



Your Passport to Building a Healthy AFS Team



Volunteer learning guide

AFS-USA
May 2006

AFS-USA mission

AFS-USA works toward a more just and peaceful world by providing international and intercultural learning experiences to individuals, families, schools and communities through a global volunteer partnership.

AFS-USA core values are

Safety and Welfare - The safety and well being of our participants are our highest priority. In all our actions and decisions we make, this value above all others will always serve as the guiding principle in our work.

Respect - We treat all individuals respectfully, and value each others' unique contributions. We treat each other fairly and are responsive to the needs and requests of others. We are, by our mission and actions dedicated to acceptance of diverse peoples and viewpoints. We believe that the opportunities we offer through our organization and through our programs should be accessible to all regardless of race, creed, gender, nationality, cultural background, faith, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.

Accountability and Commitment - We believe in, and are committed to, the AFS mission and strive to exceed the highest standards in the work we do to enact the mission. We hold ourselves and each other accountable for the attainment of our goals and the demonstration of our values in all the work we do. We are passionate because the real impact of our work is to challenge thinking and change lives —both individual lives and, cumulatively, everyone's lives through effecting the enhanced possibility of peace in the world.

Integrity and Trust - We practice and honor open and authentic communications with each other as members of the AFS-USA community and with all those with whom we come in contact as a result of our work for AFS-We are honest and ethical in all aspects of our work. We demonstrate integrity and contribute to building relationships within an environment of partnership and trust

Continuous Learning and Improvement - We believe that learning, and in particular intercultural learning, is a basis for creating social change for the betterment of a worldwide community. We believe that continuous learning and personal growth must begin with us. We are dedicated to building our knowledge and skills and we will innovate in order to make 'what is' better and to make 'what can be' a reality.

Partnership and Teamwork - We believe to be most effective we must work together as a team in an atmosphere of mutual respect and support. Our personal conduct serves to break down walls and encourage people to work cooperatively to achieve success. Through our teamwork and volunteerism, we work to foster a more civil society.

AFS-USA's vision is

To build a culture of world peace by bringing international and intercultural education to daily life in the United States

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Welcome to volunteering with AFS-USA

On behalf of the Board of Directors, National Council, Volunteers and Staff, welcome to AFS-USA. Thank you for making the important decision to become an AFS Volunteer in your community. The most significant contributions of AFS-USA in action occur through the efforts of thousands of dedicated volunteers in the U.S. who support the AFS Mission of helping to build a more just and peaceful world.

This learning guide serves as your 'passport' to what we hope will grow to become a rich and rewarding experience for you as you work with young people and their families, educators, host families, community leaders, and others on behalf of AFS-USA. An AFS-USA Volunteer is truly an international volunteer. With every conversation you have and connection you make, you will demonstrate how peace is made possible between people.

It's an exciting time to be volunteering with AFS. The world needs intercultural understanding now more than ever. While so many people are asking themselves 'What can I do to make a difference,' you are heeding the call. I have every confidence that you will represent our organization with pride as you continue the legacy of the World War I and II American Field Service volunteer ambulance drivers who founded AFS. They believed, as AFS believes today, that building a more just and peaceful world begins when people from different countries and cultures meet, learn together, and have opportunities to better understand one another.

You are what the world needs now.

Alex J. Plinio

President and CEO
AFS-USA

Welcome to the AFS network and to this learning guide. When we set ourselves the task, back in 1946, of promoting understanding among cultures and helping people develop the knowledge and skills needed to create a more just and peaceful world, we knew that we could not accomplish this from the top down. What we needed then, and what we need even more today, is the commitment of a worldwide body of volunteers to truly make AFS into an organization driven by individuals who believe in our values. Your contributions make our values and goals come alive.

You are a member of a strong and vibrant volunteer community. More than 30,000 individuals like you are working around the world, to create a new generation of responsible global citizens. We dream of a world in which injustice, inequity and intolerance will not impede human progress and we believe that we can make this dream come true if we become a leader in promoting peace and tolerance through intercultural learning. Your contributions are extraordinary and indispensable to the advancement of our mission and our goals. AFS could not possibly exist without you.

