



Group Check-ins



To build on the training sessions you or your program staff facilitated during orientation on fostering a belonging culture, incorporating an asset-based framework, and enhancing intentional skills attainment, you will continue to foster collective engagement and feedback from your service year corps members through intentional group check-ins. Engagement with your corps members through these conversations will help you identify ways to support your corps members' personal and professional development and enhance their overall experience while serving. The check-ins are designed to build rapport and identify challenges and barriers, while also establishing intentional facilitated discussions amongst your corps to foster growth and development. Scheduling your check-ins throughout your program year will ensure that you're able to understand and support your corps members during their service.

During the Belonging orientation sessions, you established community agreements with your service year corps members. The community agreements are mutually agreed upon guidelines for engagement between your service program staff and corps members. The goal is to ensure that your service year corps members feel comfortable contributing in conversations and group discussions.

Here are recommendations to facilitate a meaningful and thought-provoking group discussions:

Begin with the Community Agreement: Remind your service year corps members of the Community Agreement established during orientation.

Incorporate an Icebreaker: Begin the group discussion with an icebreaker activity to help your service year corps members feel comfortable sharing in the space.

Sample Prompt: Share your highs and lows from your service year experience so far or from this past week.

Facilitate a Small Group Discussion. Depending on the size of your corps, you may break your corps members into small groups of 8 or lead a "pair & share" discussion. You will likely know the most effective ways to get your corps members to engage and interact with one another. Be sure to identify a recorder and notetaker for small group discussions.

Plan for a Debrief Discussion. Bring your service year corps members back together to debrief their small group discussions. During this time, you should listen for barriers and challenges and explore with your corps members ways to provide additional support, address common challenges and barriers, and follow up on ideas and concepts during individual check-ins.

To facilitate a debrief discussion:

- Instruct each group to share what they discussed.
 - Identify a staff member to record notes.
 - If you identify themes or common challenges, you should facilitate a discussion that helps discuss solutions and best practices.
- Some additional questions, may include:
 - Name one thing you learned today that will help you in your service year or in a future opportunity?
 - What is one ask that you have of your fellow corps members and staff?
 - What is one thing you can give to your fellow corps members and staff?

Group Check-in (Mid-Year)

By the mid-year point in your service year program, your service year corps members will have become familiar with you and their fellow corps members as well as have an understanding of your program's culture and environment. To foster growth and learning of your corps members, you should facilitate a conversation that will help your corps members share their experiences and collectively work to address challenges and barriers.

Engaging your service year corps members in the planning process of group discussions can increase feelings of belonging and elevate the value of their experience while serving. Some examples may include:

- Asking your corps members to provide discussion topics and questions
- Acknowledging individual or corps contributions to achieving your program's service intervention
- Recognizing personal and professional accomplishments of your corps members
- Identifying corps members in advance to share their personal story of a recent success or challenge during service during the group discussion time

Here is list of questions to help you facilitate a group discussion:

1. How have you grown or changed since you began your service year?
2. Have you learned something new, gained new insight, developed new skills, or challenged yourself in some way?
3. Have you identified any barriers or roadblocks that are preventing your success? How can we help you address these barriers or roadblocks?
4. How are you currently using your strengths, skills, and talents to serve your community?
5. Find or share an idea, poem, quote, or song that is about the importance of being connected to each other and/or building community. Why did you choose that particular item and how is it applicable to being connected and in community?
6. Can you remember a time where you felt as if you really needed love and support from those around you and you felt that the love you desired wasn't given to you? How did that make you feel?

Group Check-in (End of Year)

By the end-of-year group check-in, your service year corps members are beginning to wrap up their service year and may be feeling some anxiety as they think about next steps. You should focus on creating spaces that will help your corps members reflect on and discuss their shared service year experience, while also elevating barriers and challenges that can be solved collaboratively. Again, it is important to ask your corps members about discussion questions that are most valuable to them.

Here is list of questions to help you facilitate a group discussion:

1. What strengths, abilities, and skills have you learned about yourself?
2. What ways do you plan to utilize these strengths in your future opportunities?
3. What areas can you use more help and support?
4. How can you learn from/leverage others or your fellow corps members to help you achieve success?
5. What has your experience in this program taught you about your ability to advocate for others? How has it helped you advocate for yourself?
6. What relationships have you developed in this program that make you proud? Has the relationship challenged you to grow in any way?