

Close of Service Gathering

*NOTE: Although the exercise refers to AmeriCorps*VISTA and AmeriCorps, the exercise can be adapted for all national or community service groups.*

Overview:

This end of year gathering serves as a final time for the entire corps. It is a reflection and celebration of the work AmeriCorps*VISTA members have accomplished both individually and collectively. It's also a final time for members to engage with one another during their year of service.

Possible Placements in Year:

This gathering falls at the end of the service year, typically three or four weeks before the final day of service.

Goals/ Learning Outcomes:

AmeriCorps*VISTA members will reflect on their accomplishments throughout the year, and share their future plans.

Duration:

1-4 hours (It's up to the AmeriCorps program and how much they want to include in the time allotted for the gathering and possibly incorporate more celebratory activities.

Materials:

Worksheet, Pens, Flipcharts, Food

Agenda/Outline:

Final Accomplishments/Challenges: 1 – 2 hours

AmeriCorps*VISTA members are given a half sheet of paper asking them to write down their proudest accomplishment and one challenge they overcame during their year of service. In the large group, members each share aloud their responses. Accomplishments and challenges can be of either a personal or professional nature. The corps shares this activity as one large group as to demonstrate the collective accomplishments and growth of the community throughout the year.

Unanswered Questions: 30 minutes

Time is provided for the AmeriCorps*VISTA Leaders and Program Director to answer any questions members have regarding their final month of service. The Segal Education Award can be discussed at this time, and any other questions or concerns are addressed.

Evaluations: 15 - 30minutes

AmeriCorps*VISTA members complete an evaluation of the training programming for the entire year of service. Feedback from these evaluations is crucial to the on-going development of the training orientation program.

One Thing You're Taking Away: 45 - 60 minutes

As the final reflective activity for the year, AmeriCorps*VISTA members are asked to share one thing they are taking away from their year of service. This exercise is facilitated in the large group and in an open-ended manner. It creates an opportunity for members to reflect and share as much or as little as they want. By creating the space for all members' voices to be heard, everyone can fully reflect on their year of service.

Where Will You Go Next?: 30 minutes

AmeriCorps*VISTA members share out in the large group what their plans are following the completion of their year of service. Members enjoy the opportunity to hear from all individuals what their next steps will be.

Attachments:

Accomplishments/Challenges Worksheet

Source: Adapted from the Massachusetts Campus Compact training curriculum written and compiled by Bonnie Grassie-Hughes

Additional Resources:

- Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps/segal-ameri-corps-education-award>
- AmeriCorps Alums <http://www.americorpsalums.org/>

Final Accomplishments/Challenges Worksheet

What is the one thing you're most proud of accomplishing this year?

What is one challenge you overcame?

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