Thank you, on behalf of AFS International and its Partners, for your part in making our dreams come true.

Tachi Cazal

President and Chief
Executive Officer
AFS International

Our proud AFS history

During World Wars I and II, young Americans volunteered as ambulance drivers in the American Field Service (AFS). When they returned home, they founded a movement to promote peace through international student exchange now known as AFS. Since World War II, AFS volunteers and staff have been working in partnership to forge international connections and develop intercultural understanding.

Since 1947 AFS has grown to become a yearly global partnership of:

- more than 30,000 volunteers
- more than 11,000 program participants
- more than 50 program partners around the world.

Currently AFS-USA:

- annually places students from abroad with more than 2,800 U.S. families
- has more than 6,000 volunteers to support our programs
- works directly with over 2,300 schools and local communities
- sends more than 1,500 U.S. students to more than 40 countries each year
- annually awards more than \$1.5 million in financial aid and scholarships.



Learn more about our 90 year history on the AFS International Website www.afs.org and launch the interactive timeline.

Learn more about AFS-USA by visiting our website www.usa.afs.org

What does it mean to be an AFS-USA volunteer

When you volunteer with AFS, you are part of a unique worldwide community. Our history, our volunteerism, our global partnership and nearly 60 years of experience in global exchange place AFS as one of the leaders in international, intercultural learning exchange programs. We are recognized as an advocate for world peace.

Volunteering for AFS-USA means that you have the opportunity to:

- be part of a local volunteering community who share your values
- become part of a worldwide network of volunteers, families and young people
- meet with and help support exchange participants from all over the world
- develop your own skills in intercultural learning and leadership
- promote the AFS mission of building, promoting and understanding peace through intercultural exchange experiences that change the world.

As an AFS-USA volunteer you undertake a formal application process in order for you to be registered to volunteer with AFS-USA. This process reflects AFS-USA's commitment to ensuring appropriate screening and record keeping for volunteers who are engaged in supporting our programs.



What is your “passport to building a healthy AFS team” volunteering learning guide

The volunteer learning guides have been developed based on input and experience from AFS-USA volunteers and staff.

Your **passport to building a healthy AFS team** has been designed to provide you with information to help you make your team effective and energized. You will be able to use this guide at any time.

- ✓ this guide will explain the way things are done in AFS-USA and provides you with practical strategies to follow
- ✓ it includes tools, resources and information about working with teams and how you can help make your team achieve outstanding results
- ✓ you will be able to reflect on your current knowledge, check on your own learning progress and be directed to further learning, assistance, training and support
- ✓ at any given time, this guide will allow you to help support your team in your community.

This guide is all about being as effective as we can in working towards our common goals. It will help you to learn new skills, improve on your existing skills, identify some common barriers that can arise in volunteer teams and most importantly enable you and your team work better together.

How do I use the volunteer learning guide

- ☑ Read the overview and introductory pages
- ☑ Reflect on your current knowledge
- ☑ Start by reading the sections of most interest to you
- ☑ Refer to the materials and further reading
- ☑ Complete the exercises and activities
- ☑ Talk with other volunteers in your local community, Chapter or Area Team
- ☑ Ask for assistance from your Regional Service Center
- ☑ Seek to develop your skills further through training
- ☑ Apply the skills to your role and evaluate your success
- ☑ Check your progress

We have included the following symbols as your guide to learning



Complete the activity



Contact Regional Service Center for help



Interactive learning activity



Go to AFSONline



Materials available separately



Pass it on – share your successful stories with other volunteers!



Support for your role



Visit website

We have left plenty of blank space for you to make your own notes. Materials are cross referenced and a glossary is at the back of this guide at the beginning of the Volunteer Resources Section on page 58.

The value of AFS teams

AFS-USA believes that one of the best ways to fulfill our organizational goals and mission is by adopting a team based approach to our work. AFS-USA encourages a team approach to supporting its operations and delivering its programs. While we acknowledge that individual volunteer efforts are important, AFS-USA believes that team efforts are a powerful tool for creating results.

