

INTRODUCTION

ROADMAP *to Civic Engagement*

Adapted for Washington Service Corps

Service-Learning Northwest partnered with Washington Service Corps (WSC), a statewide AmeriCorps program, to implement the *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* program in its 2002-2003 pilot year.

Service-Learning Northwest (SLNW), a program of Educational Service District 112, was established to meet the training, technical assistance and resource needs of educators, students, youth and community-based organizations throughout the service-learning and service communities. SLNW promotes service-learning excellence by developing high quality service-learning practices and tools for success. Please visit our web site for information about products and services offered by Service-Learning Northwest at www.servicelearningnw.esd112.org.

The *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* was developed to provide young people with both the skills and knowledge needed to effectively address issues and needs in their own community. Many young people are looking for opportunities to act on their interests and get involved with their community. The *Roadmap* is an avenue for action and a vehicle for such involvement.

This edition of the *Roadmap* is designed for implementation with young people in community-based settings outside of a classroom.

WSC is the oldest publicly funded statewide service program in the nation. WSC was created by the state legislature in 1983, and has since challenged thousands of young adults with hundreds of opportunities to “get things done” by addressing critical needs in their communities. Administered by the Employment Security Department, the WSC serves as an intermediary for community and faith-based organizations as well as education institutions and local governments in addressing unmet community needs and providing young adults with meaningful service experiences.

In order to implement the *Roadmap*, WSC developed a program structure to allow more than 800 AmeriCorps members to civically engage up to 1,000 young people in projects based on a service-learning methodology. Twenty-two project sites partnered with local community nonprofit and faith-based youth-serving organizations to deliver a *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* throughout the state of Washington.

A Word About the Goals of the *ROADMAP to Civic Engagement*

“America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests and teach us what it means to be citizens. Every child must be taught these principles. Every citizen must uphold them. And every immigrant, by embracing these ideals, makes our country more, not less, American.”

President George W. Bush

Central to the American ideals expressed by President George W. Bush are “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” the guiding principles on which this country was built. The pursuit of these ideals cannot be separated from specific actions, knowledge, values, and skills. The *Roadmap* seeks to help individuals rediscover the substance of these ideals and how they impact all who call this country home.

There is no belief more basic or more deeply ingrained in the American consciousness than that of individual freedom for all. President Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke in terms of four specific freedoms that he felt comprised the very core of this American ideal. “The first,” he said, “is freedom of speech and expression -- everywhere in the world. The second is the freedom of everyone to worship God in his own way, everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want . . . everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear . . . anywhere in the world.”

Through a *Roadmap to Civic Engagement*, participants have the opportunity to rediscover these freedoms. In addition, participants will help ensure that the freedom of expression, the freedom of worship, and the freedom from a life of want and fear, are more secure for them, their family and their community. Or, as the Founding Fathers put it, to “secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”

Roadmap is not about political or cultural conformity. It is about the power of civic engagement for all who have chosen to live in this country. It is an opportunity to learn the values, the history and, especially, the actions that have formed the foundations of this nation and continue to shape it today. Not to indoctrinate, but to inform. Not to conform, but to free. Not to disenfranchise, but to engage and empower Americans (of all status) to work to make this country, as Rosa Parks once said, “...better than it is.”

The goal of the *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* is to help individuals from all walks of life make their town, their community, their county, their world, “better than it is.”

What is Citizenship and Civic Engagement?

Citizenship and civic engagement are commonly used terms and yet they both resist simple definitions. Sometimes they are used interchangeably, other times they are used as separate concepts. One dictionary defines citizenship as, “the status of a citizen with its attendant duties, rights, and privileges.” There is, unfortunately, no dictionary definition for “civic engagement.” But the dictionary does define the words “civic” and “engaged,” and these definitions could be combined to provide a framework for understanding. That definition might read:

civic: relating to community; connected with the duties and obligations of belonging to a community; and

engagement: to involve someone in an activity, or to become involved or take part in an activity.

Or simply, “Civic engagement is the involvement in an activity related to community, often connected with duties and obligations.”

