

SESSION 3

YOU AND COMMUNITY - THERE'S HISTORY

Purposes

- To deepen members' understanding of the concept of citizenship.
- To produce an asset-based Community Inventory.
- To explore uses of the Community Inventory.
- To relate self and family history to the deepened understanding of citizenship.
- To connect and practice interviewing skills with valuing differences.

Session at a Glance

Mins	Activities	Materials	
20	1	Welcome, Understanding Citizenship	Binders, prepared wall charts, list of eight citizenship behaviors, Handout A
45	2	Reports on Field Assignment #2 - Creating a Community Inventory. Discuss the uses of the Inventory and lessons learned about Interviewing	Prepared wall chart, Handout B
30	3	Self-History and Citizenship	Prepared and blank wall charts, markers
25	5	Valuing Differences – Exercise and Field Assignment #3	Handout C, potatoes
10	6	The Learning Store	Handout D

Preparation for the Session

1. Remind members to bring their binders and field assignments to the session. Let them know that this session will be ten minutes longer than previous sessions.
2. Prepare four wall charts:
 - a) Purposes of session.
 - b) Write each of these words on a separate chart: Civics; Community Service Volunteer; Paid Public Service (for Activity #1, Step 3).
 - c) Summarize group instructions (for Activity #2, Step 3).
 - d) As directed in Activity #3, Step 4.
3. Copy and punch Handouts A – D.
4. Decide how the AmeriCorps sponsor office would like to make the Community Inventory sheets available to members. You may want to decide this with the members. One idea is to put them in a binder that members can access to make copies. If members are interested, a system can be devised so they can add to the Inventory, either now or in the future.
5. During this session you will start the process of setting up a panel of speakers for Session 5. Before inviting panelists, read through Session 5 to understand the purpose of the panel and to become familiar with preparation you will need to do.
6. Have a dozen markers, tape, and extra blank wall chart paper for Activity #3.
7. Buy enough potatoes so that each member has one. It is best to buy less expensive, all-purpose potatoes because there is more variability in their sizes and shapes.

Activity #1

Welcome and Exercise “Understanding Citizenship”

20 minutes

STEPS

1. Welcome members and review purposes of the session using the prepared wall chart.
2. Ask members to read Training Objectives #4 and #5 from their binders page 10.
3. Call for and respond to any questions about the purpose of the session or the objectives.
4. Tell members that you are going to introduce today’s session on Citizenship with a short exercise.

Understanding Citizenship

STEPS

1. Begin this activity by asking the group: “What does the term, ‘citizenship’ mean to you?”
(Accept all answers.)
2. After you have recognized all responses, read or say in your own words, the following¹:

“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 a government “by and of the people” and that we are involved with how our country runs – the problems and the solutions.”

(At this point pause for a few moments and let the members absorb what you have just read.)

¹ *By The People*, edited by Henry Boyte.

3. Ask members to pay special attention to the description of the citizenship framework that you will read. Inform them that they will be asked to categorize citizenship behaviors according to this framework.

(Post the three wall charts with these functions and read the following)

We can break citizenship down into three main functions:

Civics: The focus here is largely on government and services – 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 service include letter writing campaigns, attending public meetings, and voting.

Community Service Volunteer: The focus here is on local communities. The model citizen is a volunteer. The citizen is not only someone with rights but with responsibilities. Citizenship takes place in settings such as neighborhoods, religious congregations, and voluntary groups. Examples of this citizenship service 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. Examples here include being an AmeriCorps member, a teacher, a social worker or working in the Environmental Protection Agency. It also includes the host of tangible public works like building and maintaining nature trails, bridges, and parks.

4. In order to check and reinforce members' understanding of citizenship, read the list of the following eight citizenship behaviors. After each one, ask members to classify each according to the three areas of citizen involvement you just presented: civics, community service, or paid public service. Compare their responses to the correct matches listed after each behavior.

- A. Vote (*civics*)
- B. Coach a little league team (*community service volunteer*)
- C. Tutor children in a homeless shelter (*community service volunteer*)
- D. Obey the law (*civics*)
- E. Teach in a public school (*paid public service*)
- F. Pay taxes (*civics*)
- G. Visit with seniors at a Senior Center (*community service volunteer*)
- H. Join AmeriCorps (*paid public service and community service*)

5. Close this activity by handing out Handout A, page 75, thanking members for their responses, and summarizing the main points.

