factfinder" section of the U.S. Census Bureau's website and look up demographic information about the community in which you are working: <http://factfinder.census.gov/>. Enter the zip code of the school or agency at which you are working and click "go." If you are placed at a site that serves a small neighborhood (e.g., a school), click on the "search by address" link in the box with the zip code you entered and enter the address of your site (or another address relevant to your particular JEP assignment). A Census tract link will appear near the top of the page, under the "Fact Sheet" header. Review the demographic information and explore the map features available in the chart that appears. What are some of the more interesting or surprising statistics about the community? How does the community fare in relation to Los Angeles County? How might these findings about the community relate to or inform your work at your JEP site?

**Week Five:** Describe a meaningful event or series of events (positive or negative) in which you were involved at your site, briefly describing the who, what, where, when, why, and how. Why does this event stand out as particularly important or meaningful to you? How has it affected your relationship to others at the site, your role there, and/or your perspective about your JEP assignment?

**Week Six:** Compare and contrast your experiences at your JEP site with your own K-12 education. How is the JEP site, its facilities, its approach to education and teaching, etc., similar to or different from what it was like at the schools you attended? What are some of the unique strengths of and challenges facing the students and the school? (Note: if you are not placed at a school, describe the mission of your JEP site and discuss the strengths and challenges of the particular group of people with whom you are working.)

**Week Seven:**

If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.

— Booker T. Washington

You cannot help someone get up a hill without getting closer to the top yourself.

— General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

The above quotations about volunteerism are based on the philosophy that when people volunteer to help others, they are also helping themselves. Reflect upon these quotations in relation to your own JEP volunteer experiences. In what ways have you been helped by your experiences working in the community? Have you gained skills and/or knowledge that you wouldn't have otherwise had? What motivated you to volunteer for the JEP Math Mentor program? Has the program met your expectations?

**Week Eight:** According to USC's mission statement, "The central mission of the University of Southern California is the development of human beings and society as a whole through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit. The principal means by which our mission is accomplished are teaching, research, artistic creation, professional practice and selected forms of public service".

([http://www.usc.edu/private/factbook/USCRole\\_and\\_Mission\\_Statement\\_1993.pdf](http://www.usc.edu/private/factbook/USCRole_and_Mission_Statement_1993.pdf))

Consider this statement in light of your experiences in JEP. Do you think public service-and specifically your service-learning experiences in the community via JEP-have helped to "cultivate" or "enrich" your "mind" and "spirit" and/or those of the community members with whom you worked? If so, how? If not, why not? Please describe in detail what you have gained from your experiences through JEP from an intellectual, spiritual and/or ethical perspective. How have your experiences in JEP compared to what you expected to get out of the program?