So, if citizenship can be thought of as understanding certain “duties, rights and privileges,” civic engagement can be thought of as the actions associated with those particular duties, rights and privileges.

The following definition summarizes the broader scope of citizenship and civic engagement adopted in the *Roadmap to Civic Engagement*.

Citizenship or civic participation consists of **behaviors, attitudes and actions** that reflect **concerned and active membership** in a community. This includes the more traditional electoral citizenship activities, such as **voting, serving** on nonprofit boards or school boards, as well as less traditional forms of political participation, such as **community organizing** and **social activism**. It includes participation in **small neighborhood-based efforts** and the larger **national and international movements**.

*Source: The State of Service-Related Research.
The Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service*

The *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* focuses primarily on cultivating an understanding of the behaviors, attitudes and actions that reflect concerned and active membership in a community. It engages participants in real-life opportunities to apply that knowledge, both locally and globally. By participating in an active service-learning process, participants examine a variety

of community settings, learn to identify a community's assets and needs, and gain an understanding of how to develop strategies for meeting genuine community needs by utilizing a variety of community resources.

This program is best understood as a *Roadmap* to civic action. It is not just learning about citizenship -- it is participating in citizenship that reflects membership in a community. And, it is not just about members of a community being active. It is also about developing a personal understanding of those behaviors, attitudes and actions that help to define civic engagement.

What is the Roadmap to Civic Engagement?

“In a democratic society we must live cooperatively, and serve the community in which we live, to the best of our ability. For our own success to be real, it must contribute to the success of others.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

Roadmaps are helpful tools that are especially useful for planning trips. In addition to providing directions for reaching one’s destination, they also provide useful information about the conditions of the roads and various hazards. Roadmaps also provide useful information about the destination itself. The more complicated the route, the more valuable the map.

Although on the surface civic engagement might seem fairly straightforward, it is actually a complicated subject. For example, is civic engagement a set of actions like voting or political activism? Is it a set of beliefs or values? Is it a set of skills? Is it knowing certain information about how government works? The *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* explores these questions and allows participants to discover their own answers.

As participants follow this *Roadmap* they will discover what it means to, as Eleanor Roosevelt said, “live cooperatively and serve the community” as active members of a democratic society. And, just as important, participants will discover that for personal success to be real, “it must contribute to the success of others.”

ROADMAP Manual Overview

Each unit of the *Roadmap* engages participants in meaningful lessons, activities and reflections to broaden their understanding of civic engagement. Participants go beyond focusing on a particular issue or cause, and develop a deep connection to the assets, values, resources, and needs within their own community.

The Roadmap begins with a focus on the concept of “community,” helping participants understand how the concepts of safety and common needs play into the development of a community. Next, in Units 2 and 3 participants deepen their connection with their own community. Community asset maps are developed as a means of identifying the wealth of resources available. Participants explore the history of their community to learn more about how communities originate and change over time.

In Unit 4, participants are taught that behind the issues--causes or situations we feel compelled to change--are universal needs that we all have in common. Participants begin to develop a "needs vocabulary." In addition, they create a continuum of local to global issues of concern and learn to link these issues back to universal human needs.

In Units 5 and 6, participants enhance their trust that one person, and one voice, can make a difference. Drawing on historical examples, participants discover a rich heritage around the roots of citizen voice and democracy. They learn more about democratic voting, consensus decision-making, and moving from community needs to solution-oriented actions.

Unit 7 is designed to provide a space for reflection and celebration on what each participant has learned through the Roadmap program. Participants are led through formal reflection activities and a formal celebration where accomplishments are recognized and acknowledged.

What Is Service-Learning?

The *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* is based on a method of active learning called “service-learning.” Service-learning teaches important lessons using community service as the classroom. Service-learning allows participants to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in a context of meeting important community needs.

Two Settings for Service-Learning

Over the years, school-based or academic service-learning has gained acceptance in many schools as an effective teaching method. It focuses on providing instruction through service experiences. It connects classroom learning and community service, using the service as a context for teaching. More recently, community based organizations that were exposed to service-learning through partnerships with schools began to see the potential for service-learning in community settings. Community organizations began to look for ways to adopt the principles of service-learning for a non-classroom setting. A new understanding of service-learning began to emerge.

