

SESSION 9

REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

Purposes

- To inventory members' accomplishments and place them in the context of AmeriCorps' mission.
- To help members identify the skills and knowledge gained from their AmeriCorps service.
- To give members an opportunity to evaluate what they felt were the most important components of their service.
- To engage members in creating an action plan for future civic involvement.

Session at a Glance

Min	Activities	Materials
25	1 Welcome, Warm Up	Binders, prepared wall chart
35	2 What Have We Accomplished?	Calculators, Handout A, blank wall charts, and markers
25	3 Skills and Knowledge Gained from Service	Handout B, prepared wall chart
25	4 What Was Important?	Handout C, blank wall charts, markers
10	5 Field Assignment #9, The Learning Store	Handouts D & E

Preparation for the Session

1. Remind members to bring their binders to the session.
2. Write session purposes on a wall chart.
3. Prepare two wall charts:
 - a) Purposes of this session.
 - b) Activity # 3, Step 4 – write the task.
4. Prepare the month-by-month list of memorable events as discussed in Activity #1.
5. Collect enough calculators so there is one for each small group in Activity #2.
6. Copy and punch Handouts A – E.

Activity #1

Welcome and Warm Up

25 minutes

STEPS

1. Welcome members and review the purposes of the session using the prepared wall chart.
2. Ask members to open their binders and read Training Objective #9, page 13.
3. Call for and respond to any questions about the purposes of the session or Training Objective #9.

Warm-Up Exercise

Facilitator Note: The purpose of this activity is to build group cohesiveness and help members recall events and feelings from their service experiences. It is similar to the visualization exercise conducted in Session 3.

To prepare for this activity, you'll need a month-by-month list of memorable events of the members' service. The list can include times when members worked together on a project or participated in a training event. If applicable, include poignant, shared memories from your community or the outside world.

STEPS

1. Ask members to sit back, relax and close their eyes. Tell them that you are going to take them back to the beginning of their service.
2. When everyone is settled, briefly describe the date and setting of the first time the group got together. Mention a few things that you remember, noticed, or felt from that time.
3. Ask the group. "What are some of the things you remember from this time? What were some of the things you were feeling?"
4. Field responses. *Members may call out responses with their eyes open or closed.*
5. Describe highlights of the next month, and then ask the group, "What are some of the things you remember from this month? What were some of the things you were feeling?"
6. Continue this month by month until you reach the present.

7. End with a brief description of the current month and ask: "What are some of the things that are happening now? What are some of the things you are feeling?"
8. Thank members for their responses. Make the transition to the next activity by pointing out that in this session they will be reflecting on the events, accomplishments, knowledge, and skills they have gained from their service. They will then evaluate what they think are the most important aspects of this experience.

Activity #2

What Have We Accomplished?

35 minutes

STEPS

1. Introduce the activity by informing members that they will create a master list of the group's accomplishments during their service by reviewing the outcomes from Field Assignment #8. The goal is to see how their service has been part of the bigger picture of AmeriCorps' work.
2. Ask members to break into small groups of approximately ten people each. *(If the large group is made up of members from different service areas, have them break into groups with other members who performed similar service.)*
3. Have each group choose a person to record responses on a wall chart.
4. Pass out one calculator to each group and Handout A, page 174, to each person.
5. After the groups finish their lists (about 20 minutes), post the wall charts side by side and give the members time to read them.
6. Ask the large group, "What are some of your thoughts and feelings about these lists?"
7. Close the activity by thanking members for their service.

Talking points:

- Members are part of something bigger than themselves or this office. If they had expanded their lists to include the service of the 50,000 AmeriCorps members nationwide, they can imagine the full impact of what they have contributed to America.
- If you feel that members' successful service has given meaning to your work and to the work of other staff members, thank them for their contributions.
- Make the transition to the next activity by pointing out that as impressive as these lists are, they are only a part of their service. In the next activity, they will examine those aspects of their service that cannot be quantified.

