



SKILLS MAPPING AND DEVELOPMENT TOOL

Overview

Skills development is an important part of the service year experience and one of the most undervalued and under communicated benefits of doing a year of service. The technical and professional skills developed during a year of service are what set a service year apart from other postsecondary alternatives like volunteering or job opportunities. When you serve you gain real-world experience and develop specific skills that, when understood and clearly communicated by corps members, can be essential to their post-service success. By providing opportunities for corps members to learn new skills and hone skills they already possess, service year programs help to prepare corps members for life-long success. Additionally, your program will also likely experience improved recruitment and retention outcomes as a result of being able to better communicate the program's value to future corps members.

Mapping skills development and attainment is a process that lasts throughout the service year. First, program staff must identify the opportunities for skills development that exist at their organizations. What will corps members learn, and how will they learn it? Once program staff have identified desired outcomes, they must communicate these opportunities for growth to corps members and empower them to take ownership of their growth and development. Program staff can build buy-in by helping corps members understand how particular skills will benefit them both during and after the service year. At the end of the service year, program staff can help corps members see how their skills align to education and career opportunities and equip them to describe the skills they have gained on college applications and in job interviews.

This tool was designed to help program staff identify opportunities for skills development within their programs and communicate those opportunities to prospective and current corps members, as well as potential employers. Additionally, the skills identification resources contained in this guide can also be distributed to corps members to complete at the beginning and end of their service year to allow staff to gain additional insight of skills development through the lens of their corps members.

SKILLS CHECKLIST

The following checklist contains technical and professional skills that corps members may develop during the service year. Technical skills, or “hard” skills, are tangible skills required to provide service or do a job, like creating a spreadsheet or speaking a second language. Professional skills, or “soft” skills, are personal traits that are beneficial during one’s term of service or in the workplace. Mark the skills that corps members can develop through service with your organization, and then describe how corps members will develop each skill. An example checklist is provided to help guide program staff through this exercise. Use the blank space to list skills that are not included in the list.

The Corps Member Curriculum also contains a training session for program staff that has helpful information about creating rubrics to assess growth in specific skill areas.

SKILL	SKILLS THAT CORPS MEMBERS MAY DEVELOP THROUGHOUT THE SERVICE YEAR	DESCRIBE HOW CORPS MEMBERS WILL DEVELOP CHECKED SKILLS
Virtual Meetings (Zoom, Google Meet, etc.)	X	Corps members will participate in weekly staff meetings held on Zoom
Leadership	X	Corps members will lead small groups of volunteers throughout the service year
Event planning	X	Corps members will plan and execute an event to engage volunteers in a multifaceted MLK Day project.
Fundraising	X	Corps members will support the development department with grant applications and/or reports to send to existing donors
Public speaking	X	Corps members will present on their work in various staff meetings throughout the service year
Teamwork and collaboration	X	Corps members will work with a cohort of members to accomplish goals throughout the service year
Networking/relationship building	X	Corps members will conduct outreach to members of the community or to local employers

TECHNICAL SKILLS CHECKLIST

SKILL	SKILLS THAT CORPS MEMBERS MAY DEVELOP THROUGHOUT THE SERVICE YEAR	DESCRIBE HOW CORPS MEMBERS WILL DEVELOP CHECKED SKILLS
Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint)		
Google Suite (Docs, Sheets, Slides)		
Social media		
Virtual meetings (Zoom, Google Meet, etc.)		
Other software (Slack, Salesforce, Charity Tracker, Apricot, etc.)		
Accounting/bookkeeping		
Data entry		
Photography/videography		
Public speaking		
Writing		
Project management		
Event planning		
Fundraising		

TECHNICAL SKILLS CHECKLIST , CONT.

SKILL	SKILLS THAT CORPS MEMBERS MAY DEVELOP THROUGHOUT THE SERVICE YEAR	DESCRIBE HOW CORPS MEMBERS WILL DEVELOP CHECKED SKILLS
Language(s)		
Machines and tools		
First Aid/CPR		
Ability to create art/music		
Information literacy		
Landscaping		
Vehicle maintenance		
Home repair		
Filing taxes		
Grant writing/management		
Classroom management		
Case management		
Curriculum development		
Financial management		
Lesson planning		
Project site safety		
Research		

