Member Development: A Tool for Creating Corps Culture & Encouraging Growth

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“Growth is never by mere chance; it is the result of forces working together.”
-- James Cash “J.C.” Penney, Jr., Businessman
Reflection Activity

What experience made you *grow up*?

Recall one experience that was pivotal to your personal and/or professional growth.

Answer the following questions:

- **What?** - What was it? What happened?
- **So what?** – Why was it pivotal? What were your feelings during the experience? What lessons did you learn?
- **Now what?** – How do you apply the lessons learned or insights gained to new situations?

Discuss with your peers/colleagues at your table and listen for any common themes, lessons, etc.
Mission of AmeriCorps

Pieces of the AmeriCorps Puzzle

Direct Service:
Getting things done for America.

Capacity Building:
Strengthening nonprofits and the volunteer sector.

Member Development:
Expanding educational opportunity and building future leaders.

Community Building:
Leveraging a powerful return on investment.
**Member Development**

**CNCS Goals**

- **Expanding Educational Opportunity**
  - Upon successful completion of a term of service, AmeriCorps Members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to pay for college or repay qualified student loans.

- **Preparing the 21st Century Workforce**
  - AmeriCorps is a pathway to economic opportunity that provides AmeriCorps Members with valuable skills sought by employers.

- **Creating Future Leaders**
  - AmeriCorps Members gain new and useful skills, advance their education, and become more connected to their communities. As a result, they are more likely to be civically engaged, go into public service careers, and volunteer in their communities.
For Your Consideration:

Before creating your Member development plan for the program year, you should frame the culture of your Corps community and promote that culture from Member recruitment through Member exit.
Within a group of people, culture is the collective:

- Knowledge
- Values
- Language
- Experience
- Attitudes
- Traditions
- Beliefs
- Symbols
- Norms
Culture of AmeriCorps

*The Symbols*
AmeriCorps Members are called _______________; not volunteers, interns, etc.
Members _______________; not work.
Members receive a _______________; not a salary or wage.
The service experience is a _______________; not a job or internship.
Culture of AmeriCorps

The Language

AmeriCorps Members are called AmeriCorps Members; not volunteers, interns, etc.

Members serve; not work.

Members receive a living allowance; not a salary or wage.

The service experience is a term of service; not a job or internship.
The Values

The AmeriCorps Pledge

I will get things done for America—to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.
I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities.
Faced with apathy, I will take action.
Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground.
Faced with adversity, I will persevere.
I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.
I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done.
Culture of AmeriCorps

The Norms

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Federal, State, and Local Regulations
- Prohibited or Unallowable Activities
- Organizational Policies & Procedures
- Member Contract
- Position Description
- Standards of Conduct/Behavior
Question:

Why would framing the culture of your Corps community be important to Member development?
Program Directors, at a minimum, are required to:

- Provide New Member Orientation to each Member at the commencement of service
- Provide training specific to direct service activities
- Provide training as required by MCSC (*First Aid*, *CPR*, *Disaster/Emergency Response*, *Citizenship*)
- Provide Life after AmeriCorps training

Reference:
2016 Program Directors Handbook, Member Development section
Member Development

Brainstorm & Best Practices

For the following trainings/training topics, please discuss best practices by answering the following:

- When does the training occur?
- How do you conduct the training (what do you do)?
- What concepts or skills should Members understand as a result of the training?
- How do you reinforce the training/training topic throughout the term of service?

Member Orientation
Citizenship
Conflict Resolution
Teambuilding
Member Wellness
Life After AmeriCorps
Member Development

Additional Requirements

80/20 Rule:
- No more than 20% of aggregate Member hours should be dedicated to training.

Documentation:
- The program must maintain an agenda and sign-in sheet for each training session, including New Member Orientation.
- Completion of MCSC-required trainings must be documented in the Member records/files.

Financial Considerations:
- If applicable, agency-provided meals at training sessions should adhere to the MCSC policy regarding Reimbursement for Meals and Lodging.
- If applicable, travel to agency-sponsored training sessions must adhere to the MCSC policies for Mileage Reimbursement (for mileage) and Reimbursement for Meals and Lodging (for lodging).
Remember to use the Program Directors Handbook as a guide for the Member development requirements, and network with your fellow Program Directors for best practices.