CURRICULUM
Strengthening Service Years
as a Postsecondary Option

Employability Skills Inventory

Overview

In order to ensure service year corps members have the opportunity to advance in their personal and professional lives post-service, service year programs must incorporate practices that encourage the development of skills. It is imperative for service year corps members to know and work toward the skills that will set them up for future success once their service year is complete. It is also crucial for supervisors to be able to identify the skills that corps members currently possess and those they need to develop over the course of their service year. This Employability Skills Inventory will help with both those endeavors.

Skills for success are often referred to as hard and soft skills, but, for the purposes of this inventory, the terms technical and professional skills are used to show that skills within each category hold equal value. In fact, current workforce development trends indicate increased value in professional (or soft) skills because of their applicability across industries.

- **Technical Skills** are specific to an industry that you learn in order to excel in that industry. For example, data analysts have to learn how to analyze data and software engineers have to learn coding and programming languages.

- **Professional Skills** cut across industries and jobs. For example, being a good communicator or being a creative problem-solver are skills you can use whether you are a customer service representative, paralegal, nurse, or carpenter.

Because some of the Professional Skills identified involve Technical Skills (e.g. communication includes email, which is more technical) this inventory uses the umbrella term Employability Skills to refer to the skills that service year corps members will develop and enhance during their year of service. This inventory does not incorporate pre-existing skills developed from home life, hobbies, or interests. Corps members will learn more about pre-existing skills and strengths as they complete the A2: Resource: Asset-Based Growth Assessment Tool.

The Employability Skills Inventory contains a detailed description of the top eight skills identified as most important for service year corps members to learn and enhance throughout their service year, and a self-assessment inventory to help see how corps members rank themselves in terms of knowledge of each skill. Service year corps members should complete the Employability Skills Inventory at the beginning of their service year. Results will then be shared with supervisors during an initial one-on-one check-in. Corps members should lead the conversation based on their own self-assessment to provide a starting point for the supervisor to check back in on corps member skill development throughout the year.

Ideally, supervisors will check in once quarterly through intentional check-ins about skills progress and attainment. Program staff should leverage any opportunity throughout the service year to highlight skills development and progress. Toward the end of service, service year corps members and program staff should complete the inventory again to determine progress towards Employability Skills attainment.

Top Eight Employability Skills

The Top Eight Employability Skills were informed by a series of resources identified below.. A description of each skill and how an individual can demonstrate knowledge of the skill is included below as well.

WORK ETIQUETTE
- Being aware of the professional culture you are a part of (e.g. understanding how people dress, present themselves, or interact with each other, and how they let leadership and peers know when they will be out or late in a professional setting).
- Being aware of professional greeting norms, which include making eye contact, turning to a person when speaking, and noting what physical greeting, if any, is used by your organization (e.g. shaking hands, fist or elbow bumps, etc).
- Possessing phone, email, and internet etiquette (e.g. answering the phone in a professional manner, responding in a timely fashion, having out-of-office messages on, knowing when to use your cell phone in a professional setting, etc).
- Possessing meeting etiquette (e.g. never arriving late, but if so, letting the right person know in advance).

Some tasks that demonstrate the skills
- Letting supervisors and peers know when you will be late or absent.
- Respecting people's personal and professional space.
- Seeking clarity on professional culture, if unsure.
- Keeping cell phones on silent or off during meetings.
- Letting peers, supervisors, and others know if you are expecting an important phone call during a meeting and stepping out of the room or out of earshot to others when you receive the call.
- Communicating if you are uncomfortable or unable to meet expectations around a professional norm.
- Responding in a timely fashion to phone calls and emails.

WORK ETHIC
- Being honest and cultivating a personal work ethic.
- Handling confidential and sensitive information appropriately and respectfully; keeping equipment safe.
- High levels of effort and perseverance, and a positive attitude towards work and service.
- Considering the impact of decisions and actions on one's peers and community.
- Eagerness to learn new skills and improve upon existing ones.
- Ability to work and serve with minimal supervision.

