

# **SECTION C**

## **TRAINING TOPICS & ACTIVITIES**

### **CONTENTS**

Chapter 6: What Every Member Must Know

Chapter 7: AmeriCorps Affiliation and Teambuilding

Chapter 8: Leadership and Self-Understanding

Chapter 9: Working Effectively in Groups

Chapter 10: Organizational Culture and Norms

Chapter 11: Diversity and Multiculturalism

Chapter 12: Community-Related Skills

Chapter 13: Planning and Evaluation

Chapter 14: Community Projects

## Introduction

### SCOPE OF THE TRAINING TOPICS & ACTIVITIES SECTION

This section of the manual addresses a number of general or cross-cutting skills -- skills which all members will find useful regardless of their priority area or specific project assignment.

**This is the "recipe" section of the manual -- it is designed to provide you with content information and sample activities covering the topics often included in AmeriCorps pre-service training.**

**Not** included in this section, nor in this manual, are sample activities for teaching technical skills in the focus areas of education, public safety, human needs, and the environment. For example, you will not find an activity that teaches members how to teach literacy to adults or how fix to a roof. The Corporation has funded other national training and technical assistance providers in some technical skills. See *Section D: Resources* for a list of the other national training and technical assistance providers, page 625. You **will** find in the Training Topics & Activities chapters case studies, scenarios, and examples based on projects in each of the priority areas. These are designed to help members develop and learn how to apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes useful regardless of their specific assignments.

The Training Topics & Activities chapters cover some of the skills and projects no longer required by the Corporation. Because they are encouraged and reinforce an ethic of service among AmeriCorps members, they are included. Specifically, communication and conflict resolution are covered in *Chapter 9: Working Effectively in Groups*, page 359.

### USING THE ACTIVITIES

Each chapter in this section includes sample activities for members, as well as an introduction and supporting information related to that chapter's topic. Each activity includes Trainer's Notes and Member Instructions; some also include worksheets or other handouts. Included in the Trainer's Notes are boxes with information for preparing newsprint or overheads related to the activity topic. Trainer's Notes provide specific directions for the trainer and list equipment needed for the activity, time required, and learning objectives, as well as providing hints for using the activities successfully and things to watch out for.

The Trainer's Notes and Supporting Information together provide the information needed for lecturettes and for helping trainers to answer questions about the topic area. Some chapters cover broad topics which may be presented in several different training units within

your overall PST schedule. For example, *Chapter 8: Leadership and Self-Understanding*, page 311, might help you develop one unit with activities on self-knowledge and self-assessment, and another unit with activities focusing on understanding other people and their motivations and interests.

The activities provided in the following chapters are both recipes and samples. Hopefully, you will be able to use many of them in your PST. The activities also illustrate how to present general or cross-cutting skills and related knowledge and attitudes in your PST using the training methods advocated in the Training Design section and described by AmeriCorps in its guidelines (see the shaded box below). These activities can give you ideas and models for developing your own activities.

### RESOURCES: REQUEST COPIES OF ACTIVITIES ON DISK

To make activities easier to modify, a computer disk (WordPerfect 5.1/5.2 files) of the worksheets and activities has been included with the manual. For additional copies, contact:

Corporation for National Service  
Training and Technical Assistance Unit  
(202) 606-5000 ext. 106

or

National Service Resource Center  
ETR Associates  
P.O. Box 1830  
Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1830  
Telephone: (800) 860-2684 or  
(831) 438-4060

TTY: (831) 461-0205

Fax: (831) 438-3618

E-mail: [jennifer@etr-associates.org](mailto:jennifer@etr-associates.org)

WWW: <http://www.etr.org/NSRC>

**Few of these activities should simply be copied and used without modification.** You should select activities that fit the objectives and needs of your PST and customize them to fit your program, member group, and host sites. If some of your members have special needs, such as a disability or low literacy level, make sure to modify the activity so that they can participate fully. It is best to use activities with examples, scenarios, case studies, etc., very similar to what actually occurs in your program and community. If you do not have enough time or do not feel comfortable enough to make major modifications, at least pick examples appropriate to your priority areas and insert the names of local programs, agencies, and communities into the activity.

Feel free to adapt and use all the materials in this manual; please include a footnote indicating the materials were adapted from MOSAICA. Some suggestions for modifying specific activities are provided in the "Variations" section of the Trainer's Notes for each activity. Additional ideas are provided in the following box and in boxes accompanying some of the activities.

**CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE**  
**AMERICORPS MEMBER TRAINING GUIDELINES**  
**Excerpts from "What Does Member Training Look Like?"**

Member training usually starts with:

- A welcome and a get-acquainted activity during which both members and staff share information about themselves in order to begin team building,
- An expectations session describing what members would like training to accomplish and how the training might best be run, which is then confirmed or revised by staff according to the shared training goals, and
- A consensus-building discussion of training "norms" in which members, program staff and trainers all take part.

Member training is based on behavioral objectives -- those accomplishments that members will be able to **do** by the end of training -- relating to specific program settings:

- What **skills** do they need? For example, carpentry, teaching, or conflict mediation.
- What **knowledge** do they need? For example, community needs, community development, program lines of communication.
- What **attitudes** would help them most? For example, cooperation, flexibility, commitment.

In order to meet the variety of learning styles and needs members may have, member training should include a **daily and weekly balance** of different activities such as (but not limited to):

- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| ● On-site observations    | ● Self-evaluation tools  |
| ● Skill practice sessions | ● Journal writing        |
| ● Small group discussions | ● Peer teaching/training |
| ● Lectures                | ● Fish bowls             |
| ● Role plays              | ● Community surveys      |
| ● Case studies            | ● Feedback sessions      |

Source: Corporation for National Service, IV. Member Training and Supervision, *Program Director's Manual for AmeriCorps\*State and National*. Washington, D.C.: issued August 1995, revised November 1995.

## USING THE ACTIVITIES IN THIS MANUAL

### To "customize" an activity, remember:

- Don't hesitate to change a case study or scenario to make it more appropriate. Use situations which your members are likely to encounter -- situations involving the types of projects and activities, communities, and organizations to which they will be assigned.
- Include real statistics and facts about the host communities and organizations.
- Consider the range of projects and sites where your members will be assigned. Use multiple cases or examples for an activity and assign one to each small group. If you want members to work on the example most closely related to their assignment, put an instruction in the Trainer's Notes to form groups based on project assignment.
- When you modify activities or select just one of a group of activities, be sure there is a logical transition between your units and activities. If you eliminate the first in a series of activities, you may want to include some of the introductory material from that first activity. Look at the boxes as well as the Trainer's Notes.
- Make sure the instructions are appropriate for your member group. If the group is very large, don't make small groups bigger -- you won't get full participation. Instead, form more groups and consider dividing them for reporting and discussion, with one trainer taking half the groups in one room and another taking half in another room.

### To develop your own activities using existing activities as models:

- Decide what type of experiential activity you want to use -- case study, scenarios, role play, community project, etc. -- and find an activity in the manual that uses the same experiential approach. Here are some suggested models:
  - ◆ **Role Play** - Activity #27: *Home Visit Fishbowl*, Chapter 12, page 511
  - ◆ **Panel Presentation** - Activity #6: *Personal Service Experience Panel*, Chapter 7, page 291
  - ◆ **Scenarios** - Activity #26: *Community Solutions*, Chapter 12, page 505
  - ◆ **Case Study** - Activity #18: *Analyzing Conflicts and Using Negotiation*, Chapter 9, page 397
  - ◆ **Community Project** - Activity #34: *Community Survey*, Chapter 14, page 579
- Prepare your own activity, using a similar format and instructions. Use the computer disk supplied with this manual to make your changes on disk.

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

All the activities in the Training Topics & Activities section are designed to actively involve members in their own learning. Lecture is used minimally. All activities are based heavily on experiential learning (see box below) which is explained in detail in Chapter 2, page 85, and the closely related adult learning theory, page 193, explained in Chapter 5. If you are not familiar with experiential learning, please review that information before using this section of the manual.

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING STAGES AND TYPICAL QUESTIONS

1. ***Experiencing:*** Participating actively, alone or in a group, in an activity designed to produce information or understanding. Members are typically asked to identify issues, analyze situations, solve problems, or answer questions which will enable them to experience a topic.
2. ***Reporting:*** Sharing the experience with others. Typical questions: What happened? How did it go? How did you feel during the activity?
3. ***Processing:*** Systematically examining and analyzing the shared experience. Typical questions: What kinds of things happened and why? Did you identify any patterns or relationships? Did you find there were important themes or common factors?
4. ***Generalizing:*** Linking or extrapolating the experience to the real world. Typical questions: So what -- what is the importance of what we learned? How can this be generalized beyond this situation? What else do we need to know about this topic?
5. ***Applying:*** Using the generalized concepts, information, and skills in real-life situations. The best way to apply new knowledge or skills is through additional experiences, this time in the community or at the service assignment. During training, applications can be planned or role-played. Typical questions: How do you plan to use what you have learned in your service assignment? How will this affect your plans or activities? Can you role-play how you might present this concept or skill to others?