Activity #3

Skills and Knowledge Gained from Service

25 minutes

STEPS

1. Inform members that during this activity they will be making an inventory of the new skills and knowledge they acquired as well as the existing skills and knowledge that they strengthened during their AmeriCorps service. This inventory will be useful when writing their résumés, applying for jobs or for entrance to institutions of higher learning.
2. Pass out Handout B, page 175. Give members ten minutes to read and work on it independently.
3. Ask members to form triads.
4. Post the prepared wall chart with tasks and review with the members the following task for discussion:

“Strut your stuff. Imagine you are on a job interview and you need to articulate the skills you can bring to an organization.”

Members should take a few minutes to describe their accomplishments and the skills and knowledge gained during their service. They should use active verbs in their descriptions. (*Examples of active verbs are included in Handout B.*)

After describing their accomplishments, members should brainstorm ideas in their small groups to expand their lists or suggest ways their skills can be more clearly articulated.

5. Close the activity by thanking members and summarizing main points.

Talking Points:

- There are many books that can help them organize their previous work experiences to make the leap into new careers; including *What Color is Your Parachute?* by Richard Bolles and *Next Steps, Life After AmeriCorps* by Nedra Klee Hartzell.

Activity #4

What Was Important?

25 minutes

STEPS

1. Point out that now that members have listed their accomplishments, skills, and knowledge, they will evaluate what they think are the most important components of their service.
2. Pass out Handout C, page 179. Distribute blank wall charts.
3. Give members five minutes to read and work on it independently.
4. Ask members to form the same small groups as in Activity #2.
5. Ask members to share their responses in the small groups, summarize them, and write them on a wall chart.
6. Hang the wall charts. *If the room is large enough, display the wall charts so that all may see them.*
7. Ask, "What are some of your thoughts and feelings about these lists?"
8. Close the activity by summarizing the following points:

Talking points:

- The room is filled with lists of accomplishments, skills and knowledge. Their service is something they can be proud of for the rest of their lives.
- The next step is to see how information from these lists can tie into their action plans for future civic service.

Facilitator's Note: if you had an extra 20 minutes for this activity, you might consider having the members create a "civic story"⁸ and then share it in small groups. The story would be constructed from the following questions:

- *If you were to look at your AmeriCorps work as an ongoing story, who are the main characters? What is the setting? What have been the major plot points? What have been the points of conflict? How have these conflicts been resolved? What is the moral of the story? What lessons have you learned?*

⁸ *By The People*, edited by Henry Boyte

Activity #5

Field Assignment #9 and The Learning Store

10 minutes

STEPS

1. Pass out Handout D, Field Assignment #9, Action Planning, page 180.
2. Ask people to read it. Call for and respond to questions.
3. Pass back previous Learning Stores and distribute Handout E, page 184, the one for this session.

SESSION 9

MATERIALS

Handout A, Quantifying Your Accomplishments	- 1 page
Handout B, Skills and Knowledge Gained in Service	- 3 pages
Handout C, What is Important?	- 1 page
Handout D, Field Assignment #9	- 4 pages
Handout E, The Learning Store	- 1 page

Handout A

Quantifying Your Accomplishments

25 minutes

In your small group you are going to combine the accomplishments of individual member's service.

Using your responses to Field Assignment #8 as a starting point, work in your group to make a list of its members' collective accomplishments. Quantify and total the results of any activity from which individuals in your group earned service hours credit. For example, if two members of your group tutored children, calculate the total number of children they tutored. If three people installed locks in a safety project, estimate the total number of locks they installed. List and quantify all accomplishments in any way that makes sense to your group.

Write your findings on a wall chart.

Hang the wall charts at the front of the room.

Handout B

Skills and Knowledge Gained from Service

10 minutes

On your résumé you will outline your accomplishments. In an interview, you will articulate the skills and knowledge you gained from these accomplishments. These are necessary steps in describing how your skills and knowledge can be applied to a new situation.

Thinking back on your service, and using the attached list as a starting point, note the skills and knowledge you acquired during your AmeriCorps service.

You will have an opportunity to discuss and expand this list with others.

