

SERVICE YEAR CORPS

MEMBER GOAL SETTING

A service year is a valuable, life-changing experience where you will learn a lot about yourself and new skills. Your service year host organization will give you many opportunities for self-growth and professional development through in service trainings and reflections. These trainings and reflection times will be more useful if you have an idea of the short- and long-term goals you want to achieve. A good practice is to do this beyond your service year and use these skills to plan yearly goals for yourself.

What do you want to accomplish in your service year? What do you want to do after service? How about about your future career and education plans? These may seem like daunting questions, but don't worry! Whether you have a 10 year plan or have no idea what you want to do with your life, showing that you set goals and achieved them during your service year will help you get the most out of your experience and set you up for success in your future. Getting in the practice of goal setting will help you stay on track for the career goals you do have - and if you're still figuring it out, it will help you refine your skills and thoughts on what to do next! Are some long-term goals that you want to work on to take to your next opportunity and beyond? Understanding what you want to get out of the experience is the first step in being able to take action and work on it during your service year.

GET IN THE GOAL-SETTING MINDSET

When you are making goals for your service year (or any job), it's helpful to start out with your position description to know what you are supposed to achieve. From there, you can also determine what sort of skills you will develop from your work or what skills or knowledge you will need to accomplish your service deliverables.

Once you know what you need to accomplish in your service year, you can also think about the skills that you want to get better at to help you in your future. Below are some questions that could help you tease out the the skills and information you will need, which will help you craft your goals. Grab some paper and start to brainstorm!

- What are the deliverables of your position?
- Are there other things you want to achieve during service that aren't in your position description?
- What are 3-5 professional skills you need to help your deliverables or other goals?
- What skills do you hope to develop through this position?
- What are your biggest strengths that will prove most effective during your service year and achieving your goals?
- What are areas or skills you want to improve?
- What do you know to know about your organization or issue area to be successful with your service year role?
- When your service year is over, what do you hope you can say you accomplished? Or what do you want to have learned or experienced?

Need more inspiration? Check out this set of TED Talks about goal setting to give you more ideas: <https://www.ted.com/topics/goal-setting>.

S.M.A.R.T. GOALS 101

Once you have some ideas of the deliverables for your service year position and of other skills you'd like to it's important to write your goals in a way that helps you take action towards achieving them. A great way to make sure your goals are actionable is to use the "SMART" goals format, which commonly* stands for:

SPECIFIC -- Goals clearly define the desired outcome to solve a problem, take advantage of an opportunity, or meet a challenge and who the participants are.

MEASURABLE -- Goals demonstrate tangible change expected and progress towards your desired outcome. There are usually short-term measurements built into a long-term goal.

ACHIEVABLE -- Goals must be attainable with the time and resources available. The appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities must be present by the individual or team or be able to learn in order to achieve the goal.

RELEVANT -- Goals measure outcomes within the scope of the work / project. Scope areas could include: the organization's mission and values, service year program, current project, your assignment, or your career pathway.

TIME-BOUND -- Goals specify when you want to achieve your goal.

*There are variations in what the letters of SMART stand for. We listed and defined the most commonly used ones and you can check out other variations.

EXAMPLES OF S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

By March 6, 2019, I will interview 10 nonprofit Executive Directors in Richmond, VA, to see what needs are unmet in the community.

I will finish an online project management course by January 31, 2019 to build skills for the communication and marketing plan project I will start on February 6, 2019.

EXAMPLE OF GOALS THAT ARE NOT S.M.A.R.T.

I will finish my current project and learn from the implementation.

I will have an impact on the students in my tutoring program.

Writing your goals in the SMART way allows you to track your progress and evaluate whether you are successful. It may take a little time to get use to writing your goals in this way, but the more more you practice, the better you'll get at it. Also, this is a skill that all employers value, so getting good at writing actionable goals during your service year will help you in future opportunities!

OTHER S.M.A.R.T. GOAL RESOURCES:

<https://www.smartsheet.com/blog/essential-guide-writing-smart-goals>

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-SvuFIQjK8>

GOALS

GET SUPPORT FOR YOUR GOALS

It's great to give yourself some time and space to think about what you want for yourself, but when it comes to your service year and career plans after, it's helpful to get advice from your supervisor, teammates, or other trusted advisors to make sure you are on the right track. Also, sharing your goals with others makes sure you are working towards the same thing and helps keep you accountable!

WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

Talk over your goals with your program supervisor to see how your goals align with the goals of the program. Your supervisor may even want to help you craft the goals for your position. Here are some questions you can ask:

- What do they see as the biggest deliverables for your position?
- Could your supervisor give you regular feedback and help keep you accountable to achieving your goals?
- What resources or training do they have available for you to build your skills and help achieve your goals?
- Are there any grants tied to the completion of these goals? (This is a big one in the nonprofit world - sometimes it can be helpful to hear the context of why certain goals are made!)

WITH YOUR TEAM

If you are working with other service year corps members as part of a team, it's helpful to know what goals you are working on together and what goals you each have for yourselves. Keep each other accountable to make sure you are always working with a purpose!

- How can working on a team help you reach your goals?
- Could team members give you feedback? What is the best way to do that?
- What skills and strengths do you bring to the team?
- What are areas of weakness for you where a teammate could help?

REVISIT YOUR GOALS OFTEN

Goals are no help if you write them once and never look at them again! Make sure to get in the habit of reviewing your goals often. Figure out what goals need weekly, monthly, or quarterly check ins.

Don't be afraid to edit your goals either! If you realize that a goal you had written no longer applies or isn't achievable, change up your goals so that they work for you where you are now. Goals are not set in stone, but rather they are a working, living guide to help you stay on track!