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Citizens in Service:

**The Challenge of Delivering Civic Engagement Training
To National Service Programs**

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**Corporation for National Service
National Fellowship Program**

About the Corporation for National Service

Created in 1993, the Corporation for National Service engages more than 1.5 million Americans annually in improving communities through service. The Corporation supports service at national, state, and local levels through:

- AmeriCorps, whose members serve with local and national organizations to meet community needs while earning education awards to help finance college or training;
- Learn and Serve America, which helps link community service and learning objectives for youth from kindergarten through college as well as youth in community-based organizations; and
- The National Senior Service Corps (Senior Corps), the network of programs that helps Americans age 55 and older use their skills and experience in service opportunities that address the needs of their communities. Senior Corps includes the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Foster Grandparent Program, and Senior Companion Program.

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The National Service Fellowship Program, launched by the Corporation for National Service in September 1997, involves a team of individual researchers who develop and promote models of quality service responsive to the needs of communities. The goal of the program is to strengthen national service through continuous learning, new models, strong networks, and professional growth.

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Abstract

Citizens in Service: The Challenge of Delivering Civic Engagement Training To National Service Programs

I. Goal of the Study

The purpose of this research project was to develop a baseline of information about civic engagement issues and training in national service programs.

II. Results of the Study

Results of the surveys are reported in three sections and include these major findings:

1. AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members:

- AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are interested in civic issues as evidenced by their survey responses and involvement with civic organizations.
- AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are exhibiting leadership skills in organizations with which they are involved.

2. State Commissions (23 responded):

- 13 state commissions see civic engagement training as the responsibility of the program director. Other respondents have a combination of program-based, regional or state level training in civic engagement.
- Six Commissions have some working definition of civic engagement.

3. Program Directors (174):

- 10% of respondents requested a definition of civic engagement.
- 30% receive resources about civic engagement training during their orientation.
- 40% have received copies of the CNS resources By The People or Effective Citizenship through National Service and 20% have used the resources to train members.

III. Implications and Recommendations

- Data shows that AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are, as a cohort, socially and politically aware. Knowing that national service programs are shaping the next generation of civic leaders, CNS should integrate high quality and challenging civic engagement programs into the member-training curriculum.
- Develop guidance or a definition of civic engagement for commissions and programs. Following the lead of the Texas Commission, program staff could be encouraged to include civic engagement training as part of member development objectives.
- Communicate to State Commissions that civic engagement training for members is a priority issue for CNS and encourage creativity in funding such member trainings, including the use of Program Development and Training funds (PDAT).
- Encourage high quality training in civic engagement issues for program directors and find ways to encourage the creative exchange of ideas among program directors about civic engagement training.

Executive Summary

Citizens in Service: The Challenge of Delivering Civic Engagement Training To National Service Programs

Problem/Research Question

The purpose of this research project was to develop a baseline of information about civic engagement issues and training in national service programs.

Methodology

The methodology employed was a literature review and survey research. Four groups were surveyed: 58 Delaware AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members, 285 self-selected AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members, Executive Directors or designated staff members from 23 State Commissions and 177 self-selected program directors. Surveys were delivered via group sessions, email and the Zoomerang internet survey research site.

Discussion of Data Analysis and Key Findings

Findings are reported in three sections and include:

AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps/VISTA members:

- AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are interested in civic issues as evidenced by their survey responses and involvement with civic organizations.
- AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are highly involved in their communities through their volunteer work.
- AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are exhibiting leadership skills in organizations with which they are involved.
- AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are using technology to communicate and receive information and are less dependent on print media for information.

State Commissions:

- A total 23 state commissions responded to the surveys.
- 13 state commissions see civic engagement training as the responsibility of the program director. Other respondents have a combination of program-based, regional or state level training in civic engagement.
- Three commissions linked civic engagement training specifically with developing an “ethic of service” in members.
- Six commissions provide no information to their program directors about civic engagement. Other respondents provided information to their program directors through a variety of formats: during staff orientation, through newsletters, mailings, conferences, monthly meetings, email lists.

- Six Commissions have some working definition of civic engagement

Program Directors:

- 10% of respondents requested a definition of civic engagement.
- 30% receive resources about civic engagement training during their orientation.
- 60% train their members at least once a year in civic engagement.
- 40% have received copies of the CNS resources *By The People* or *Effective Citizenship Through National Service*.
- 20% have used *By The People* or *Effective Citizenship Through National Service* as resources for training their members.
- 30% report that their state commission provides civic engagement training for members at least once a year.

Implications and Recommendations

The information obtained from the surveys will be useful to CNS staff members interested in civic engagement training and the implementation of such training in AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA programs. State Commission staff members as well as program directors may be interested in the findings for their respective group.

- Data shows that AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are, as a cohort, socially and politically aware. Knowing that national service programs are shaping the next generation of civic leaders, CNS should integrate high quality and challenging civic engagement programs into the member-training curriculum.
- Develop guidance or a definition of civic engagement for commissions and programs. Following the lead of the Texas Commission, program staff could be encouraged to include civic engagement training as part of member development objectives.
- Provide copies of civic engagement training resources to all programs and post all civic engagement resources in a downloadable format on the NSRC website.
- Communicate to State Commissions that civic engagement training for members is a priority issue for CNS and encourage creativity in funding such member trainings, including the use of Program Development and Training funds (PDAT).
- Encourage high quality training in civic engagement issues for program directors.
- Find ways to encourage the creative exchange of ideas among program directors about civic engagement training.

Further research will be needed regarding the effectiveness of member training and proposed training materials. As CNS staff members are engaging in such a study, other areas of research might include how civic engagement is integrated into Commission training plans and effective training for program directors.

Citizens in Service:
The Challenge of Delivering Civic Engagement Training to
National Service Programs

Introduction:
Why Civic Engagement?

