

Building Team Spirit within the Corps – “A Complete Picture”

The primary goal of this training is to use the exercises in the beginning months of orientation and training with national service participants (AmeriCorps, VISTA and Senior Corps).

Team Building Exercise

This exercise focuses on orienting AmeriCorps members to the community, to one another and to national service. This activity will assist in initiating a “team” atmosphere. Use this exercise in the beginning of members’ development. In this stage the members are getting to know one another. Many people will have “walls” up and others will be willing and ready to share information about themselves with other Corps members. It is important to be sensitive to this fact and be willing to make adaptations to the exercises according to the group atmosphere.

This is a critical time to stress the fact that the local AmeriCorps program is part of a larger picture-National Service. (This exercise can be used for VISTA and Senior Corps members as well.) The facilitators’ goals should be getting the Corps members comfortable with one another and setting up roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the Corps members for their term of service. Open communication is a key element in this phase.

Exercise/Activity: A Complete Picture

(Source: Corps Design by DynaTEAM Consulting)

Type of Training: Team Builder

Goals:

- ✓ To provide understanding of National Service
- ✓ To foster communication
- ✓ To build group, local program and state cohesiveness

Time: 30 – 45 minutes

Materials:

- Large Sheets of Paper (flip chart size)
- Colored Markers
- Tape

Introduction: This exercise will help the members understand the role that AmeriCorps has as a nation and statewide movement. Members will more fully appreciate their contribution to a large scale effort to provide service to the community across America. This exercise would be great to use after the statewide AmeriCorps conference.

Instructions:

Write the provided questions on large sheets of paper (one per paper). Hang the paper around the room. Give each Member a marker and ask them to circulate the room and respond to the statements and questions in writing. Distribute the sheets of paper to various Members and instruct them to read the responses aloud to the group. Facilitate a group discussion using the provided processing questions that follow.

Questions to write on Large Paper:

1. What does it mean to you to be an AmeriCorps Member?
2. What common link do you have with all the other Members in the state and nation?
3. What is special or unique about being an AmeriCorps Member?
4. How does AmeriCorps as a large concept make a difference in our state and country?
5. How does our state and country benefit from AmeriCorps?
6. What special role does our local program play in the state and national movement?
7. How will AmeriCorps be remembered in years to come?
8. How can unity be instilled in all of the programs nationwide?

Processing:

- How did you feel as you read the statement and questions?
- What was the central theme in this exercise?
- How did you feel about the responses given to the questions?
- How can we strive to remember the large whole of which we are a part?

Special Tips:

Feel free to modify the provided questions as you see fit.

Be sure to bring in specific points regarding AmeriCorps as a state and national movement during the processing. Revisit this exercise periodically to remind Members of the big picture and connection to National Service. Provide a list other programs within the state to connect the Members on a state level and to show the diversity of the programs. This is an excellent way for the Members to network and share ideas.

Additional Resources:

For more information about National Service in Nebraska visit:

- http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/about/about_national_service.htm
- <http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/amicorps/amicorps.htm>
- <http://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/state-profiles/ne>