Handout B continued

Skills and Knowledge¹

Analyzing/Planning

Studied and reported data
Compiled statistics
Integrated data from many
sources
Analyzed and critiqued
information
Evaluated activities
Set goals and formulated plans
to reach them
Prioritized tasks or projects
Broke down projects into doable
tasks
Met deadlines
Conducted a survey

Managing

Administered programs
Made work assignments
Supervised others
Interviewed applicants
Developed policy
Organized work
Delegated tasks
Made decisions
Met required deadlines
Planned agendas
Worked well with others
Monitored progress
Solved problems
Led meetings

¹ List was partially taken from Skills and Interest Self Assessment, by Robert Calvert. Returned Volunteer Services, Washington D.C.

Handout B continued

Interactive/People Skills

Arranged social functions
Initiated contacts with strangers
Offered support to those in need
Followed directions
Made and kept contacts
Interviewed people
Promoted an event or an idea
Raised money
Recruited volunteers
Motivated others
Convinced others of the merit of
an idea or project

Instructing

Taught
Tutored
Counseled
Set up demonstrations
Developed lessons or materials
Led a group
Made a presentation
Researched information

Manual/Technical Skills

Assembled or installed
Constructed or built
Repaired
Operated equipment or machinery
Read drawings or plans
labored outdoors
Learned a technical skill
Calculated data
Used a computer

Handout B continued

Artistic Skills

Designed posters
Developed exhibits
Sketched charts or diagrams
Illustrated publications
Took photos
Performed

Accounting/Communication Skills

Kept financial records
Stayed within a budget
Developed a budget
Wrote letters
Wrote reports
Placed information with the media
Spoke in public
Proofread or edited materials
Recorded information

Handout C

What Was Important?

5 minutes

Your AmeriCorps director has given your phone number to a prospective member who has been accepted into the program. You were chosen because this person is similar to you in age and background.

The prospective member calls you one evening and in the course of your conversation tells you that he is having second thoughts about serving in AmeriCorps.

The person asks you, "When you look back on your service, what do you remember the most? Could you tell me the three most important things you personally got out of your service with AmeriCorps?"

Take the next five minutes to organize your thoughts and jot down the three points that you would include in a response to this person.

Handout D

Planning Worksheet

Some of us like to think about and plan for the future. Some of us enjoy living in the present and value the experience of unplanned discovery. Whether or not you are a planner, take a few moments to read the following:¹

All things are created twice: There's a mental or first creation and a physical or second creation. Take, for example, the building of a house. You create it in your mind before you hammer in the first nail. You want to make sure that you've thought things through, that the blueprint—the first creation—is really what you want. If you want a family-centered home, you plan a family room where everyone can gather.

As Covey states, "The carpenter's rule is "measure twice, cut once." You want to make sure that the blueprint, the first creation, is really what you want, that you've thought things through."

To varying degrees, we use this principle in many different areas of life from cooking a meal to planning a trip.

While it's true that all things are created twice, not all first creations are by conscious design. If we do not develop our own self-knowledge and become responsible for our own first creations, other people or circumstances will shape our choices for us. We then live reactively by following the scripts handed to us by others. We can be either the second creation of our own planning or the second creation of past habits or other people's agendas.

Your last field assignment asks you to continue developing your first creation – your mental picture of your future citizenship goals and activities. To do this, please complete the Citizenship Action Plan found in this handout. During Session 10, we will share our plans.

¹ Adapted from *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, by Steven Covey.

Handout D continued

In writing your plan, you may find it helpful to review the citizenship framework² from Session 3. Here it is: 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 the volunteer. The citizen is not only someone with rights but with responsibilities. Citizenship takes place not only in government, but also especially 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 here include being a teacher, a Social Worker, and AmeriCorps member, or working in the Environmental Protection Agency. It also includes the 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).

If you have become very interested in a public problem, but you are not sure how to present it, just write it in your action plan. In Session 10 you will get help from your colleagues as you discuss the plans. For example, perhaps in the course of your AmeriCorps service, inner-city economic development efforts lit you up. Write this down even though you are unsure of how you may become involved in the future. Perhaps some of the other members will have ideas that spark your interest during Session 10.

One last note before you embark on your plan: Please make sure to include future actions that are part of the “civics” category, such as voting or working on an election.

² Adapted from *By The People*, ed. Henry Boyte.

Handout E

The Learning Store, Session 9

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?