



# eVOLve

technical assistance for  
leveraging volunteers

## Quick Links

Welcome to **eVOLve: technical assistance for leveraging volunteers**. In this electronic technical assistance (eTA) brief, you will find tips and tools to help you leverage volunteers in your community. It is sponsored by Points of Light & Hands On Network, a training and technical assistance provider for the Corporation for National and Community Service.

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## Ask Us

Do you have a question about working with volunteers? Send it to Points of Light & Hands On Network at:

[training@handsonnetwork.org](mailto:training@handsonnetwork.org)

## This Month's Question

What are ways our program can deepen the civic commitment of our volunteers?

## The Answer Corner

### Consider This:

Imagine that you're about to wash dishes. You're filling the sink with water; you've got the stopper in the bottom of the sink; and the phone rings. You stop what you're doing and pick up the phone. Your friend needs a ride, so you run out the door, inadvertently leaving the water running with the sink plugged. When you come home, the kitchen is flooding.



### ***What's the first thing you're going to do?***

Grab a mop? NO, turn off the faucet!

Often when we volunteer, we spend our time mopping up the water without addressing the fact that the faucet is still running.

How can you help volunteers to look more deeply at their service? One of the best ways is **reflection**. As it relates to service activities, reflection is a

structured time to think, write and/or talk to learn about the service volunteers provided. Reflection may include acknowledging and/or sharing of reactions, feelings, interpretations, observations and thoughts about the volunteer activity.

Reflection encourages volunteers to explore why the faucet is still running and is the primary avenue for connecting service with greater civic involvement. Through the process of reflection, volunteers will have the opportunity to create a larger social construct around the service they are providing.

**Reflection provides the structured time for volunteers to make the connection between the service they are providing and how it relates to larger social issues.**

During reflection activities, participants:

- Examine what they learned from the service activity
- Discuss problems encountered and obstacles overcome
- Celebrate successes
- Place meaning on their participation

As you design service activities for your volunteers, think about ways to integrate reflection into their service. Here are a few easy ways to add a reflection component into your volunteer activity:

**Postcard home** - Have volunteers write a note that will be mailed to them at a later date to remind them about what they learned from the volunteer activity, why it was important to them, or what they achieved. If time permits, allow people who want to an opportunity to share what they wrote. A couple of weeks after the service experience send the postcards back to the volunteers.

**Group journal or "reflection wall"** - Put out a notebook or hang a large piece of paper on the wall. Have volunteers share thoughts about their volunteer experience through words or pictures.

**Group discussion with critical questions** - Sometimes, one of the quickest ways to facilitate a group reflection process is through a discussion. The reflection discussion requires no materials and just 10-15 minutes of your time.

As you help volunteers deepen their civic understanding, their overall impact and commitment to serve will become greater.

## Resources

Visit [The Resource Center](#) to learn more about reflection and deepening volunteers' service experience. Find resources such as:

### Effective Practice Briefs:

- [Moving from Reflection to Action with a Volunteer Plan](#)
- [Deepening the Connection between Service Activities and Civic Involvement](#)
- [Bringing Closure to a Service Project with Recognition, Reflection, and Evaluation](#)
- [Planning Reflection Activities](#)
- [Using Movies to Educate and Motivate AmeriCorps Members](#)
- [Developing Awareness of Patriotism through Service-learning](#)

## Online Learning Courses:

- [Moving Volunteers from Service to Civic Engagement](#)

## Tools

- [Deepen Community Action through Reflection](#)
- [Service to Civics Program Plan](#)
- [Reflection: The Key to Service-learning](#)
- [Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service-learning: Student Voices & Reflections](#)
- [How-to Guide to Reflection: Adding Cognitive Learning to Community Service Programs](#)
- [Motivational Elements in Service-learning: Meaningfulness, Recognition, Celebration, and Reflection](#)

## Points of Light & Hands On Network Training

Points of Light & Hands On Network provides training and technical assistance to help national service programs leverage volunteers. From live training and webinars to on-line courses and effective practices, we provide a wide variety of resources for your program.

[Join](#) us for a free webinar on **December 10 at 2:00 p.m. Eastern:**

### [Leveraging Partnerships for Community Impact](#)

As you engage volunteers in service, you may find many opportunities to broaden your work by partnering with other community-based organizations. In this 90-minute session, you will find tools to help you evaluate your organization's capacity for establishing and building these partnerships. Learn how to determine your organization's readiness, assess potential partnerships, and contact community organizations to establish and build relationships.

Space is limited, so [register](#) today! Click on the "Upcoming" tab and then on the "Register" link to the right of the session titled "CNCS: Leveraging Partnerships for Community Impact." You do not need a password to register. After registering, you will receive an e-mail with log-in information for the session. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Contact us at [training@handsonnetwork.org](mailto:training@handsonnetwork.org) or visit [The Resource Center](#) for more information about our training and technical assistance services.

## Share Your Story

Points of Light & Hands On Network would like to hear your story about engaging volunteers in meaningful service. Your experience with volunteers and the community or any other civic action and service are welcomed. Submit your stories to [training@handsonnetwork.org](mailto:training@handsonnetwork.org).

*Submissions are subject to revisions and are not guaranteed to appear in eVOLve.*

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