

# Training Briefs

## Training Members on Evaluation

OCTOBER 1999

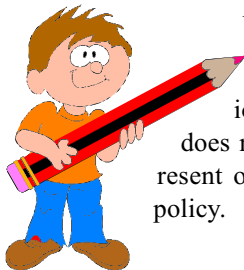
NUMBER 15

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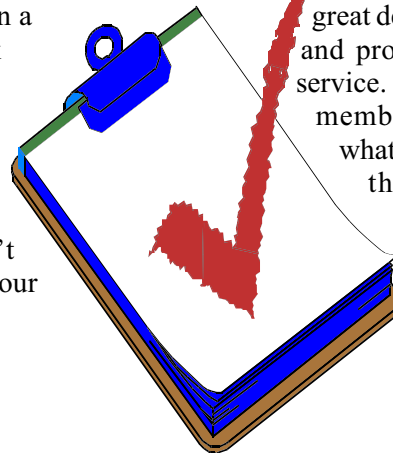
**Evaluation** is the systematic review and assessment of the benefits, quality, and value of a program or activity. It can focus on program design, implementation, and/or results. Evaluation efforts typically seek to answer the following questions:

- 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