Over the past few years, the decline in political participation in the United States has been well documented. Books such as Robert Putnam's Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community detail the detachment of citizens from traditional modes of civic involvement. Articles and studies have been published which document the decline in voting and other forms of civic participation among young adults. The New Millennium Project, Part I, sponsored by the National Association of Secretaries of State, illustrates this decline in interest in civic participation (Horwitt, 1999, p. 11):

- Since the 1972 presidential election, when the voting age was lowered to 18, there has been nearly a 20% point decrease in voting among 18 to 24 year-olds, with only 32 percent going to the polls in 1996.
- In the 1998 elections, only 28 percent of young people who voted did so because they felt it was their civic duty or responsibility.
- By a margin in 64 to 35 percent, young people believe that "government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, not for the benefit of all.
- Fifty eight percent of American youth agree with the statement "You can't trust politicians because most are dishonest."
- "Being involved in democracy and voting" is "extremely important" to only 26 percent of young people.
- A majority of youth, 55 percent, agree that "schools do not do a very good job in giving young people the information needed to vote."
- Only 21 percent of young people say that they "often" spoke to their parents about politics, government or current events.

While young adults' interest in more traditional forms of civic involvement is at a low level, volunteerism among young people is at a very high level. The same group of young adults reported that 53% of them have either volunteered or were likely to volunteer for a community organization (Horwitt, 1999, p.31).

Sheliah Mann also reports that interest in current affairs and personal political action has declined among college students. Her report on the civic engagement

preferences of college freshman in the June 1999 edition of PS: Political Science and Politics (the journal of the American Political Science Association) shows that only 26% of college freshmen in 1998 identified “keeping up to date with political affairs” as very important versus 58% of college freshman in 1966 (the first year that the survey was administered). She also found that 78% of college freshman were involved in volunteer work in high school, but only 22% considered “community action essential.” (Mann, 1999)

The question arises, what is the role of national service in this discussion? Do national service programs have an obligation to encourage civic engagement or involvement among its participants? And, if so, what should the staff of national service programs be teaching members? There is an understandable fear by some that discussing even citizenship roles might lead to the politicization of members. The events of the past few years, during which the Corporation for National Service (CNS) was always on the firing line for the perception by some that the organization was solely a Clinton initiative, serves as a reminder that no such discussions are risk-free.

One might begin this discussion, however, by distinguishing between political socialization and politicization. Political socialization may be defined as “...the process by which the individual acquires attitudes, beliefs and values relating to the political system of which he is a member and his own role as citizen within that political system.” (Greenberg et al, 1970, p. 3) Politicization may be described as the act of becoming politically active or “the giving of political character to something (Politicization. Dictionary of Political Terms/www.fasttimes.com).” All nations, if they are to survive, must find a way to socialize their young into their political systems. Indeed, political socialization by its very definition refers to the way that individuals act when socialized within a particular political system. Politicization may refer to activity inside or outside of the current political system. Confusing these two terms may lead one to the conclusion that there is no place for a discussion of civic engagement within national service programs. If one recognizes, however, that political socialization is a necessary part of building a nation’s citizenry, then the question might better be rephrased as “How might national service programs, and AmeriCorps and VISTA in particular, contribute to the political socialization of our citizens?”

As pointed out in the New Millennium Project: Part I, schools have the potential to play an important role in the political socialization of American youth. Yet, focus group participants in the New Millennium study dismissed civics classes as “boring and they feel that high school government classes are largely disconnected from current events (Horwitt, 1999, p.44).” Focus group participants criticized these courses as focusing on history and political institutions, as opposed to current events and issues (Horwitt, 1999, p.45). An additional concern is that for students whose education ends with high school, the study found that the rate of civic engagement is substantially lower than for those students who graduate from college. For example, 47% of college graduates as opposed to 25% of high school graduates reported voting in the November 1998 elections (Horwitt, 1999, p. 44). Although one might wish for a renaissance in the teaching of high school civics, such reforms, even if enacted today, are not likely to affect

young adults for a number of years. Hence, it seems reasonable that national service programs, which affect the lives of thousands of young Americans each year, consider the integration of civic engagement training as an important part of member development. For those members who have not graduated from college, this training may serve as a critical link between encouraging further civic engagement after the term of service.

Political socialization, as an area of study, has had a somewhat difficult history. Although a popular field in the 1960s and 1970s, it was all but abandoned by political scientists by the 1980s. Part of this shift related to methodological issues. As Diana Owen points out in her article “Service Learning and Political Socialization,” problems in theory and method, contradictory research findings, and the “volatility of political organizations over time” resulted in “rather sterile debates about which agent was most influential, rather than to discussions about how agents might successfully inspire the development of democratic values in children and adolescents (Owen, 2000).

Richard Merelman, in “Revitalizing Political Socialization,” notes that one limitation in the old models has to do with the assumption that all models were based on hierarchical social arrangements. Political socialization took place from the top down, although via different actors. The dominant force for socialization varied among theories—the family, school, economic elites, interest groups or political parties. No attempt was made to discern other means of political socialization (Merelman, 1986, p. 282). Merelman asserts that a more creative way of describing political socialization is needed. He suggests that changes in society, economic changes, and, the author would add, technological change, have led to “lateral political socialization.” For Merelman, the flattening of some social hierarchies implies “influence must be won through sentimental attachments (Merelman, 1986)”. These attachments are “situated in informal, temporary, though affectively appealing structures of learning (such as peer groups or mass media viewing) (Merelman, 1986, p. 309).” Lateral political socialization processes are “egalitarian, transient, choice making and individualized (Merelman, 1986, p. 309). National service programs such as AmeriCorps and VISTA might be viewed as an intermediary form of lateral political socialization—part way between hierarchy and peer group. Individual choice in many areas is exercised by the member, but within a certain program structure. As CNS prepares to train its members in civic engagement, it might be wise to remember the potential impact of the service experience on the member’s future civic involvement.

What is Civic Engagement?

Civic engagement may be defined as the means by which an individual, through collective action, influences the larger civil society, although there is a spectrum of activity associated with civic engagement. (Van Benschoten, 2001, pp. 2-3). Civic engagement training for national service members might provide the members with the tools they need to understand how to be involved in the public sphere, to understand the functions of government and to develop their own vision for civic engagement after

leaving AmeriCorps. Civic engagement encompasses broader action than traditional citizenship activities such as voting and knowledge of government, but for the purposes of national service, training should focus in these areas.