Some tasks that demonstrate the skills
- Limiting absences and lateness, but letting your supervisor or a peer know when and if you need to be out or late.
- Sharing mistakes early so issues can be resolved quickly.
- Making sure to lock up or password protect sensitive files or information.
- Respecting peers', supervisors', clients', and stakeholders' need for more time to complete tasks and communicating schedule delays appropriately.
- Maintaining positive relationships with peers, supervisors, clients, and stakeholders.
- Attempting to solve issues on one's own first before involving others.
- Awareness of the importance of taking care of one's health (for example, taking time to overcome illness, but also understanding how one's absence affects the whole team).

COMMUNICATION

- Communicating clearly and effectively with peers, supervisors, clients, and stakeholders. This includes providing and presenting information by phone, email/written communication, or in-person communication to individuals and groups.
- Writing emails and other forms of written communication clearly, and taking the time to check spelling and grammar.
- Listening actively to understand and asking questions to clarify or offer differing points of view.
- Ability to acknowledge and interact effectively with people from different cultures, different communication and language styles, and different abilities, and adapting as necessary to communicate effectively.
- Relaying and receiving feedback in written and oral form.
- Understanding, interpreting, and following instructions in oral, written, or email form.
- Sharing ideas for improvement to a process, product, or service through discussion or a follow-up email.

Some tasks that demonstrate the skills

- Communicating a detailed procedure to a peer or re-capping a service-related situation to a supervisor.
- Communicating with external stakeholders over the phone, in-person, or over email.
- Outlining a process or standard operating procedure.
- Engaging in close reading of reports and documentation.
- Giving a fellow participant feedback on a written product or an idea.
- Receiving feedback on one's own deliverable and following through on recommendations.
- Sharing a start-up process or procedure one has developed.
- Writing a debrief report or follow-up email.
- Listening to and successfully implementing a new task.
- Creating and giving clear presentations.

ORGANIZATION AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL

- Conducting and completing assignments and projects with a consistent standard of high quality; taking pride in one's service and work.
- Ensuring that materials, files, manuals, etc. are organized and easy for anyone to find.
- Interpreting and reporting any errors or miscalculations found in planning documents, data generation, technical reports, and other documents appropriate to a chosen service area.
- Time management – Planning, setting goals, prioritizing, completing tasks on time and accurately, and communicating when you or your projects will be late.

Some tasks that demonstrate the skills

- Keeping one's own work area clean and organized.
- Keeping records and documentation organized and aligned with any auditing or regulatory requirements.
- Documenting decisions made during discussions or meetings.
- Close review of emails and reports for spelling errors and grammatical mistakes that hinder the message, prior to sending.
- Setting expectations with stakeholders around project or task completion.
- Keeping to do lists to prioritize and stay on top of tasks.

TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION
- Collaborating well with others and promoting a teamwork environment.
- Embracing, supporting, and elevating good ideas from others on one's team towards shared outcomes.
- Learning from and contributing to the learning of others for shared purposes and outcomes and in a wide range of environments.

Some tasks that demonstrate the skills
- Requesting informal feedback or providing constructive criticism to others.
- Helping others clean and organize their work area.
- Identifying team strengths during a collaborative group project.
- Providing and receiving constructive feedback during and upon completion of a team project.
- Sharing ideas and knowledge during group projects and team activities.
- Sharing training material with supervisors and peers upon attending a professional development activity.
- Using technology to coordinate and keep track of team projects.

CUSTOMER SERVICE-MINDED
- Responding appropriately to questions from peers, supervisors, clients, and the general public based on the situation.
- Discussing problems and resolving conflict calmly and patiently with peers, clients, stakeholders, and others.
- Communicating with different departments or partners of an organization to understand their roles and needs.
- Encompassing the knowledge, attitudes, and activities of an individual who actively works to improve or positively influence a community.
- Ability to understand one's role in a community and the society at-large through active involvement and participation in an organization for the welfare of that community.