Whereas school-based service-learning is a teaching method that uses community service as a means of helping students gain a deeper understanding of course objectives, acquire new knowledge and engage in civic activity, community-based service-learning focuses on the same goals but with a different perspective. Community-based service-learning is an approach to service that intentionally enhances the learning opportunities by identifying specific learning goals and incorporating structured reflection activities into the service experience. While fulfilling the mission of an organization through the use of volunteers, opportunities for academic and skill development are identified and designed into the service. These lessons are reinforced through an effective practice known as *reflection*. In this way the strength and benefit of service-learning can transform the activity from simply service to service with lifelong lessons. Organizations benefit from volunteers who are more deeply engaged in the work of meeting the organization’s mission.

In short, school-based programs are tied to the academic curriculum. Community-based programs identify learning outcomes not related to the school curriculum.

Three Defining Characteristics

There are three essential or defining, characteristics of service-learning. These three common elements distinguish service-learning from other hands-on and project-based learning experiences:

CLEAR LEARNING OBJECTIVES. As the concept and practice of service-learning expands to include a number of settings outside the traditional classroom, the focus must still remain on achieving intentional learning related to the personal, social and civic development of the participant.

MEET GENUINE COMMUNITY NEEDS. The strength of service-learning is the authenticity of the service in which young people are involved. The significance of the service performed enhances the participant's personal, social and civic development.

SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION. One of the important components of service-learning is reflection. Rather than being a simple summary of activity, reflection is an effective form of teaching which, when coupled with clear learning objectives and genuine community need, has the power to strengthen service and learning while also transforming the learner and teacher.

Three Additional Essential Elements

In addition to the three defining characteristics, Service-Learning Northwest incorporates three additional Essential Elements that are important components of quality practice:

YOUTH VOICE. The role of youth voice in active decision-making in developing service-learning activities is an important component in increasing positive impact.

MEANINGFUL SERVICE. To strengthen the impact of service-learning activities, it is important that young people participate in meaningful service and understand the important role they play.

PARTNERSHIPS. Increasing the number of stakeholders not only increases the immediate impact of a project, it helps service to continue.

What is the Six-Step Model?

This manual is built around a framework developed by Service-Learning Northwest (SLNW) called the Six-Step Model of Service-Learning. The Six-Step Model is a project planning and development tool based on the fundamental elements of quality service-learning practice.

The following six Essential Elements of Service-Learning form the basis of the model¹:

- Creating clear learning objectives requiring the application of concepts, content and skill;
- Meeting genuine community needs;
- Reflecting throughout the experience;
- Giving voice to participants throughout the selection, design, implementation and evaluation process;
- Making certain that the service outcomes are significant; and
- Partnering with key stakeholder groups.

The Six-Step Model

Step One: Discuss

Discuss the concept of “community.” This process will help participants understand the community, identify the varied communities each person belongs to, and examine how communities have different needs that must be met. This initial step helps participants form a connection to their community as they identify needs, issues, and problems facing the various communities to which they belong.

Step Two: Investigate

Gather specific information regarding the needs of various communities. This can be accomplished by surveys, needs assessments, asset maps and other resources.

Step Three: Address

Examine the possibilities for meeting the identified needs. Determine what resources and skills will be required to meet different needs. Ask if a service or solution is feasible given the available resources, including time. Discuss the possibilities and choose a targeted need to be addressed.

¹ National Service-Learning Cooperative, 1999

Step Four: Plan

Develop an action plan and design a project to meet the selected need(s). Identify and make explicit connections to learning objectives. Determine what skills and knowledge will be taught and how they will be assessed. Determine what individuals and/or agencies need to be involved. Build partnerships and determine roles and responsibilities for all involved.

Step Five: Execute

Perform the planned service activity or activities. This should encompass more than one event and may include outcomes from the previous steps.

Step Six: Review

Examine the impact of the service and the learning. Identify if the targeted goals were met, what was produced, and who benefited. This is the point for completing the reflection process. A celebratory event, also part of this step, is a good opportunity for participants to recognize themselves and other volunteers, as well as be recognized by others for their efforts.