Civic engagement differs from an individual ethic of service in that it directs individual efforts toward collective action in solving problems through our political process. As pointed out by the authors of the New Millennium survey, 18-24 year olds are declining in voting and civic involvement at the same time that they are increasing in individual commitment to community service (Horwitt, 1999, p.23). As traditional forms of civic engagement such as voting and knowledge of government processes are the foundation of a democratic society, integrating civic engagement training into member development is an investment in our country's future.

Although there are clear prohibitions against AmeriCorps members becoming involved in partisan political activities during service hours, an important part of their member development is to understand how such activities contribute to maintaining a healthy civil society. For example, AmeriCorps members are encouraged to register to vote and to vote in local, state and national elections. They may not work in political campaigns during service hours, but civic engagement training may include inviting candidates to talk to members about what motivates them to run for office. Civic engagement training may include a balanced discussion of policy issues related to the mission of the AmeriCorps program. If members focus their service on education, a program director might invite representatives of school districts, the state education agency and appropriate elected officials to discuss current issues in education.

Project Methodology:

A baseline survey of civic engagement in national service programs

Five surveys were deployed during the course of the project in order to obtain a baseline of information about social capital and civic engagement of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members. As described below, the Social Capital Survey for Delaware AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members was adapted from the sixty-six-question Social Capital Community Benchmark developed by the Saguaro Seminar. Fifty eight responses were received from members of five programs. A twelve-question survey was then developed for use on the Zoomerang research site for AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members. 285 responses were received. The civic engagement survey for program directors was also launched from the Zoomerang website with 177 responses received. The two civic engagement surveys for commission staff were emailed to commission directors. A total of 23 responses were received. The results of each survey are detailed in separate sections below.

The genesis of this project was my own experience as an AmeriCorps program director on the campus of the University of Delaware. I had an intuitive sense that students in my classes were less interested in all forms of civic involvement than the same age group in my generation. I also heard a number of comments such as "Politics is

dirty, I wouldn't want to be involved in it." The AmeriCorps members in my program, mostly first and second year women students, excelled at their service placements, but I began to see that it would take extra effort on my part to connect their mentoring and tutoring service with the larger issues of social class, poverty and educational opportunity. For the most part, once the opportunities were presented to them, they were willing to look at the larger issues, and became articulate about the backgrounds and needs of the students with whom they were working. In addition, these AmeriCorps members served as teaching assistants for a service-learning mentoring course, and they were able to draw upon their own experiences to teach fellow students. Yet, there was no road map to guide me, and no formal resources available to me during 1997-1999 in order to integrate a discussion of the broader issues of service, policy and citizenship with the First State Mentor Corps members. It was only in February of 2000 that I received a copy of By The People, and became intrigued with the idea of formally integrating these types of discussions into a service year.

My original fellowship proposal then, was a plan to do intensive civic engagement training program with Delaware AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members during the 2000-2001 service year. A series of formal trainings were proposed, along with reflection sessions and a "civic career fair." Due to changes in top-level staff at the Division of State Service Centers, my sponsoring agency, it became impossible to follow through with my proposed work plan. At this point, I consulted with CNS staff in order to revise the proposal. Ms. Robin Dean, Fellowship Manager for the project, was extremely helpful in assisting me in reframing the project from a qualitative study to survey research that would illustrate what is happening with the issue of civic engagement in national service programs. With the assistance of Ms. Dean, Dr. Marcia Scott and Mr. Lance Potter, my plan was revised. I had already conducted the social capital survey with the Delaware AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members, and would have the social capital data from a national sample as well as a statewide survey for Delaware. Dr. Scott suggested that, based on my experience, perhaps a survey of state commissions was in order. It was clear from the previous experience of the first few months of the fellowship that civic engagement was not an issue on the agenda of the Delaware Commission. How did other commissions perceive the issue? Was civic engagement part of their member training agenda? And most importantly, how did Commission staff define civic engagement?

As can be seen in the section detailing the results of the Commission survey, I received responses from 23 state commissions. The responses varied greatly in the length and completeness of the replies. Among other findings, I was able to confirm that civic engagement was not an issue that was of concern to commissions. Only six commissions ventured to give a definition of civic engagement, and many commissions considered civic engagement an issue to be dealt with at the program level.

Now that my fellowship project was redefined as survey research, I realized that there was other information that I wanted to know. How were program directors handling the issue of civic engagement? After the survey was sent to Commission Directors twice via email in January and February 2001, I planned a survey for program directors.

National Service Fellow Brandon Rogers introduced his colleagues to the Zoomerang web-based survey product, and it seemed the perfect vehicle with which to conduct a survey of AmeriCorps directors. I used both the aclist (955 members) and the acdirectors (102 members) listservs in order to reach program directors. I also used the Corporation for National Service (CNS) website to retrieve the addresses of 304 AmeriCorps state program directors. A message was sent from me with a link to the Zoomerang site with the survey to the aclist, the acdirectors list and directly to the 304 addresses. I received a total of 179 replies. As I had used an email list of 304 addresses from 50 states and Puerto Rico, I was satisfied that I had received a good cross-section of information about civic engagement from directors who were dealing with the issue on a day-to-day basis.

I was also interested, based on my findings from the social capital survey with the 58 Delaware and VISTA members, as to whether a survey would reveal similar trends among national service members across the country. Again, I used the aclist and VISTANET listservs to reach AmeriCorps and VISTA members and offered them the opportunity to participate in a twelve-question survey that was adapted from the original sixty-six question social capital survey. I received responses from 284 members. I do not claim that this survey produced a valid national sample because the respondents were those members who had access to a computer, and thus could respond to my request. They were also self-selected and, I suspect, had a higher level of interest in the issue of social capital and civic engagement than peers who received the listserv invitation but did not participate in the survey.

As you review the individual sections of the report, remember that the national social capital survey and Delaware social capital surveys are considered statistically valid samples. I make no such claims about the program directors and national AmeriCorps and VISTA social capitals surveys. Rather, this data should be seen as a snapshot of what is happening in the field, or a baseline report on the civic engagement issue.

Social Capital Survey Results

Robert Putnam has defined social capital healthy networks of civic engagement, shared responsibility and trust within a community. Putnam makes the point that, like the concept of physical capital with the notion that tools can enhance productivity, the idea of social capital postulates that social networks have value. The assumption follows that social capital, also called “civic virtue” by some authors, “is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal and social relations (Putnam, 2000, p.19).” Putnam further postulates two forms of social capital—“bonding” versus “bridging” social capital. “Bonding” social capital is “good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity,” such as the social and psychological support provided in ethnic enclaves. “Bridging” social capital, however, provides links to external assets and information diffusion. Putnam quotes Xavier de Souza Briggs on the difference between the two, “Bonding social capital is good for getting by, but bridging social capital is better for getting ahead (Putnam, 2000, pp.22-23).” Those communities in which both forms of social capital are present provide residents with bonding “superglue” and

bridging “WD-40” (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). Putnam admits that measuring bridging and bonding social capital are not easy, but proposed to begin a process of examining social capital in the United States.

During the past year, Putnam sought, with other members of the Saguro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America of Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, to measure the level of social capital in the United States (The saguro is a sturdy cactus that survives in inhospitable situations in the Southwest according to the Bowling Alone website). Putnam and associates developed a survey instrument of sixty-six questions that measured trust levels, perceptions of one’s community, community and political involvement, and charitable giving of respondents. A random-digit-dialing system was used to generate a random sample of residential phone numbers within specified geographic areas. A national sample of 3003 persons was taken, and this provided baseline information about social capital formation in the other communities and states. This survey is referred to as the “U.S. Survey” in the information tables. Surveys took place in 37 communities and 3 states with a total of 29,200 respondents interviewed. In the State of Delaware, 1383 persons were interviewed (Anderson & Wykoff, 2001, pp. 2-3). This survey is referred to as the “Delaware State Survey” in the information tables.

At the same time that the Delaware survey was being conducted, the survey was adapted from its original 66 questions to a 30-question survey that was administered to AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members in the State of Delaware. The survey questions focused on the political and social involvement of national service members in order to ascertain how these individuals participated in their community. Questions regarding neighborhood definition (the geography of one’s neighborhood), trust levels of neighbors and other issues directly affecting long-term community residents were dropped from the survey because it was assumed that at least some of these members were in transition from one geographical area of the country to another. This survey focused on issues within one’s community, as defined by geography. Perhaps further research needs to be undertaken to make such a survey more applicable to national service members. In particular, one might want to know if the AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA experience has provided the member with opportunities for building both bonding and bridging social capital.

There were a total of 58 members surveyed from five programs: Public Allies Delaware (national direct), University of Delaware VISTA project, The Wilmingtonians (education award program), Teen Corps (AmeriCorps state) and Delaware Promise Fellows. The surveys were administered from November through January 2000. This survey is referred to as the “Delaware AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA” Survey in the information tables.

Program	Number of respondents
University of Delaware AmeriCorps*VISTA Program	15
Wilmingtonians (Education Award)	14

Promise Fellows	5
Teen Corps (AmeriCorps State)	8
Public Allies Delaware (national direct)	16

After the survey was delivered to the Delaware national service members, a twelve-question survey was then adapted from the original sixty six-question survey and was delivered to AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members via the aclist and VISTANET listservs. This allowed for a comparison of the Delaware national service data with national data. 285 responses were received from the members of the aclist (955 members) and the VISTANET listserv (449 members). This survey is referred to as the “National AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA” survey in the information tables. For ease in understanding the data, the number of respondents for each survey is as follows:

Survey Type	Number of Respondents
U.S. Survey (national sample)	N=3003
National AmeriCorps/AC*VISTA Survey	N=285
Delaware AmeriCorps/AC*VISTA Survey	N=58
State of Delaware Survey	N=1383

The results of questions that were answered by respondents from all four surveys will be considered first, and then an analysis will follow of the information gathered from the Delaware AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA Survey.

Impact on the Community	US Survey	National AC/AC*VISTA	DE AC/AC*VISTA	DE State Survey
Moderate-Big Impact		93%	94%	78%

As can be seen, both the national and the state AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA survey indicate that a high percentage of members believe that they can make a difference in the community in which they are serving. This confidence in their personal efficacy may be seen as germane to the issue of civic engagement training—members may be more likely to be receptive to civic engagement training if they see that such training is directly connected to the change that they want to create within the community. Good service-learning programs, of course, begin with the premise that theory and praxis are interrelated, and civic engagement training will need to build on this member enthusiasm.

Interested in	US Survey	National	DE	DE State
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politics and national affairs		AC/AC*VISTA	AC/AC*VISTA	Survey
Very interested	30%	48%	38%	30%
Somewhat interested	36%	38%	48%	35%

Although perhaps a controversial question in light of recent CNS experience, the findings nonetheless provide an important piece of information—that national service participants are very interested in politics and national affairs, indicating an interest in public affairs at a rate far higher than national and state of Delaware survey participants. For those considering the matter of civic engagement training in national service, the issue may be framed as not whether civic engagement training might be of interest to members, but rather, how to provide quality civic engagement training to members who have already indicated an interest in the subject.

Registered to Vote	US Survey	National AC/AC*VISTA	DE AC/AC*VISTA	DE State Survey
Yes	80%	91%	83%	79%
No	20%	7%	10%	20%

Voter registration rates again testify to the interest of national service members in the issue of civic engagement. Their rate of voter registration is at least as high, and in the case of the national AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA Survey, much higher than the rates reported in the national survey.

Trust national gov't to do what is right	US Survey	National AC/AC*VISTA	DE AC/AC*VISTA	DE State Survey
Always	5%	0%	0%	3%
Most	21%	12%	23%	29%
Some	51%	63%	58%	52%

It is interesting to note that the findings on this question from the U.S. sample, state of Delaware sample and the Delaware AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA survey are not substantially different—these groups indicate trust of the national government at approximately the same rates. The national AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA sample, however, indicates an 11% difference in trust level between the national sample and the state sample for trusting national government “most of the time.” With the exception of one national service program (University of Delaware AmeriCorps*VISTA), most of the

members for national service programs are locally recruited. Thus, members may reflect the overall findings of the Delaware survey with regard to trust levels of national government. As a small state with a small population, it is possible to reach Delaware local and national officials fairly easily. Both U.S. Senators and the Representative are familiar faces, and this local connection may engender more recognition and trust than in other states. For example, 36% of Delaware respondents were able to name both senators correctly as opposed 19% of the respondents in the national sample.