Some tasks that demonstrate the skills
- Communicating with stakeholders to develop knowledge or obtain information outside of one's expertise.
- Reviewing lessons learned after completing a task, project, or event.
- Working patiently with people from different cultures, communication styles, and abilities than one's own to solve an issue or problem.
- Learning people's names and pronouns, and using them correctly.
- Assisting others in a project that is not one's own.
- Prioritizing requests and communicating expectations.
- Resolving conflicts or issues with dissatisfied peers, supervisors, clients, and stakeholders.
- Participating on and contributing to various committees outside of one's department or areas.

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY LITERACY
- Ability to effectively use technology to access, evaluate, create, and communicate information.
- Ability to locate and incorporate relevant media sources.
- Knowledge of specific tech skills like Microsoft Office, Google Suite, Dropbox, and Zoom, and project management tools like Slack.

Some tasks that demonstrate the skills
- Basic computer literacy including ability to troubleshoot basic issues.
- Locating and using appropriate research sources.
- Ability to distill information from multiple sources to use in a report or presentation.
- Completing tutorials for common tech tools like Microsoft Office, Excel, or PowerPoint.
- Being able to mute appropriately on Zoom and other types of calls.
- Using proper Zoom, Webex, or other webinar platform software etiquette including letting meeting participants know when you need to keep your camera off or being work/service ready when on camera.

INNOVATIVE THINKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING
- Thinking creatively, and developing ideas and approaches to design challenges.
- Researching, analyzing, and determining causes of issues and deciding the best way to solve them.
- Supporting one's claim or position with substantial evidence and logical reasoning.
- Generating questions, making connections, identifying patterns, and evaluating information to aid problem solving and solution finding.

Some tasks that demonstrate the skills
- Using research skills to help conduct and review surveys or other data collection methods.
- Creating a proposal for a start-up procedure or work/service-related process.
- Using previous documentation and/or discussion to solve an issue or problem.
- Using previous documentation and/or discussion to propose a new process.
- Creating a proposal based on discussion of decisions and options with a supervisor or peer to generate ideas and creative solutions.

Proficiency Indicators

As you read and review the descriptions of the Eight Employability Skills, assess yourself using the proficiency indicator levels below. Where do you fall? Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. This is a chance for you to build and enhance skills used during your service year that are needed for future success.

SKILL	Emerging
Emerging	You have little to no experience with the skill and are being exposed to the skill for the first time. You will need specific and intentional training and/or coaching to become more experienced.
Developing	You have some experience with the skill. For example, you have used the skill once or twice with some success. You may need or would like additional training and/or coaching to become proficient.
Proficient	You can accomplish the skill with very little guidance, coaching or training.
Advanced	You know the skill well enough that you can teach the skill to someone else. You feel confident that you can coach and train others to be more proficient at the skill.

Pre-Service: Employability Skills Inventory

Use the following chart to rate your current skill level in each of these areas during orientation before your service year begins. In the comments section, provide specific details about your choices. If there are specific skills related to your organization's specific focus, there is space to add them below.

SKILL	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Advanced	Comments *Explain your choices*
Work Etiquette					
Work Ethic					
Communication					
Organization & Attention to Detail					
Teamwork & Collaboration					
Customer Service-Minded					
Information & Technology Literacy					
Innovative Thinking & Problem-Solving					
Additional Skill					
Additional Skill					

Additional Comments and Observations:

End of Service: Employability Skills Inventory

Use the following chart to rate your current skill level in each of these areas at the end of your service year. In the comments section, provide specific details about your choices. If there are specific skills related to your organization's specific focus, there is space to add them below.

SKILL	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Advanced	Comments *Explain your choices*
Work Etiquette					
Work Ethic					
Communication					
Organization & Attention to Detail					
Teamwork & Collaboration					
Customer Service-Minded					
Information & Technology Literacy					
Innovative Thinking & Problem-Solving					
Additional Skill					
Additional Skill					

Additional Comments and Observations: