

First Year Public Service Representative / House Public Service Representative Job Description 2022-23

BACKGROUND - *The First Year Public Service Representative team* (formerly known as the First Year Council) and *The House Representative team* strategize community building initiatives and lead your peers into community-engaged commitments through residential programming. Representatives serve as a think tank that engages first-year students and upper-class students to pursue public service opportunities at Harvard College. Representatives work to provide their peers with knowledge and advice about public service opportunities. Representatives work under the guidance of the Service to Society Fellow at the Center for Public Service and the Assistant Dean of Civic Engagement and Service. They collaborate with other staff from Harvard College to develop programming, advising, and support for public service initiatives. Representatives are supported in the duties outlined below through monthly meetings and other initiatives hosted by staff at the Phillips Brooks House Center for Public Service & Engaged Scholarship. [APPLY](#) HERE.

JOB DUTIES - Representatives should be passionate about public service and will provide peers with knowledge and advice on public service opportunities with the public service offices and organizations on campus. Representatives should be enthusiastic, thoughtful, intentional, organized, and effective communicators.

Responsibilities will include:

- Attending one monthly meeting (90 minutes) each month during the academic year
- Collaborating with proctors or their respective tutors to advise peers
- Planning and hosting several public service events in collaboration with other representatives each month (refer to minimum expectations list of events/activities)
- Publicizing campus-wide public service projects in their respective first-year communities or house communities
- Attending 1 of 2 service retreats throughout the year as well as other public service related events
- Complete evaluation and 500 word blog reflection at the end of the year

Public Service Representatives will:

- Be paid a stipend of \$600 for the year
- Receive instructional training about primary public service offices/organizations
- Be provided with all necessary primary public service offices/organizations' materials and information
- Gain professional skills through regular presentations, and guest speakers which will be held during the scheduled monthly meetings/workshops.
- Be provided an opportunity and space to reflect on their time at Harvard (as public service representatives and more generally as students)
- Manage respective House or Yard residential budget for event and programming
- Build meaningful connections with their peers, supervisors and staff

TO APPLY

This position is designed for students who are passionate about public service AS WELL AS for those who want to build meaningful connections with their peers. It is imperative that the selected representatives fulfill the minimum requirements so please do not apply if you know yourself to overcommit to other extracurricular activities. Please use [this link](#) to apply for this role. MORE ABOUT THE ROLE → → →

The Public Service Representative is broken down into three sections...

1. Building Community
2. Event Planning / Promotion
3. Public Service Education

*please note that some of this is repetitive because different initiatives within the role could be placed into more than one section (e.g. retreats are both Building Community *and* Public Service Education)

Building Community

“The depth of our relationships with one another directly determines the strength of our collective action and this our collective liberation.” -adrienne maree brown, Emergent Strategy

WITH WHO?

- **EACH OTHER!** Every meeting will begin with some type of team building activity. Some of them are service-related and some are quirky and may seem or feel a bit odd. However, please know that each exercise/activity is fully intentional. You are more than welcome to share any of these in the spaces you take part in. Please note: enthusiasm and a willingness to try new things are key qualities for success in this role, so COME READY!
- **THE COMMUNITY!** As a group, we will attend one “service retreat” a semester. If we are who we say we are, taking part in service as a group and having time to reflect on it is an essential part to our mission as public service representatives. Promoting and coordinating civic engagement is important, but so is participating in it ourselves. Additionally, you will be asked to lead one event/program that’s related to a key issue area that you’re passionate about. This may be done within the Greater Boston/Cambridge community or the Harvard community... that’s up to you! We will go over this more in detail throughout the fall semester as your actual event won’t take place until the spring semester.
- **PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF!** You will work on building professional AND meaningful relationships with staff throughout the year. This is a vital part to expanding your network and practicing your people skills. You will be asked to attend Lesedi’s office hours twice a semester, one 1:1 meeting with Dean Lovett at any point in the year, and one meeting with your respective tutors/proctors once a semester. Any of these meetings can be used to go over your worksheets, but the one with your proctor/tutor will be used to plan at least one event for the year together (this can be tabling). Remember that you are representing your yard/house, but also the Center for Public

Service and Engaged Scholarship. All of these meetings should be conducted with the utmost professionalism!

Event Planning / Promotion

“What we do is more important than what we say or what we say we believe. -bell hooks”

EVENTS You will note that on the events/meetings schedule for the year, there are several options for you to fulfill the event planning portion of your role. Some of these are predetermined (e.g. tabling) and others will be determined by you (e.g. key issues project).