Trust local gov't to do what is right	US Survey	National AC/AC*VISTA	DE AC/AC*VISTA	DE State Survey
Always	6%	1%	0%	5%
Most	36%	23%	23%	38%
Some	45%	65%	61%	46%

Trust levels for local government rise in the “most of the time” category for all respondents except in the Delaware AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA survey where the percentage remains the same. The respondents of the national AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA survey appear to echo the responses of the respondents in the New Millennium survey regarding trust of government. For example, 57% of respondents in the New Millennium survey agreed “strongly” and “somewhat” that “You can’t trust politicians because most are dishonest.” 64% of New Millennium respondents agreed “strongly” and “somewhat” that “Government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, not for the benefit of all.” (Howitt, 1999, p.15) The responses may be correlated to age—all respondents in the New Millennium survey were under 24, and 48% of respondents in the national Delaware AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps* VISTA survey reported themselves to be 18-24 years old.

Participated in the following activities in the past 12 months	US Survey	National AC/AC*VISTA	DE AC/AC*VISTA	DE State Survey
Signed a petition	35%	63%	38%	25%
Attended a political meeting or rally	16%	45%	40%	17%
Worked on a community project	38%	99%	78%	37%
Participated in any demonstrations, boycotts or marches	7%	35%	24%	5%
Donated blood		29%	16%	21%

Another clue to the possible interest in civic engagement training and issues among national service members can be seen in the participation rates in a variety of activities, some political and some nonpolitical. In almost all categories, both the national and Delaware national service members showed a higher level of involvement than the respondents in national and State of Delaware sample (with the exception of blood donation in the Delaware AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA survey). Again, the data indicates a high level of interest in political issues, with the national AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA respondents reporting higher involvement than the Delaware AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA members.

Political Outlook	US Survey	National AC/AC*VISTA	DE AC/AC*VISTA	DE State Survey
Very Conservative	15%	2%	4%	13%
Moderately Conservative	34%	7%	15%	31%
Middle of the Road	25%	14%	22%	27%
Moderately Liberal	16%	34%	24%	29%
Very Liberal	7%	28%	27%	8%
Something else	1%	11%	8%	2%
Don't know	2%	2%	4%	0%
Refused	0%	1%	0%	0%

National service members report themselves to be more liberal than the respondents in the national sample and State of Delaware surveys, with national AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA respondents reporting the highest percentages in the “liberal” and “moderately liberal” categories.

Education	National AC/AC*VISTA	DE AC/AC*VISTA
Less than high school	0%	2%
High school	4%	25%
Some college	19%	25%
Associate's degree	8%	2%
Bachelors degree	48%	40%
Graduate or other professional degree	11%	2%

National Service Program	National AC/AC*VISTA	DE AC/AC*VISTA
VISTA	41%	26%
AmeriCorps	59%	74%

National service members in both the national and Delaware AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps*VISTA surveys report that 75% (national) and 67% (Delaware) have at least some college. At least 40% (Delaware) report that they are college graduates, indicating that national service programs are attracting members with high educational levels who are capable of becoming the next generation of civic leaders. Given their reported interests, community involvement and educational levels, it makes sense for national service to build on this potential leadership base during the service year with civic engagement training appropriate to the ability levels of the members.

The social capital survey to the Delaware AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members also afforded a glimpse into the technology and communication related activities of members. As can be seen in the table below, only 12% of the members report reading a newspaper every day of the week as compared with 35% of respondents in the Delaware sample and 32% in the national sample:

Days Reading Newspapers Each Week	DE	DE	US		
	AC/AC*VISTA # Responses	AC/AC*VISTA % Responses	Delaware %Responses	US %Responses	
7 DAYS		7	12	35%	32
6 DAYS		0	0	2%	2
5 DAYS		7	12	4%	4
4 DAYS		11	19	4%	5
3 DAYS		9	16	9%	9
2 DAYS		10	17	10%	10
1 DAY		8	14	11%	12
0 DAYS		6	10	23%	26
Total		58	100	100%	100

In addition, 62% of the Delaware AmeriCorps and VISTA members reported watching three to six hours of television each day. 43% report using the internet 1-10 hours per day. 61% report having access to the internet at home, as opposed to 60% of the Delaware respondents and 54% of the national survey respondents. It is clear that these members are now relying on the television and the internet for connection, communication and information as opposed to traditional print media. Such data makes clear the need for national service programs to be on the cutting edge of using these tools not just for communication, but to consider their integration into civic engagement training programs as such programs are developed.

It is clear from the results of the survey of the Delaware AmeriCorps and VISTA members that these individuals are not “bowling alone.” They show a high degree of involvement in many types of organizations. They report membership rates at higher levels than respondents in both the national and Delaware surveys. As might be expected, levels of involvement are high in sports leagues and youth organizations, 40%

and 57% respectively. But, these members also report high levels of involvement in Parent-Teacher Associations/school service groups and neighborhood associations. As can be seen below, their involvement levels are higher than the national and Delaware samples at 39% for PTA/school support group and 30% for neighborhood associations.

	DE AC/AC*VISTA # Responses	DE AC/AC*VISTA % Responses	Delaware %Responses	US %Responses
PTA, PTO, school or service group				
Yes	22	39%	24	22
No	35	61%	76	78
Don't know	0	0%		
Total	57	100%	100	100

	DE AC/AC*VISTA # Responses	DE AC/AC*VISTA % Responses	Delaware %Responses	US %Responses
Neighborhood association, block association				
Yes	17	30%	29	20
No	39	70%	71	80
Don't know	0	0%	0	0
Total	56	100%	100	100

The only forms of involvement in which the members show lower scores than the respondents for the national and Delaware surveys are veteran's groups, professional group and labor unions (one would surmise that some respondents were members of unions prior to AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps*VISTA service).

