

# Training Briefs

## Training Members on Evaluation

OCTOBER 1999

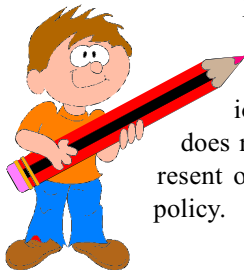
NUMBER 15

\*In *TrainingBriefs*, MOSAICA uses the term *member* to refer to individuals (including members, volunteers, and participants) providing service in National Service programs.

\*National Service program staff, site supervisors, and trainers share responsibility for member training and development. *TrainingBriefs* provide these individuals with useful information and innovative ideas for training and development.

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This material represents the opinion of MOSAICA, and does not necessarily represent official Corporation policy.



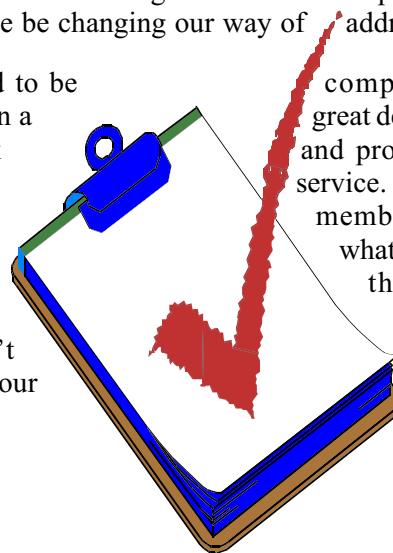
**Evaluation** is the systematic review and assessment of the benefits, quality, and value of a program or activity. It can focus on program design, implementation, and/or results. Evaluation efforts typically seek to answer the following questions:

- Is the program doing what it does well?
- Is the program doing the right things, in order to meet its program objectives?

For AmeriCorps and other national service programs, these questions might be stated in more specific terms:

- Are our programs being run as designed? Are we completing the activities in our work plan? Are we operating within the budget? Is our work of high quality, as judged by specific short-term measures?
- Is our national service work making a difference in a specific issue in our community? Or should we be changing our way of addressing this issue?

Evaluation does not need to be complicated in order to be helpful, and members gain a great deal with they are involved in evaluating their work and project achievements from the beginning of their service. With careful thought and your questions about members can get answers to how well they are doing them to meet program objectives. Evaluation can provide insight into what works and doesn't work and why, and help identify ways to make your program more successful.



### Why Evaluate?

Evaluation:

- helps make sure that programs reflect community interests, needs, and priorities;
- lets you know what your service recipients think about your program;
- helps you find out what went wrong and fix it — and identify what went right and repeat it;
- helps you provide better services; and
- helps you show funders and other stakeholders what your program can achieve.

### EVALUATION APPROACHES

- **Design evaluation:** assesses program design and helps you make choices among strategies
- **Process evaluation:** assesses whether a program has been implemented as planned
- **Outcome evaluation:** determines project results or achievements

## RESOURCES FOR EVALUATION TRAINING

### *Training Members to Evaluate Their Year of Service*

This MOSAICA module was designed to help staff train their members how to evaluate their year of service. It provides basic information on evaluation, as well as examples and practice activities to use with members.

### *Chapter 4: Planning and Evaluation, Starting Strong, Staying Strong: A Guide to Service Training*

This chapter covers basic planning skills and tasks, developing measurable process and outcome objectives, and evaluation methods — with specific applications to setting objectives, planning, and evaluation of your project.

### *Toolkit: A User's Guide to Evaluation for National Service Programs*

Project STAR (800-548-3656) developed this reference on the universal elements of program evaluation — writing objectives; developing plans; developing instruments; and collecting, analyzing, and reporting your data. It also covers evaluation issues specific to programs working in the Corporation for National Services' issue areas: education, the environment, public safety, and other human needs — as well as providing customizable tools and instruments.

### *Designing and Delivering Interactive In-Service Training*

This MOSAICA module provides ideas and techniques for making in-service training sessions more interactive, more valuable to members and the communities served by national service programs, and part of a lifelong learning and growing process.

## ACTIVITY:

Review with members the definitions of *design*, *process*, and *outcome evaluation*, then offer a few examples of each. Have the large group state which type of evaluation is being used when the following questions are asked:

- Did the participants learn and apply new skills presented by the program? (outcome)
- Was the project implemented as intended or was it modified? (process)
- Were materials available in the literacy level and/or language appropriate for program participants? (design)
- What activities were completed? (process)
- What changed because of the program? (outcome)
- How many people were helped? (process)
- What was accomplished by the program? (outcome)
- Are people coming to our meetings/sessions/activities? Why or why not? (design)
- Why did we use this approach instead of another method? (design)



## SAYING GOODBYE...



This issue is the last of the *Training Briefs*, and the end of MOSAICA's National Service Training and Development Project. Our cooperative agreement with the Corporation for National Service ended on September 30, 1999. We have enjoyed working with you and have learned as much from you as you have, we hope, learned from us! Thanks for your interest and commitment to quality training.

MOSAICA staff