See also Chapter 2 of the Training Design section, page 63.

The experiential learning model recognizes that experience alone is not enough; you must help members understand, generalize, and be ready to apply the experience. After each activity or experience, it is important to complete the experiential learning cycle by having the members **report, process, generalize, and apply** what they learned. In some activities you will clearly address each step of the cycle separately; in other activities the steps of processing, generalizing, and applying will be covered during the discussion after the activity. The directions for each activity in the Trainer's Notes refer to these steps in a way that is appropriate to the activity. The steps are in bold in the activity directions, to remind you to include them. Once a trainer becomes familiar with the steps and the kinds of questions each one requires, including them will become almost automatic. The box summarizes the experiential learning steps and the kinds of questions to ask for each.

Because research shows that most cooperative approaches are often superior to competitive, individualistic methods in both learning and problem solving, MOSAICA also strongly encourages use of cooperative learning groups and techniques as a part of the experiential learning process. Practical background materials on cooperative learning are included in Chapter 5, page 197. Many of the activities in this section use cooperative learning strategies. Members

### COOPERATIVE LEARNING ROLES CHART

<b>Facilitator</b>	Responsible for organizing the work of the group, and being sure the group stays on task
<b>Recorder</b>	Takes notes, writes on newsprint as the group brainstorms and/or prepares the newsprint
<b>Reporter</b>	Shares with other groups the work or conclusions of the group
<b>Timekeeper</b>	Assures that the group is able to devote appropriate time to each assigned task and complete all its tasks within the allotted time; this role is especially useful when the group has a tight deadline
<b>Observer</b>	Watches the interaction of the group members and reports on difficulties or successes in group interaction

*In groups of four*, one person should take both the timekeeper and observer roles. *In groups of three*, another person should take both the recorder and reporter roles.

Make sure to assume a different role each time you work in a cooperative learning group. Group members should take turns, so everyone gets a chance to try each role.

are asked to work in small groups of 3-5, and each member has a specific role within the group. The roles are listed on the previous page; put this list up on newsprint and post it in your training rooms for easy reference during activities. Make sure that members rotate roles. It is okay for the more assertive members to start off with the facilitator or reporter roles, while the less assertive ones take the recorder or timekeeper roles. Later in your training session, however, it is important to get the quiet members to take the facilitator or reporter roles, and the outspoken ones to take the observer or timekeeper roles.

While this manual was originally developed for pre-service training, many of the 6 parts of the Design Section and most of the 35 activities in the Training Topics & Activities Section can also be used for in-service training. The chart which follows indicates which parts and activities are most easily used for in-service training, how they might be used, and how they might be modified for use at in-service training sessions.



## Use of Activities for In-Service Training

Part/Activity	Use for In-Service?	Applicability; Suggestions for Use and Modifications
<b>DESIGN PARTS</b>		
1. Gathering Information for Decision Making, page 29	No	Designed to help plan pre-service session; review information from this activity in planning in-service training.
2. Holding Decision-Making Meetings, page 41	Yes	Use <i>Chart of Desired PST Outcomes</i> to identify desired in-service training outcomes and plan an in-service session or a year of in-service training; refine <i>Decision Worksheets</i> for planning in-service sessions.
3. Preparing a PST Workplan, page 57	Yes	Modify <i>Sample Workplan Format</i> for use in planning a major in-service session such as mid-year training.
6. Preparing Your Trainers and Presenters, page 111	Yes	Use <i>Trainer/Facilitator Skills-Assessment Form</i> to determine skills of potential in-service trainers; use trainer training format for preparing in-service trainers.
<b>TRAINING ACTIVITIES</b>		
1. Expectations, page 249	Yes	May not need icebreaker component, but expectations activity is useful at the beginning of any in-service session.
2. What is AmeriCorps? page 255	No	Information should be known to members by the end of pre-service training.
3. Administrative Issues, page 261	No	Information should be known to members by the end of pre-service training.
4. Service Comparison, page 269	Yes	If there is any confusion about member versus volunteer and staff roles, use this session at an early in-service session.