PROMOTION A key component to this role is promoting the different public service opportunities to your peers. Oftentimes, the best way to spread the word means subscribing and reading through the *Weekly Public Service Newsletter*. It’s extremely important that each week you take 5-10 minutes to read through what’s happening within Harvard’s public service ecosystem so that you can best service your peers (and yourself). It is your responsibility to keep up to date with the newsletter.

Public Service Education

*“Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.”
-Confucius*

MONTHLY MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS These will include departmental updates, team building activities, and moments for reflection/evaluation. Sometimes these meetings will directly relate to service and sometimes we’ll have more general conversations about social justice, leadership styles, allyship, etc. We have to be willing to have difficult and productive conversations about “service” and these workshops will allow us to reflect individually and as a group. Some examples from last year’s workshops include:

- ***Reflection on Service and Social Change*** -- Students considered how concepts of self, collective, and political efficacy intersect with public service work and can impact outcomes for personal and community growth.
- ***Leadership Styles*** -- Students participated in an exercise to determine the “type” of leader they might identify the closest with. They began to reflect on what this means for them as public service representatives and what it means more generally in their lives. Sometimes having more language to describe oneself can be both informative and liberating. We looked at what the group’s most common and uncommon leadership style was.

- ***Home for Me, Home for You*** -- Students explored activities that allowed them to think about why context (historical and current) is important and how it can impact their work.
- ***How to Be an Ally: Considering Transformative vs. Performative Allyship*** -- Students discussed several case studies and reflected on what it means to be an ally in a social movement, particularly what's most important to consider before you jump in.

RETREAT! This was explained in the **Building Community** section.

CONFERENCES Under the public service education section includes getting a glimpse into what lies at the intersection of academia and social justice/public service. This will include your attendance to one of two academic conferences at Harvard. The Public Interested Conference takes place in early February and the Scholarship and Social Justice Undergraduate Research Conference takes place in mid-April. You will also have the option to substitute these conferences for other events taking place on campus. You just need to be able to justify your decision!

Examples and Testimonies from students in this role:

Public Service Study Break in Quincy: Arts for Little Hearts By: Ellen Zhang

Reflecting on my experience at Harvard as a senior, I can say that public service has undeniably been a vital part to forming my identity as a student, community member, and leader. In service, I have found many roles, niches, and places I call home. On February 25th, I had the opportunity to organize an amazing event that truly manifested the importance of service to me. I combined my passions in service, medicine, and creativity through collaborating with [Arts for Little Hearts](#). Through this collaboration, I organized an event for students in Quincy dining hall to take a break from their studies or busy days to make and decorate stuffed hearts; these crafts, along with short notes, would ultimately be delivered to hospitalized children around the world.

Alysha, the public service tutor in Quincy House, and I worked together to make the event happen. More than dozens of students came to sew hearts together, fill it with stuffing, and then decorate their creations.



Students in Quincy dining hall sewing and decorating their stuffed hearts. As they worked, they conversed and ate the Felipe's nachos, seen in the back of the table.

This event, beyond just the arts and crafts itself, was an exciting way to meet new people and hear about their days. For me, it cool to both share the importance of the work we were doing and learn about other's range of interests. Also, many students voiced sentiments that I felt: it was wonderful to work with our hands and hold a tangible product—something that we often do not do due to our problem sets that need finishing and essays that need to be written.



One student holds their craft heart while another holds up a postcard filled with warm wishes ready to be sent.

At the end of the event, we had colorful hearts of all colors and designs. Everyone was so excited to have the kids receive the crafts—we weren't sure where they would go, but regardless, we hoped that kids would enjoy them.



Alysha, the public service tutor, and I holding our hearts that we had made for this event. We were both so proud of how the event turned out.

As Alysha and I cleaned up after the event, we reflected on how well the event went; in particular, it was great to bring service into communities and have people enjoy it as well. This event was one of the first in the semester, and it excited us for future events that we have in store. In our roles, we are eager to encourage and provide students with opportunities to think, reflect, and go about service.

As a public service representative for Lowell House, I have had the privilege of both seeing this cycle play out in my own House as well as be inspired by the service of others. In November, it was extremely memorable when we came together as a community to write thank you letters and recognize the dining hall, security guards, and custodial staff members in the House. After the event many of the House employees expressed how fortunate they feel to be a part of the Lowell community and how that drives them in their own work and service. Through this position, I have also gotten to learn about students who have committed themselves to service projects to help others and seen students in the community come out to events like our Lowell House Y2Y Deep Clean in December out of gratitude and just a strong desire to give back to the community.

Therefore, I think it is only appropriate to conclude with a little bit of gratitude to my House and to my peers. Thank you for your service and for your willingness to explore service as a community. Getting to know and work together alongside you all is definitely a part of why I feel like I am the luckiest person in the world.