- ⇒ **Teams get big results** - volunteers working in teams or groups can have a bigger and more immediate impact on getting the job done
- ⇒ **Teams build unity** – inviting and uniting volunteers from all of the community, teams promote community spirit and a connection to something bigger than the individual
- ⇒ **Teams make change happen** – through volunteers working together
- ⇒ **Teams promote equality** – everyone is respected in a team and everyone has something to contribute
- ⇒ **Teams share** – in working together, teams share their responsibilities, help each other, share their skills and provide avenues for learning
- ⇒ **Teams have fun.**

Keep your AFS team alive, healthy and energized by reminding your team that together they are achieving powerful results for the mission of AFS-USA.

What is a team in AFS-USA

AFS-USA encourages volunteers to undertake their volunteering activities through collaborative team work. Having a team based approach, means better results can be achieved that are beneficial to you in your volunteering role, to your volunteer colleagues and to AFS-USA in achieving our goals.

This volunteer learning guide has been developed to assist volunteer teams and groups to build healthy AFS teams. Your team could be:




- ✓ an Area Team
- ✓ a local chapter
- ✓ a volunteer team working together in a functional role (hosting, sending etc.)
- ✓ a special project group involved in organizing an event or an activity
- ✓ a newly formed group of volunteers
- ✓ a volunteer and staff team that are working together to achieve either operational or strategic aims of the organization.

A healthy AFS team will help you and your volunteer team to learn from each other, maximize your time, be energized and be more effective in achieving successful results.

Because in AFS-USA, a healthy team means that:

T together
E everyone
A achieves
M more

Reflecting on the health of my AFS team

Use this table to review and check your AFS team's health	 I can do this now	 I have some knowledge of this	 I need to learn this
My AFS team understands their importance and value			Go to page 11, 18 – 19, 21
My AFS team understands the importance of trust and mutual partnerships			15 – 17
My AFS team communicates effectively			47
My AFS team seeks involvement through consensus			30 – 31
My AFS team can work well together to achieve results			22, 23
My AFS team meets regularly to plan and innovate			39 – 41, 43 - 45
My AFS team is encouraging and welcoming to new volunteers			42
My AFS team celebrates success			49
My AFS team has a succession plan			52 - 55

Leading your AFS team

A key foundation of the AFS mission is to encourage leadership development. In AFS-USA we encourage leadership at all levels of our organization. Leadership is embedded in our history, in our exchange programs and throughout our volunteer network. AFS-USA takes great pride in the many and varied contributions that our volunteer leaders have made and continue to make.

In leading your AFS team, your role is to help strengthen our programs and presence through the active engagement of your team of volunteers. This is achieved by your ability to motivate, inspire and build trust with your team. As a team leader you will consult with all members of the team and help guide the team to consider what is important, creating meaning and direction for the team. You will encourage collaboration and communication.

In leading your team, you can help make it healthy by demonstrating your leadership behavior and skills to encourage and sustain team success. You can do this by:

- ✓ communicating to create enthusiasm on what has to be achieved
- ✓ getting commitment from the team to achieve results of high quality
- ✓ achieving results by team input and consensus
- ✓ delegating with trust and support to achieve accountability
- ✓ encouraging creative problem solving
- ✓ inspiring collaboration, team work and ways to combine skills and expertise
- ✓ using praise to make your team feel valued and appreciated.

The power of our mutual partnerships in a healthy AFS team

AFS is an interdependent organization of mutual partnerships and relationships. In order for us to achieve the mission of AFS, we are reliant upon the cooperation of others to help us achieve our goals.

Our interdependent relationships extend across volunteers, staff, schools, community groups and AFS partners offices throughout the AFS global network. A large part of both volunteer and staff work relies heavily upon establishing an understanding of shared responsibility in being able to achieve the results necessary to support our programs. In working together it often means that we have varying and often demanding expectations.

Our mutual partnerships need to be based upon the principals of trust, respect, cooperation and collaboration so that in working together our AFS teams achieve synergy.