Part/Activity	Use for In-Service?	Applicability; Suggestions for Use and Modifications
5. Articulating AmeriCorps, page 287	No	Information should be known to members by the end of pre-service training.
6. Personal Service Experience Panel, page 291	Yes	Panel can be a motivating experience at an early in-service or midyear in-service session; change focus to topics relevant to the members' stage of experience.
7. Team and Tent Building, page 297	Yes	Teambuilding activities useful at any time; get-acquainted aspects probably not needed.
8. Understanding Your Task Preferences, page 313	Yes	Particularly appropriate where problems arise in the "fit" between members and work tasks; can also increase mutual understanding of work preferences and improve teamwork.
9. What Motivates Me and Others? page 321	Yes	Enables members to understand what factors motivated them to join AmeriCorps, and to understand similarities and differences among people in their work group; facilitates good working relationships among members, volunteers, and staff.
10. Understanding Leadership, page 329	Yes	Introduction to leadership development; useful at any time.
11. Leadership Styles, page 335	Yes	Concept of leadership styles; useful to members at any time.
12. Situational Leadership, page 343	Yes	Concept of situational leadership; useful to members at any time.
13. Communication Basics, page 361	Yes	Helps strengthen communication skills needed by members; might be covered at an early in-service session.
14. Meeting Planning, page 367	Yes	Helps prepare members to plan and run meetings; customize the "situation" to fit your program.

Part/Activity	Use for In-Service?	Applicability; Suggestions for Use and Modifications
15. Group Problem Solving, page 373	Yes	Introduction to the classic problem-solving model; useful at any time; customize the "situation" to fit your program.
16. Using Force-Field Analysis, page 381	Yes	Introduction to the concept of force-field analysis as a way of diagnosing or analyzing a problem; useful at any time.
17. Approaches to Conflict: A Self-Examination, page 389	Yes	An introduction to conflict resolution, helping members understand how they deal with conflict; useful at any time.
18. Analyzing Conflicts and Using Negotiation, page 397	Yes	An introduction to negotiation as a method of conflict resolution; useful at any time.
19. What Do You Do When...? page 427	Yes	An introduction to organizational culture and norms; best used at an early in-service session; particularly useful for members with limited work or volunteer experience.
20. Multicultural USA, page 449	Yes	Helps members understand the growing diversity of the U.S.; customize by adding state or local statistics; useful at any time but designed as an introduction to diversity.
21. Dimensions of Diversity, page 457	Yes	Provides an understanding of the concept and dimensions of diversity; useful at any time but designed for use early in the process of addressing diversity.
22. Understanding Culture, page 463	Yes	Introduces the concept of culture and its relationship to values; useful at any time but designed for use early in the process of addressing diversity; <i>Values Quiz</i> particularly appropriate as a basis for discussion at an in-service session.

Part/Activity	Use for In-Service?	Applicability; Suggestions for Use and Modifications
23. Everyone Has Culture, page 471	Yes	Helps members understand that everyone has culture, regardless of their race and ethnicity, and that many people encounter discrimination.
24. Culture as a Filter for Experience, page 477	Yes	An introduction to stereotyping, diversity terms, and the extent to which behavior and attitudes are shaped by culture and experience and by stereotyping; useful at any time; requires a skilled facilitator.
25. Working in Multicultural Communities, page 485	Yes	Helps members understand barriers to effective multicultural communication and interaction and how to overcome them, important for those working in multicultural communities; useful at any time, but especially early in the year.
26. Community Solutions, page 505	Yes	Helps members see communities and residents as having "assets," not just problems; customize to fit your program.
27. Home Visit Fishbowl, page 511	Yes	Useful for any program where members make home visits; most useful early in the year; provides a good model for a role play which engages the whole group.
28. Community Involvement, page 517	Yes	Helps members understand the importance of and the barriers to community involvement; useful at any time; customize the scenarios to fit your program.
29. The Planning Process, page 529	Yes	An introduction to the planning process; useful at any time, but probably best covered in an early in-service session since planning skills will be needed throughout the year; customize to fit your program.

Part/Activity	Use for In-Service?	Applicability; Suggestions for Use and Modifications
30. Preparing Objectives, page 535	Yes	Member objectives will already be developed, but activity teaches members how to prepare objectives for activities and projects they help develop; customize examples to fit your program.
31. Methods of Evaluation, page 547	Yes	Teaches members about methods of evaluating progress towards objectives; useful at any time.
32. Focus Group Simulation, page 553	Yes	Teaches members how to plan and conduct focus groups for needs assessment, planning or evaluation; useful at any time.
33. Putting It All Together: Planning for Your AmeriCorps Assignment, page 557	No	Planning for assignment should be done during pre-service training or right after members arrive at their host sites.
34. Community Survey, page 579	Yes	Prepares members to plan, conduct, and use results of community surveys; highlights sources of community information; customize to fit program and community.
35. Community Service Project, page 593	Yes	Prepares members to plan and carry out community service projects and strengthens planning skills; use in developing a community service project.