	DE AC/AC*VISTA # Responses	DE AC/AC*VISTA % Responses	Delaware %Responses	US %Responses
Veteran's group				
Yes	4	7%	9	9
No	52	93%	91	91
Don't know	0	0%		
Total	56	100%	100	100

	DE AC/AC*VISTA # Responses	DE AC/AC*VISTA % Responses	Delaware %Responses	US %Responses
Professional, trade, farm or business Association				
Yes	12	21%	22	25
No	44	79%	78	75
Don't know	0	0%	0	0
Total	56	100%	100	100

Membership was reported to be the highest among the following organizations: organizations that provide services to the needy (64%), literary or arts groups (49%), and support or self-help groups (45%).

	DE AC/AC*VISTA	DE AC/AC*VISTA	Delaware	US
	# Responses	% Responses	%Responses	%Responses
Labor Union				
Yes	3	5%	10	12
No	54	95%	90	88
Don't know	0	0%	0	0
Total	57	100%	100	100

Membership was reported to be the highest among the following organizations: organizations that provide services to the needy (64%), literary or arts groups (49%), and support or self-help groups (45%). Although this group reported high internet access and usage, only 9% of members reported involvement in a group that meets only over the internet.

With regard to the future potential of this group for leadership, the tables below may be instructive. As can be seen, this group of members shows higher levels of participation, at 27%, than both the national and Delaware respondents in public interest groups and political clubs. These members also show involvement with groups that take local social and political action at 33% as opposed to 20% of Delaware respondents and 19% of national respondents. Most interesting, however, is the high percentage, 46%, of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members who have volunteered for leadership roles as an officer or as a committee member in organizations in which they are members. If current members are willing to assume such leadership roles, providing them with organizational and leadership skills during the program year may become a way to support future involvement.

	DE AC/AC*VISTA	DE AC/AC*VISTA	Delaware	US
	# Responses	% Responses	%Responses	%Responses
Public interest groups, political clubs, party committees				
Yes	15	27%	8	9
No	40	73%	92	91
Don't know	0	0%	0	0
Total	55	100%	100	100

Any groups take local action for social/ political reform in the past 12 months?	DE	DE	Delaware	US
	AC/AC*VISTA # Responses	AC/AC*VISTA % Responses	%Responses	%Responses
Yes	18	33%	20	19
No	16	29%	79	78
Don't know	21	38%	1	3
Total	55	100%	100	100

Served as officer or committee member for any local club or organization?	DE	DE	Delaware	US
	AC/AC*VISTA # Responses	AC/AC*VISTA % Responses	%Responses	%Responses
Yes	23	43%	23	20
No	30	56%	77	79
Don't know	1	2%	0	1
Total	54	100%	100	100

Members were also asked about their volunteer work with various types of organizations. Members reported the following levels of involvement within the past 12 months:

Organization	% Volunteered
Place of worship	42%
Health care, fighting particular disease	41%
School or youth programs	64%
Organization to help poor/elderly	54%
Arts/cultural organization	34%
Neighborhood or civic group	40%

AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members reported higher levels of involvement than the Delaware and national respondents in four of the six categories. Exceptions were place of worship and neighborhood/civic group. Reported rates of involvement for the Delaware and national respondents were 75% and 79% respectively for place of worship and 44% and 39% respectively for neighborhood/civic group.

A summary of the data gathered from the various social capital surveys is as follows:

- AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are interested in civic issues as evidenced by their survey responses and involvement with civic organizations.
- AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are highly involved in their communities through their volunteer work.

- AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are exhibiting leadership skills in organizations with which they are involved.
- AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are using technology to communicate and receive information and are less dependent on print media for information.

State Commission Survey

Based on my experience with the Delaware commission, and further discussions with CNS staff, it was decided that it would be helpful to know what was happening at the state commission level with the issue of civic engagement. A survey was proposed and reviewed by Robin Dean and Marcia Scott, and the survey was sent via email to commission directors during the first week of January 2001. The survey was sent via email again at the end of January 2001. The survey to state commissions focused on the implementation of civic engagement training---how commissions trained program directors and members to be involved civic engagement activities during the program year. The commissions were also asked to include a definition of civic engagement.

The following states responded to the January survey: Arizona, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Responses varied in depth and length. Of the 15 commissions that responded, only five provided a definition of civic engagement. Some commission staff members requested a definition of civic engagement because they did not know the meaning of the term. Some responses seemed to confuse the term “civic engagement” with “ethic of service” or indicated that the need to inform directors about activities prohibited by AmeriCorps regulations was seen as more important than expanding into a discussion of civic engagement. Some examples of these responses include:

When asked if the commission provides civic engagement training to program directors:

- When we review the provisions during Program Orientation, this topic does arise, and we re-state what the provisions require. (Arizona)
- We have not provided information. Our focus has been on emphasizing “prohibited activities.” (Maine)

When asked if the commission provides civic engagement training to members:

- Ethic of service, Life After AmeriCorps, motivational speakers at various events, etc. (Indiana)

After reviewing the 15 responses received, and realizing that there was no common definition of civic engagement, I proposed that a second survey be sent with a list of competencies that might be integrated into member training, thus giving commissions some idea of what civic engagement training would look like throughout the service year. Competencies proposed in the second survey included:

- Knowledge of voting
- Knowledge of the electoral process
- Assessing community needs/asset mapping
- Conflict resolution
- Cultural awareness
- Knowledge of federal, state and local legislative processes
- Knowledge collaborative efforts for community improvement including the roles of advocacy and lobbying
- Assisting the member in identifying possible post-service civic roles (“ethic of service”). These roles may include, but are not limited to, the following positions: Volunteer service at public or nonprofit organization, service as an elected official, nonprofit agency director, administrator of government agency, member of nonprofit or public board.

The competencies were reviewed at the February 2001 mid-year National Service Fellows meeting during the small group presentations. Michael Mercil, our facilitator, was especially supportive of the competency listing and indicated that the National Service Leadership Institute (NSLI) had moved toward using competencies in its training program. Thus, I revised the second survey and sent it to commissions again in March 2001.

