





























## Handout A

### Understanding Citizenship<sup>3</sup>

There are many ways to think about being a citizen. Often people think of citizenship in its most narrow, legal terms: citizens are people who have certain guaranteed rights because they were born in or became citizens of the United States. In this case a good citizen would vote and obey the law.

However, if we look at citizenship in its fullest sense, it takes on a much deeper meaning. We are citizens of a democracy. A democracy means that we are involved with how our country runs – the problems and the solutions.

We can break citizenship down into three main functions:

**Civics:** The focus here is largely on government and the services it delivers – how a bill becomes law, the branches of government, the role of elections, and legal rights. Here, the model citizen is the informed, knowledgeable voter. Between elections, the main role of the citizen is to interact with legislators and government agencies. Examples of this type of citizenship include letter writing campaigns, attending public meetings, and voting.

**Community Service Volunteer:** The focus here is on the local community. The model citizen is a volunteer. The citizen is not only someone with rights but with responsibilities. Citizenship takes place not only in government, but also in settings such as neighborhoods, religious congregations, and voluntary groups. Examples of this type of citizenship include coaching a little league team, raising money for a school, or cleaning up a local stream on Earth Day.

**Paid Public Service:** The focus here is on the citizen who is paid to either produce public things or provide a public service. This type of citizenship helps society balance the pursuit of private wealth. Examples include being a teacher, a Social Worker, an AmeriCorps member or working in the Environmental Protection Agency. It also includes a host of tangible public works like nature trails, bridges, and parks that were produced by the Civilian Conservation Corps(CCC) or Works Progress Administration (WPA).

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from *By the People*, edited by Henry Boyte

## Handout B

### **The Assets of a Community: Individual, Associations, Institutions<sup>4</sup>**

"Each community boasts a unique combination of assets upon which to build its future. A thorough map of those assets would begin with an inventory of the gifts, skills and capacities of the community's residents. Household by household, building by building, block by block, the capacity mapmakers will discover a vast and often surprising array of individual talents and productive skills, few of which are being mobilized for community-building purposes.

This basic truth about the "giftedness" of every individual is particularly important to apply to persons who often find themselves marginalized by communities. It is essential to recognize the capacities, for example, of those who have been labeled mentally handicapped or disabled, or of those who are marginalized because they are too old, or too young, or too poor. In a community whose assets are being fully recognized and mobilized, these people too will be part of the action, not as clients or recipients of aid, but as full contributors to the community-building process.

In addition to mapping the gifts and skills of individuals, and of households and families, the committed community builder will compile an inventory of citizens' associations. These associations, less formal and much less dependent upon paid staff than are formal institutions, are the vehicles through which citizens in the U.S. assemble to solve problems, or to share common interests and activities.

It is usually the case that the depth and extent of associational life in any community is vastly underestimated. This is particularly true of lower income communities. In fact, however, though some parts of associational life may have dwindled in very low-income neighborhoods, most communities continue to harbor significant numbers of associations with religious, cultural, athletic, recreational and other purposes. Community builders soon recognize that these groups are indispensable tools for development, and that many of them can in fact be stretched beyond their original purposes and intentions to become full contributors to the development process.

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, by J. Kretzmann, and J. McKnight, ACTA Publications, Chicago, IL. 1993.

Handout B continued

Beyond the individuals and local associations that make up the asset base of communities are all of the more formal institutions that are located in the community. Private business; public institutions such as schools, libraries, parks, police and fire stations; nonprofit institutions such as hospitals, and social service agencies – these organizations make up the most visible and formal part of a community's fabric. Accounting for them in full, and enlisting them in the process of community development, is essential to the success of the process. For community builders, the process of mapping the institutional assets of the community will often be much simpler than that of making an inventory involving individuals and associations. But establishing within each institution a sense of responsibility for the health of the local community, along with mechanisms that allow communities to influence and even control some aspects of the institution's relationships with its local neighborhood, can prove much more difficult. Nevertheless, a community that has located and mobilized its entire base of assets will clearly feature heavily involved and invested local institutions.

Individuals, associations and institutions - these three major categories contain within them much of the asset base of every community. ....

... First, focusing on the assets of lower income communities does not imply that these communities do not need additional resources from the outside. Rather, it simply suggests that outside resources will be much more effectively used if the local community is itself full mobilized and invested, and if it can define the agendas for which additional resources must be obtained.

Second, the discussion of asset-based community development is intended to affirm, and to build upon the remarkable work already going on in neighborhoods across the country.

## Handout C

### Field Assignment #3 - Valuing Differences

1. In order to meet the goal of valuing differences, first consider the aspects of your work that matter to you. Then find and interview someone at your service site whose view of any of these aspects is different from your own. (You may have to interview more than one person to achieve this end.)
2. After the interview, prepare a two-to-three-minute oral report for the group in which you:
  - A. Identify the aspect of work you considered and describe the difference between your view of it and that of the person(s) you interviewed.
  - B. Give at least one reason why it is important for you to understand this different viewpoint.
  - C. Explain why you will or will not incorporate this different viewpoint into your service.

If you are having trouble with this assignment, discuss it with other people or your Program Director to get ideas on how you can accomplish this task.

3. As a resource for completing this assignment, please read Handout B, "The Assets of a Community: Individual, Associations, Institutions."

## Handout D

### The Learning Store, Session 3

In order to help us better serve your learning needs, and to help you reinforce your own learning, please take a few minutes and thoughtfully answer the following questions about today's session. Please give this completed form to your facilitator. Thanks very much for your input.

Name:

1. Please list at least three things you learned or relearned today that you think will come in handy.
2. What did you find the most useful in the Field Assignment?
3. Was there anything you found less useful in today's session? If so, what was it?
4. What did you especially like about today's session?
5. What aspect(s) of this session could be changed to make it better in the future?