Synergy is achieved by the positive interaction and cooperation of two or more individuals or other groups working in partnership to produce an enhanced outcome. Through this approach more efficient working relationships can be developed. This helps us to ensure that our results are greatly improved by working together in harmony.

In working together, a synergized team demonstrates respect, trust and understanding that each partner has a responsibility for the team, through:

- **shared goals** – as our collective reason for working together
- **interdependence** – awareness that they need each other's expertise, ability, and commitment in order to succeed
- **commitment** – to working together to achieve results
- **accountability** - for the role each plays in order to achieve the end results

- **appreciation** – recognizing others for their contributions to the team.

In AFS-USA we are often required to work with other or across AFS teams. This approach to cross-functional teamwork has many benefits. In working with other AFS teams it allows for volunteers to share goals and achieve collective success. Working with other teams provides opportunities for knowledge sharing and innovation allowing for volunteers to interact and network with other volunteers or community groups. It allows for stronger teams to help support teams that need more expertise and insight.

Working with or supporting other AFS teams can generate new knowledge, learning and develop commitment and consensus. Cross-functional team experience is a powerful opportunity for volunteer team development and in building partnerships. Working together with other AFS teams builds shared vision and encourages collaborative inquiry.

When teams work together they learn more about AFS-USA, and develop a better understanding of the interdependencies of different parts of the organization and related processes.

Building relationships of trust

Trust is a fundamental quality of successful, productive and sustainable mutual partnerships. Without trust, AFS-USA's ability to operate suffers. In establishing trust, it is important to consider that we benefit from our attitudes towards each other. AFS-USA encourages all volunteers, staff and other groups to demonstrate respect and treating others the way you wish to be treated yourself.

In building mutual partnerships based upon trust, it means that as individuals we are:

- demonstrating high levels of collaboration
- openly sharing information
- maintaining high morale
- not using negative gossip or blaming
- planning for success and avoiding a crisis
- disciplined in our communications
- willing to accept and provide constructive feedback.

In building trust, we demonstrate respect for each other's experience and expertise. We take responsibility for our actions and are accountable to each other so that in working together we can support and achieve the mission of AFS.

In AFS-USA we encourage our AFS teams to operate through cooperative, collaborative and synergized mutual partnerships that are respectful and trusting in their manner to each other.



Interactive learning activity – Building trust, accountability and clear lines of communication.

Go to page 64 in the Volunteer Resource Section of your Building a healthy AFS team passport.

This activity will give you and your team to further develop your volunteer learning.

Your AFS healthy team

For your AFS team to be effective in what they do, it is important that the team is healthy. Much like maintaining and monitoring your physical health, it is important to your team's continued well-being that you take the time to assess and monitor the health of the team. A healthy AFS team ensures the continued growth and well being of AFS-USA.

Healthy teams in AFS-USA are high achievers, have fun in their volunteering roles and are able to balance the needs of AFS-USA with great results, commitment and consideration of their team.

A healthy AFS-USA volunteer team will:

- have at least three active members
- have a chosen team leader
- be engaged and inspired by the tasks that they have to get done
- be in regular and open communication
- be able to identify and get what they need – training, resources and information
- have leaders who delegate and share responsibility
- have fun
- network with other AFS-USA volunteer teams, individuals and others in the community
- feel like their volunteer efforts are making a difference
- see how their efforts connect and contribute to the mission, vision and values of the organization.

Getting your team to health

Teams can go into decline for a number of reasons and generally this develops over a period of time. Your team could be ailing due to lack of membership, a disaffected volunteer influencing the team, unresolved issues, conflict between members of the team, suffering from neglect or lack of direction.

If you think your team needs help in restoring its health, then:

- ⇒ talk to individual team members - survey their opinions, seek their feedback
- ⇒ propose a team meeting – to identify the causes, ask the team what they think has been the cause
- ⇒ identify strategies and solutions – what are five things that the team could do to function better, feel healthy and successful
- ⇒ use the mission, vision and values – get your team to re-familiarize themselves with their purpose, their identity, what their goals are
- ⇒ reinforce the team’s importance – why they are volunteers, respect for each other and the benefits they can gain from a collaborative approach.