The second survey elicited responses from the following commissions that had not previously responded: Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Nebraska, and Wyoming. Commissions from Maryland, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Washington responded a second time with comments regarding the competencies. Nine of the commissions agreed with the competencies proposed. Three of these commissions wanted to add additional competencies to the list:

- Alaska: “time management”
- Rhode Island: “Understand the social issues that AmeriCorps members seek to address through service (e.g. hunger related to community garden programs).”

- Washington: “I think we should also be talking about “why” we do service as well, what needs of ours are met, otherwise it is easy to burn-out on the work or the sometimes sparse external rewards.”

One respondent (Nebraska) commented: “I am not sure where conflict resolution fits in with the other competencies.” Two commissions disagreed with the competencies proposed: Oregon and Georgia. The response from the Colorado commission was interesting in light of the additional questions on the survey related to who was providing civic engagement training: “The trouble with this list is that some programs will look at it as a checklist for skills that program coordinators are supposed to be building in their members. I do not think that programs can or should necessarily take on this list as a checklist, so it is important that the entire list is framed as only examples of ways to promote civic engagement.” It is clear when reading the complete response to this survey that the Colorado commission is doing considerable training of members in the proposed competencies, and the burden of training does not appear to be placed on the individual program directors.

Summary results of the surveys show:

- A total 23 state commissions responded to Surveys I and II.
- 13 state commissions see civic engagement training as the responsibility of the program director. Other respondents have a combination of program-based, regional or state level training in civic engagement.
- Three commissions linked civic engagement training specifically with developing an “ethic of service” in members.
- Six commissions provide no information to their program directors about civic engagement. Other respondents provided information to their program directors through a variety of formats: during staff orientation, through newsletters, mailings, conferences, monthly meetings, email lists.
- Six Commissions have some working definition of civic engagement

Definitions of Civic Engagement

Maryland:

The Governor’s Office of Volunteer Service defines civic engagement as an individual’s duty to embrace the responsibilities of citizenship with the obligation to actively participate, alone or in concert with others, in volunteer service activities that strengthen the local community. All Americans should have equal opportunity to give back through a quality volunteer experience so that they can

learn that they can make a genuine and meaningful difference in someone's life, their life, and/or the life of their community.

Ohio:

We define civic engagement in the broadest of terms, including all activity related to personal and societal enhancement which results in improved human connection and human condition.

South Carolina:

Civic engagement is related to individuals positively impacting and strengthening their communities.

Washington:

Experiencing a sense of connection, interrelatedness, and naturally, commitment towards the greater community (all life forms).

West Virginia:

Civic engagement is any activity where people come together in their role as citizens.

Rhode Island:

Rhode Island is strongly oriented toward civic engagement. Our staff members need to demonstrate a commitment to and competency about civic engagement in order to participate in our National Service portfolio. With AmeriCorps, civic engagement is supported by looking at things like the economic development implications of the service performed by members as well as other indicators (needs/asset assessments, high quality partnerships). With Learn & Serve America, the civic education focus is much more tangible. The purpose of the initiative, in our view, is to socialize children & youth to become community-engaged over their lifespans. We do this by ensuring that Learn & Serve initiatives educate participants (intentionally) about the American social problems that are being addressed through their service (e.g. hunger with a community garden project).

Program Directors

Who responded?

The survey for program directors was designed to find out how program directors were being trained, what materials directors were using for training, and how many times during the program year the directors were training their members. There were 177

respondents from 40 states drawn from the following listservs: aclist of 955 members, accirectors list of 102 members and 304 AmeriCorps state addresses found on the CNS website. States with no programs reporting included Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Louisiana, North Dakota, Puerto Rico, North Dakota, West Virginia and Wyoming. Some of these states listed no AmeriCorps state programs on the CNS website. A message with a link to the Zoomerang site (where the survey was located) was sent to the aclist and accirectors listservs. The message with the link was sent directly to the 304 AmeriCorps state addresses.

Training of trainers and members

Only 30% of the respondents reported that they had received any information about civic engagement during their orientation as program directors. Yet, 61% reported that they were responsible, not a trainer, for training their members in civic engagement. 41% of the program directors reported that they trained their members once a year in civic engagement, 26% reported that they trained members twice a year and 33% reported that they trained their members three or more times a year on the topic.

Use of CNS and Other Resources

As can be seen by the table below, program directors received and used both resources at an equal rate:

Resource	Yes, received resource	No, did not receive resource	Yes, used this resource for training members	No, did not use resource for training members
<u>By the People</u>	42%	58%	19%	81%
<u>Effective Citizenship</u>	39%	61%	18%	82%

Comments from the survey regarding the CNS materials:

- We are a national direct parent organization. Our sites use the materials you referenced on an on-going basis in team meeting activities and in specific training. We gather as a full corps 2-3 months before their service term is finished for a training on community leadership and citizenship with a focus on transitioning out of their service as AmeriCorps members to service as citizens.
- For members to grasp the concept of civic engagement I think it's important they have regular training through out their service year. Many multi-site programs like ours find it difficult to have one training on civic engagement and have it mean anything. The resource materials provided by ETR and CNS are excellent. However each lesson builds on the previous lesson, making it difficult to adapt to AmeriCorps programs who are only able to provide a "one time" training.
- The curriculums are too basic.

- We really appreciate the resources offered through CNS (the above listed resources are really great). It is an area we hope to explore further in our next year's slate of member development topics. I personally feel very passionate about the issue and hope to bring some of this enthusiasm and understanding to both members and the students in the schools where we serve.
- The materials that were sent are good, and I intend to use them in the future. The Commission did not provide the civic engagement training this year, although we always have a "Launch" that is held in the Statehouse.
- As the Project Director for the Maine Service Corps I used the "Effective Citizenship Through National Service" guide to create an all-day training called "6 steps to community organizing". I have presented it to my entire corps, and was asked to present it as part of the Maine Commission for Community Service's annual member training "Road Show" series in Brunswick and Bangor. Over 100 national service participants - all branches were represented attended this training.
- I was very impressed with "By The People". We provide much of the training included but have never called it citizenship. By connecting the two it gets the message across how members' service is connected to a legacy of civic responsibility. I found the other guide less helpful. It seems geared to younger members and to service options different from ours. Most CNS info is usually geared to literacy programs or group placements. Most of our members serve at single placement sites and address broad health topics from prenatal to senior citizen needs. The process can be adapted to other situations, though. Also, this instrument forced me into a 'yes' or 'no' answer when I would have liked to provide a narrative response (it would have made your survey more difficult to evaluate). I am currently developing a PST that focuses on civic responsibility using the format in the first document by rescheduling the order we provide our training.
- We have used a few of the activities in the resources listed above as part of our program to reinforce the mission of AmeriCorps and the ethic of service with our Members. We did not use the entire resource; we found much of it elementary and did not meet the needs of our Members.