How to Use This Manual

The *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* is comprised of seven units designed for a 90-minute learning/activity session to take place once per week for optimum effectiveness. Each unit is designed in such a way that, if necessary, it can be divided into separate 45-minute sessions. There are also several supplementary Exploratory Service Projects that expose participants to various service areas in the community.

This manual has been written in a structured, straightforward and detailed manner so that novices and skilled facilitators alike will find what they need to successfully lead participants through the program. Each unit is organized in the same format and includes:

ACTIVITIES The activities help build team and community identity, as well as introduce and reinforce the lesson. They focus participants' attention on the unit's objectives and also set the stage for reflection.

LESSONS The lessons often involve discussion and exploration. Some will include activities that focus on an issue relevant to the session topic.

REFLECTION The reflection, an essential component of each unit, includes a variety of activities and forms, including journals, artwork, group sharing, and other appropriate activities that reinforce the lesson.

ROAD SIGNS These guideposts--hints and clues-- help to direct activities along the way.

Exploratory Service Projects

Supplemental Activities

A central component of the *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* asks young people to identify, design and implement a service-learning project that engages participants in meeting compelling community needs. To further develop the impact of service on participants, early involvement in additional service opportunities has been included to supplement the primary service-learning project. These one-time service activities, called Exploratory Service Projects, are designed to expose participants to a range of service opportunities to meet a variety of community needs. The projects are intended to be facilitator-planned, one-time service activities designed primarily to expose participants to various opportunities for community service.

There are a number of added benefits to incorporating one or more Exploratory Service Projects into the *Roadmap* program. Participating in additional service activities strengthens one's sense of personal empowerment. Including these projects exposes participants to a variety of genuine community issues and significantly increases participants' sense of community awareness. They also help develop an individual's personal awareness. Lastly, they increase the amount of service provided to the community that each group provides.

Service projects should expose participants to different types of needs within their community. Below are some broad project areas:

Exploratory Service Project Ideas

SOCIAL JUSTICE	ENVIRONMENTAL	HUMAN SERVICES
Food bank / food drive	Trail maintenance	Mentoring / tutoring
Media literacy	Recycling	Day care center
Homeless shelter	Watershed	Book drive
Domestic violence	Computer recycling	Elder home care / repair
Peace	Invasive plants	Nursing home visit
Gun control, gun safety	Tree planting	Toy drive
Bullying	Stream clean	Bicycle repair clinic
Computer literacy	Energy audits for homes, schools or businesses	Single mom support / babysitting, home repair
Digital divide		

10 Keys to Working With and Engaging Young People

The *Roadmap to Civic Engagement* is designed to be an active learning experience that engages young people in participatory learning and service on their road to civic engagement. Here are ten useful suggestions for working with youth, especially in out-of-school settings:

1. Keep it simple.
2. Build relationships.
3. Have fun.
4. Provide hands-on and high-energy activities.
5. Consider the appropriateness of activities and, if necessary, prepare multiple options.
6. Involve students as decision-makers and, remember, young people are partners.
7. Utilize local resources especially in your school and local community.
8. Look for ways to involve as many people as possible.
9. Be patient. Relationships and success are both built slowly.
10. Plan well, practice beforehand, and review often.

A “Must Read” Resource Book for Facilitators

Perhaps the most comprehensive resource book in the area of Community Asset Mapping is:

*Building Community From the Inside Out:
A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing A Community's Assets*

By John R. Kretzman and John L. McKnight
Of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute
Institute for Policy Research
Northwestern University
2040 Sheridan Road
Evanston, Illinois 60208-4100

The book is distributed by:
ACTA Publications
4848 North Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60640
800-397-2282

Published in 1993, the book contains these six comprehensive and extremely useful chapters:

1. Releasing Individual Capacities
2. Releasing the Power of Local Association and Organizations
3. Capturing Local Institutions for Community Building
4. Rebuilding the Community Economy
5. Asset-Based Community Development: Mobilizing an Entire Community
6. Providing Support for Asset-Based Development: Policies and Guidelines

We believe that it is a very useful companion for the Roadmap.