To turn the team around you may also want to consider using a person (volunteer, staff or other) that is removed from the issues of the team and could independently facilitate a session.

It can take time to restore your AFS team to health and it is often dependant upon the willingness of the team members, resources available and assistance from your staff at the Regional Service Center.



If you need help in helping your AFS team becoming healthy – contact your Regional Service Center for assistance.

Starting to work together

Volunteering in an AFS team, can often mean that you could be a group of people who have not had the opportunity to work together previously. Sharing tasks and frequently communicating will help you to function as efficiently as possible. Spreading the workload will improve team strength, allow you to get more done, and help ensure that nobody feels overburdened or excluded.

Top tips in working together as a team, include:

- ✓ encouraging active participation
- ✓ team based decision making
- ✓ sharing the workload collectively
- ✓ dividing tasks fairly
- ✓ being able to recognize when individuals need help or assistance
- ✓ sharing expertise and having fun.

In working together your healthy AFS team should be mirroring your leadership principles of:

1. demonstrating good, open, honest and authentic communication
2. being collaborative in your work
3. operating with consensus
4. demonstrating trust and being respectful of others
5. being motivated to achieve while remembering to acknowledge and value each other's contributions.

To be an effective leader and to keep your AFS team healthy use these five principles as your team values for working together.

Successful AFS teamwork

Teamwork is an important aspect in almost everybody's modern day existence. Teams are an integral aspect to much that we do, either in the workplace, on the sports field, at the club, or in the group or church that we belong to.

Belonging to a team is a result of feeling part of something that is bigger than yourself. In AFS-USA it is often the connection that you have made with the mission, the values or the objectives of the organization. As a volunteer working in a team you are contributing to the overall success of AFS-USA, through your team's efforts.

A healthy AFS team relies upon each individual volunteer being able to work together in a cooperative manner to achieve the team goals. It is necessary for each person on the team to be able to share their knowledge and skills in an environment where they feel they can contribute. In your volunteer role, fostering a positive team environment will help to nurture an effective and healthy AFS team.

Research on effective teamwork proves that healthy and successful teams:

- are committed to team success and shared goals
- create an environment where they actively promote and encourage all team members to achieve, contribute and learn
- foster an environment of working effectively together by discussing issues openly, honestly, respectfully, and supportively
- ensure that communication is open and all members feel free to provide feedback
- are aware of their individual roles and responsibilities
- are committed to the team, their leadership and accountability.

Check how well your AFS team is in working together

Diagnosis	Your AFS team members:	✓ Check
Clear expectations	<p><i>are able to define and understand their:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose • priorities • expectations • expected outcomes 	
Context	<p><i>understand their:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • importance in relation to AFS-USA's goals – national, regional, area & local • contributions into the bigger picture 	
Commitment	<p><i>feel that they:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • want to participate • are committed to achieve • are engaged and excited 	
Charter	<p><i>are aware of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their assigned area of responsibility • timelines and deadlines • their responsibility and accountability for achievements • their own limitations • where support can be found 	
Collaboration	<p><i>are able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand team and group processes • work together effectively • understand their roles and responsibilities • work cooperatively to achieve results • reach consensus on goals or objectives • manage and resolve conflict • share success equally 	
Communication	<p><i>are able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly and honestly communicate with each other • air a range of opinions • help promote our programs to potential customers 	

Keeping your team inspired and motivated

Morale plays a key factor in being able to keep your team both inspired and motivated. A healthy AFS team will share confidence, demonstrate determination to succeed, be supportive of each other, passionate in their volunteering roles and acknowledge and celebrate their successes and achievements.

Teams with a high morale are more likely to be inspired and motivated to achieve collective team success.

You can work with your team to encourage morale by:

- showing the team that you **value** their opinions by listening and acting on them
- seeking **suggestions** on what improvements can be made – as individuals or as a team
- identifying **opportunities** for skill development and learning
- identifying ways to make the team's work more **creative, flexible and fun**
- encouraging open **communication**
- encouraging** your team to express what could be upsetting them – openly or in private
- taking **action** when team members are not contributing fairly
- encouraging the team to **distribute** the more mundane tasks evenly within the team
- involving** the team in planning, decision making and setting targets
- celebrating** success, achievements and important events.

