Background checks and pre-service requirements may apply

First, procedures vary among partners and types of services provided. Background checks (see Appendix D for sample forms) are required for almost all projects with medical providers who frequently also require TB testing, and in a few instances, certain vaccinations are also required; this is more frequently the case with interns, who are much more involved in direct medical care, than it is with service-learning students. Students working with children under the age of 18, such as with public schools or Communities in Schools, are almost always required to have a background check; there are some exceptions for students who serve fewer than four hours per week and are never left unsupervised with children (e.g. Junior Achievement).

Many medical and educational institutions that require background checks also require drug screening, and a few will require a credit report. Depending on the community partner, and often influenced by the number of hours students serve during a semester or academic year, these screenings may be paid for by the partner. In some cases, students are required to cover these costs, so it is important to be familiar with the practices of all partners with whom you collaborate!

Also, consider how soon into the semester students should begin their service. If they will begin sooner than five or six weeks in, it is highly recommended that the screening process begin six to eight weeks before the semester begins. Depending on the number of checks and the volume of requests agencies have at a given time, checks have been known to take up to eight weeks to complete, and students cannot begin service prior to receiving clearance!

Forms also vary from partner to partner, so it is best practice to contact your upcoming partners well in advance to be sure you have the most up-to-date forms and procedures. If you require pre-registration interviews for students, that is a good time to have all these forms completed, signed, and submitted.