



Project on Civic Reflection



2010 SOUTHWEST CLUSTER CONFERENCE

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Civic Reflection and National Service

The Project on Civic Reflection leads – and trains others to lead – reflective discussions to deepen civic engagement and add meaning to the service experience. We help AmeriCorps and other national service programs increase effectiveness and member satisfaction. Programs implementing civic reflection discussions report **increased satisfaction** among members, a **stronger commitment to service** and **higher rates of member retention and renewal**.

How Civic Reflection Works

AmeriCorps members gather for interactive and highly participatory conversations to explore fundamental questions about service, community, and leadership. Members use a short reading – usually a relevant poem, essay, or short story – to explore the values and beliefs that underlie their service, their relationships with other members, and their impact on the communities they serve.

Benefits of Civic Reflection

- **Higher rates of retention** and a noticeable **increase in renewal rates**.
- **Greater satisfaction** among AmeriCorps members – leading to increased commitment to their service and the program.
- **A fresh perspective** for program staff and members on their day-to-day work and a newfound ability to see the “big picture.”
- **Better and more inspired relationships** between program staff and AmeriCorps members – leading to more effective service.

Making an Impact

- Rhode Island offers civic reflection to all AmeriCorps members. **One in three participants said they were more likely to sign on for another year** because of their civic reflection experience.
- **70%** of the 1,500 AmeriCorps members who have participated in civic reflection programs said these programs **improved their experience** and **increased their commitment to service**. **74%** said civic reflection **improved their relationships** with AmeriCorps staff and members.

Typical Civic Reflection Series with AmeriCorps Members

- Series of 4-8 sessions throughout AmeriCorps year of service.
- Sessions are 60-90 minutes long.
- Sessions occur every 2-8 weeks.
- One PCR-trained facilitator leads sessions.
- Expert facilitators consult with program directors to review key themes and tailor the series appropriately.
- Each member receives a copy of *The Civically Engaged Reader* to use in their sessions.
- Evaluations are conducted at the end of the discussion series.

In Their Own Words

“Civic reflection has been instrumental in improving our retention rate. It’s a bonding tool that helped reunite our group.” **AmeriCorps program manager, Ohio**

“The impact is tremendous. Civic reflection readings and discussions help the members become better citizens. They provide effective and meaningful service. For the program, it means that more members stay to the end of their year of service and earn their educational award. The retention rate goes up.” **AmeriCorps program director, New York**

peers. practice. knowledge. tools.