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS CHECKLIST

SKILL	SKILLS THAT CORPS MEMBERS MAY DEVELOP THROUGHOUT THE SERVICE YEAR	DESCRIBE HOW CORPS MEMBERS WILL DEVELOP CHECKED SKILLS
Communication/interpersonal skills		
Customer service-minded		
Innovative thinking/problem solving		
Teamwork and collaboration		
Organization and attention to detail/ time management		
Work ethic		
Professional etiquette		
Self-awareness		
Leadership		
Adaptability/flexibility		
Perseverance		
Responsibility/dependability		
Cultural competence/championing diversity, equity, and inclusion		
Civic engagement		
Emotional intelligence		
Self-care		
Networking/relationship building		
Self-motivation		
Ability to respond to constructive criticism		
Time management/ability to adhere to a schedule		

NEXT STEPS

Completing the Skills Checklist is the first step in an ongoing process of skills mapping and development. Below you will find suggestions for using the information gathered in the Skills Checklist throughout the service year.



Pre-Recruitment

Use the Skills Checklist above to identify skills that corps members will have the opportunity to develop during the service year.

Recruitment

Share opportunities for skills attainment with prospective corps members during the recruiting process. For many individuals, especially those with little professional experience, this will be a valuable selling point!

Explain how the skills gained during the service year can be used to achieve career and educational goals.

Orientation

Share expectations for skills development during the service year. Using your responses on the Skills Checklist as a guide, tell corps members about the opportunities they will have to develop particular skills. For example, “You will have the opportunity to develop leadership skills by managing small groups of volunteers.”



Identify the skills that corps members already possess and set goals for further skills development. A Skills Checklist like the one included in this tool may be a helpful starting place for corps members who struggle to name their skills. Ask corps members to check the skills they already possess, and then identify new skills that they would like to develop during the service year.

Encourage corps members to think about how the service year might prepare them for future career or educational opportunities. What transferable skills will they gain?

The Asset-Based Growth Assessment Tool, which is part of the [Corps Member Curriculum](#), contains a pre-service assessment that will help corps members identify the strengths, skills, and talents they bring with them to their service year.

Training & Development

Prior to beginning a project, identify what skills will be gained through participation in the project and communicate the opportunity for skills attainment. After a project is complete, invite corps members to reflect on what they have learned.

Design training sessions focused on specific skills you are hoping corps members will develop (for example, communication or time management). While some learning will occur naturally as corps members complete tasks at your organization, others may need additional reinforcement.

The Skills Attainment component of the [Corps Member Curriculum](#) contains resources to help you facilitate training sessions on the following employability skills: work ethic, work etiquette, communication, attention to detail, teamwork, collaboration, customer service-mindset, information and technology literacy, and innovative thinking and problem solving

Facilitate ongoing reflection about skills development in both 1-on-1 and group settings using the following questions as a guide:

- What new skills have you developed during the service year? How do you know you have developed these skills?
- What skills would you like to develop? What steps can you take to build your skillset?
- What challenges are keeping you from developing new skills?
- What support do you need to reach your goals for skill development?
- Encourage corps members to track their skills development in a journal. Recording goals and progress will help corps members to take ownership of their growth and see how far they've come at the end of the service year!

End of Service

Help corps members identify the skills they have developed and match those skills to post-service opportunities.

Connect corps members with employers that are seeking the skills they possess. Although it may not be the responsibility of program staff to find post-service employment for corps members, staff may assist in making connections and building awareness about the skills developed by corps members in their programs.

Not sure how to form stronger partnerships with employers? Check out the [Connecting to Employers Guide](#) to learn about helpful strategies that will set your program up for success.

Assess corps members' skills development over the course of the service year. Ask corps members to identify skills they have attained and compare their reports to the items you marked on the Skills Checklist. If corps members identify skills that you did not mark on the Skills Checklist, add them! If they do not identify skills that you marked on the Skills Checklist, delete them or create an intentional strategy for developing those skills during the following year.



Service Year Alliance is working to make a year of paid, full-time service – a service year – a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans. We envision a future in which national service is part of growing up in America. As we enter a new era for national service fueled by recent investments in AmeriCorps, we are focused on ensuring these expansions are successful and set the stage for future growth of the field. We identify opportunities for shared recruitment and data systems to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing our sector. Finally, we foster collaborative approaches to demonstrate the impact of service years as an experience that transforms lives, strengthens communities, and fuels civic renewal at scale. Learn more about our work at ServiceYearAlliance.org.

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