Program directors also reported using other resources to train their members in civic engagement issues. These additional resources were reported as proving useful in member training by program directors:

- Two program directors used videos (one from the California Chancellor's Office)
- Three program directors use training manuals other than the CNS resources or developed their own civic engagement manual.

- Five program directors mentioned using reflection or discussion sessions as a part of civic engagement training for members.
- Three program directors mentioned using local or national newspaper articles in training.
- 12 program directors use other resources: training manual developed by Becky Blumer, Building Citizens, Soul of a Citizen, Building Communities from the Inside Out, “Rock the Vote” materials, “Project Vote Smart” materials, Putting Idealism to Work (a City Year publication), Public Adventures (a 4-H publication), “Character Counts” materials, Habits of the Heart, At America’s Service, Servant Leadership, Democracy in America, Education for Action.
- 23 program directors listed speakers from the community as civic engagement resources. Examples included speakers from the League of Women Voters, community leaders, local elected officials, state legislators, local nonprofit staff members from organizations such as the YMCA and United Way, members of the local police department, past members, representatives from veterans’ groups and other AmeriCorps program directors.

One program director commented on making the important link between member service and civic engagement training:

A great many of our service projects involve interaction with neighborhood and community groups, as well as local, state and federal governmental units. These all provide frameworks from which we interact with these different constituencies, sometimes with the useful bonus of having long discussions with different partners who have specific and highly-variable perspectives. Additionally, we do some environmental “current events” activities based on newspaper and media articles. These often directly or obliquely tie in with our local projects and partners.

Role of State Commissions

In addition to providing civic engagement materials and training for program directors, some commissions also provide civic engagement training for members. 29% (n=47) of respondents reported that their state commission provided member training. Of this group, 69% reported that their commission provided training once during the program year, 24% reported training for members twice during the year, and 7% reported training three or more times during the year.

The Need for a Definition of Civic Engagement

Ten percent (n=18) of the responses indicated that the director was unfamiliar with the term “civic engagement,” or wanted a definition of the term. Sample responses include:

- I don't even know what this is
- What is civic engagement?
- I'm not sure what civic engagement is.
- What is your definition of civic engagement?
- I'm not sure what you mean by civic engagement. This is the first time that I'm hearing the phrase, and I haven't received any past resources or information on training. Maybe it's called something different?

Several program directors commented on the difficulty of negotiating the civic engagement issue in national service programs:

- I was very upset when the Corporation took the stance that registering people to vote is "too political"/tantamount to "lobbying". This is ridiculous and sends a mixed message to the members.
- Civic engagement is an important area for members to receive training in. I think a lot of programs shy away from this topic in fear of advocating (or being perceived as such) lobbying or other political engagement.
- There is a great opportunity for this type of training through the Life After AmeriCorps training materials. But there is a need to separate civic engagement from political advocacy. Political advocacy is a type of engagement not the only element.

Summary Information from Program Directors Survey

- 10% of respondents requested a definition of civic engagement
- 30% receive resources about civic engagement training during their orientation
- 60% train their members at least once a year in civic engagement
- 40% have received copies of the CNS resources By The People or Effective Citizenship Through National Service

- 20% have used By The People or Effective Citizenship Through National Service as resources for training their members
- 30% report that their state commission provides civic engagement training for members at least once a year

The proposal by CNS staff to test the two sets of materials-- By The People and Effective Citizenship Through National Service--may provide information about not only the effectiveness of the materials, but also the most effective way to deliver the training to members. The research design includes training by a professional training, training by local staff who have received training and staff who have only a curriculum guide (memo, May 14, 2001). It is clear, however, that results from both the commissions' and program directors' surveys indicate that program directors will have, for the foreseeable future, the burden of responsibility for this training unless commissions decide to integrate civic engagement into their overall training mission.

Commission support of civic engagement training would bring more resources to the table, and ensure some consistency of training, at least within each state. AmeriCorps programs vary greatly with regard to the educational level and experience of their members. Thus, a standardized approach to civic engagement training might not be either possible or desirable. Yet, commission involvement might "level the playing field" in terms of resources, and allow program directors access to professional trainers for at least some civic engagement training sessions. If civic engagement training is a priority for CNS, it would be wise to rethink the restrictions on the use of PDAT funds. Allowing commissions to plan and fund several civic engagement trainings for both program staff and members would again provide consistency and expand the training resource base. At the same time, commissions could also move in the direction of the Texas Commission, which now requires programs to include civic engagement under member development objectives.

Study Recommendations

The information obtained from the surveys will be useful to CNS staff members interested in civic engagement training and the implementation of such training in AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA programs. State Commission staff members as well as program directors may be interested in the findings for their respective group.

- Data shows that AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members are, as a cohort, socially and politically aware. Knowing that national service programs are shaping the next generation of civic leaders, CNS should integrate high quality and challenging civic engagement programs into the member-training curriculum.

- Develop guidance or a definition of civic engagement for commissions and programs. Following the lead of the Texas Commission, program staff could be encouraged to include civic engagement training as part of member development objectives.
- Provide copies of civic engagement training resources to all programs and post all civic engagement resources in a downloadable format on the NSRC website.
- Communicate to State Commissions that civic engagement training for members is a priority issue for CNS and encourage creativity in funding such member trainings, including the use of Program Development and Training funds (PDAT).
- Encourage high quality training in civic engagement issues for program directors.
- Find ways to encourage the creative exchange of ideas among program directors about civic engagement training.

Further research will be needed regarding the effectiveness of member training and proposed training materials. As CNS staff members are engaging in such a study, other areas of research might include how civic engagement is integrated into Commission training plans and effective training for program directors.

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