Talking Points

- This short activity was designed to help deepen your understanding of the concept of citizenship.
- The main point to remember is that citizenship is a much richer idea than voting and paying taxes. It encompasses a philosophy of service, both unpaid and paid.
- This notion of citizenship is described in Handout A that members can add to their binders for future reference.
- Later in this session, we will examine how we have benefited from others' citizenship and what members and their families have contributed to citizenship.

7. Make the transition to Activity #2 by informing the members that they will discuss what they learned by doing Field Assignment #2.

Activity #2

Field Assignment #2, Creating a Community Inventory

40 minutes

Facilitator Note: In today's session, it is important to stress the importance of looking at a community in relationship to its assets as well as its needs. The concept that strengthening a community starts with an asset-based Community Inventory is further explained in Handout B, page 76.

STEPS

1. Inform members that in this activity, they will each present a three-minute report on the findings from their Field Assignments.
2. Break up into small groups no larger than five members per group. Ask each group to select a timekeeper who will indicate when the three minutes for each report are up.
3. Post the wall charts summarizing these instructions:
 - a) Members make a three-minute report on the organizations they interviewed. Each report should describe those aspects of the organization that are most interesting or helpful to the group.
 - b) After the reports, group members discuss what they learned about conducting an interview. Members should describe:
 - What they did well in the interview
 - What was the most difficult part
 - What they could improve
 - c) Ask the members to discuss what they found in this Inventory that they think will be useful to them in their current or future service.

Let the groups know they have 30 minutes for their discussions.

4. Bring the large group together and take five minutes to discuss the last question, "By doing the Inventory, what did you discover that will be useful in your current or future service?"
5. Close the activity by summarizing any striking points of the discussion. Collect the Community Inventory sheets.

6. Inform the members that the Community Inventory will be expanded in Session 5 when they hear from a panel of people who work in various community organizations. Pass out Handout B, page 76, for the members to put in their binders and read as part of their next Field Assignment.

7. Since it is nearing the time for you to start inviting the panelists, ask the group if there is anyone they would like to see included or any organization they would like to see represented on the panel.

Activity #3

Self-History and Citizenship

30 minutes

Facilitator Note: The purpose of this activity is:

- *To continue deepening AmeriCorps members' understanding of citizenship by categorizing examples from their own lives.*
- *To expand on the theme of an "asset-based community inventory" by having members list more common assets found in many communities.*
- *To develop the premise, introduced in Session 1, that self-knowledge and community service are closely linked.*
- *To strengthen members' belief in the importance of community service by recognizing the organizations that have already affected their lives.*

STEPS

1. Introduce this activity by informing the members that they are going to expand on an idea introduced in Session 1: That self-knowledge and service are closely linked. In Session 1, they explored self-knowledge through personality types. In this exercise they'll explore personal history as an important aspect of self-knowledge. They'll also discover how their personal history reveals significant links to community service.

Facilitator's Note: You will lead members through a visualization exercise in which they will be asked to recall experiences or events in their lives that we will then link to citizenship. To conduct the exercise, you can either read the visualization text below or put the content in your own words.

2. Inform the members that you will be taking them through a visualization exercise that will bring back memories of citizenship activities that have touched their lives. Members can close their eyes while you are reading and then open them to write responses in their binders.

3. Instruct members to sit back and get comfortable. Read the following:

"Think back to when you were very young, perhaps three to seven years old. Remember where you lived, your home, your street or neighborhood. What did your parents or guardians look like? Who were the other people who lived in your house? What did you do during the day - go to a day care, a public park or playground, or someplace else? Did you visit a library, church or other community organization? As you think back to this time, try to remember what civic organizations, activities or services you or your family were involved with or otherwise benefited from?" *(Pause)*

Give members a minute to write their answers.

“Remember back to when you were 8 – 12 years old. What did you look like? Where did you go to school? Who were your friends? How did you like to spend your time? Were you in Scouts, Little League, church groups? Did you march in town parades? Did you ever go to a polling station with an adult? Did you attend a community summer camp or youth center? Did you plant trees on Arbor Day or clean up on Earth Day? Do you remember a time when an ambulance or fire truck assisted someone you knew? List all of the community events, services or organizations that you or your family joined, were involved with or benefited from at this time.” *(Pause)*

Give members a minute to write their answers.

“Remember back when you were a teenager, 13 – 18 years old. Who were your friends? What did they look like? How did you dress, wear your hair? Did you have hobbies or a part-time job? Did you play a sport? What did you do after school or on the weekends? Did you, a family member, or a close friend ever need assistance from a counselor or a social worker? When you were a teen, what civic organizations or activities did you or your family participate in or benefit from?” *(Pause)*

Give members a minute to write their answers.

“Lastly, think of yourself as an adult. How have you changed over the years? Whom do you live with? Do you belong to a neighborhood organization? What do you do for recreation? Have you gone to a park, library, museum or other civic facility? Do you go to church or play in a town athletic league? Have you ever worked on a political campaign or run for office? Now, as an adult, what civic organizations or activities do you and your family participate in or benefit from?” *(Pause)*

Give members a minute to write their answers.

While they are writing their answers, hang extra blank charts next to the three wall charts labeled, “Civics,” “Community Volunteer” and “Paid Public Service” so the members can use them to create their lists in the next step.

4. a) Referring to the three charts, remind the members of the three categories of citizenship they learned about in Activity #1.
 - b) Tell them to take ten minutes and individually list on the relevant wall chart the citizenship activities that they or their families have benefited from or been involved with.
 - c) Let them know that they should feel free to add activities that they may have forgotten to write in their notes.

d) Tell them that if someone has already written down an activity similar to their own, they can just make a check mark next to that activity.

e) Invite members to write freely on the wall charts as they think of these activities. Encourage discussion and re-writing.

Facilitator's Note: This may take a bit of time as members look at others' responses, discuss which category an organization may fit under, and add to the wall charts.

5. Bring the group together after ten minutes. Ask, "What is striking or interesting about the lists we've just compiled?"

6. Then ask the group, "How important has citizenship been to our lives? Why?"

7. Close this activity by recognizing and thanking members for all of their past and present contributions to good citizenship.

Talking Points

- Invite members to consider that these organizations and services could not exist without dedicated, caring volunteers or public servants.
- Challenge them with the idea that if they want a better life for themselves and future generations, and if they want America's legacy of strong civic involvement to continue, they need to stay involved in as many aspects of good citizenship as they can.

Activity #4

Introduction to Seeking out Differences

20 minutes

Exercise: "Your Potato"²

STEPS

1. Inform the members that they will participate in an exercise to introduce the topic of seeking differences as the first step towards valuing them.
2. Have each member choose a potato from the bag. Instruct the members to take a minute to examine their potatoes carefully, get the feel of them, their weight and peculiarities. Ask them to discuss the characteristics of their potatoes with the people next to them until they are able to recognize their potatoes with their eyes closed.
3. Ask the members to form pairs. One person holds both potatoes while the other, with eyes shut, tries to identify his or her own. Reverse the process.
4. Ask the members to take their potatoes and form a large circle. (If the group has 20 or more members, form two circles.) Collect all the potatoes from people in the circle and pass the potatoes behind members' backs. Keep the potatoes circulating until everyone has his or her own potato. The exercise ends when everyone recognizes his or her own potato.
5. To process this exercise, ask these two questions:
 - a.) **"What was your first impression when you were given your potato?"**
(Sample replies: All potatoes are alike. This exercise is silly. Potatoes aren't different enough to tell apart.)
 - b.) **"What was striking about doing the exercise?"**
(Sample replies: All potatoes are really different. I started to care about my potato. You think it is going to be impossible to find your potato, but it is possible.)
6. Make the transition to the field assignment by summarizing how this exercise can illustrate the value of seeking out differences.

² Adapted from *Training For Transformation*, by Anne Hope and Sally Timmel

Talking Points

- At first impression, the bag of potatoes looks ordinary and common, something to dismiss.
- By putting effort into learning more about potatoes, just like putting effort into learning more about our communities, we can see individual differences.
- Through a conscious effort to learn the differences in our community, members will gain knowledge, a sense of ownership, and a realization of the unique and special characteristics of individuals in the community.

Activity #5

The Learning Store

Field Assignment #3, Valuing Differences

10 minutes

STEPS

1. Pass out Handout C, Field Assignment #3, page 78.
2. Ask members to read the field assignment. Answer any questions.
3. Pass back previous Learning Stores and distribute Handout D, page 79, for this session.

SESSION 3

MATERIALS

Handout A, Understanding Citizenship	- 1 page
Handout B, Assets of a Community	- 2 pages
Handout C, Field Assignment #3	- 1 page
Handout D, The Learning Store	- 1 page

Handout A

Understanding Citizenship³

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).

³ Adapted from *By the People*, edited by Henry Boyte

Handout B

The Assets of a Community: Individual, Associations, Institutions⁴

“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.

⁴ 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?