In valuing your volunteer AFS team, the contributions they make will keep them inspired, motivated and healthy.

Building your facilitation skills

Facilitation is a process skill that can be used to guide and direct a team when working together. It can be used in meetings, training or planning sessions. The process of facilitation will help a team to accomplish the goals that are required.

While the team may have set the agenda, the facilitator's role is to ensure that the team covers the agenda and meets the goals of the meeting. In a facilitated meeting a team member is appointed to focus on the process of the meeting. The aim of facilitation is to find the right balance between achieving results and the team feeling good about the way the results were achieved.

The role of the facilitator is to:

- help guide the team to move through the process together –do not give opinions, rather draw out and encourage opinions and ideas of individual team members
- focus on how people participate – not just on what is being achieved
- remain neutral - and do not take sides.

A good facilitator will demonstrate their ability to:

- ensure that their role of facilitator is understood by the team
- remain neutral
- clarify that they are not expected to be an expert on the discussion topic
- encourage and affirm each person in the team through respect
- be aware of their own unconscious behaviors
- resist the temptation to step out of their role as facilitator.

In order to help people interact better in a facilitated team environment, ground rules should be established by the team. Common ground rules could include:

- one person speaking at a time
- raising hands when wanting to speak
- agreeing to listen to what people have to say
- listen to understand
- not attacking other people's ideas
- being timely
- being respectful of each other.

The team must agree to respect and cooperate with the facilitator and allow them to intervene when necessary.

The basics in a good facilitated meeting include:

- reviewing the agenda, objectives and the ground rules
- encouraging participation
- sticking to the agenda
- avoiding detailed decision making
- seeking commitment
- bringing closure to each item
- balancing team dynamics
- being flexible, checking with the team when some items take longer than planned
- summarizing the results, action and required follow up
- thanking all participants
- closing the meeting.

Handling conflict during facilitation

Occasionally the process of facilitation can be disrupted by conflict in your team. The facilitator can effectively handle conflict when it arises by guiding the team through a decision-making process that encourages and respects participation from all members of the team. This can be achieved by:

- assisting the team to recognizing barriers to team process
- helping the team to discuss the underlying issues
- reshuffling tasks and activities so that time is available to resolve the issue
- helping the team to develop win-win solutions
- distinguishing between individual personal needs and the needs of the team
- easing tension by being patient, trusting, empathetic, non-judgmental, and when appropriate, humorous.

These processes help your team to keep their direction and maintain their focus when conflict arises during meetings, planning sessions or training.

Building consensus

Consensus is a decision making process used in a team environment to achieve general agreement, relying on collaboration and facilitation. It also seeks to resolve the objections of the minority in achieving the most agreeable decision for the team. It is useful in teams where members have different areas of expertise but are working toward a common goal.

Consensus requires focus on developing the relationships among the team members, so they work together to achieve agreements based on willing consent. Consensus is a way of structuring your team discussions to reach an agreed upon decision that has team ownership. Building consensus helps to reconcile differing points of view.



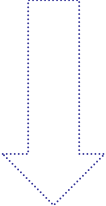
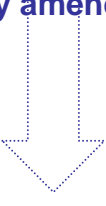
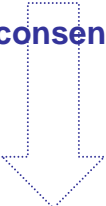
Consensus allows:

- ⇒ everyone to contribute and own the decision
- ⇒ avoids domination by those that are most outspoken
- ⇒ values everyone's opinion equally
- ⇒ aims to find the best and most suitable solution or outcome.

To use consensus in your team, requires being able to use your facilitation skills. You can follow the chart on the following page for implementing and building consensus in your team. For consensus to work the process must be followed from start to finish.

For consensus to work well, all team members must agree to a decision for it to be effective. The team must be committed to reaching a consensus view and prepared to agree what is best for the team rather than maintaining their individual opinion. Consensus can be an inspiring process as it challenges everyone in the team to contribute and act as a team. Through consensus building your team is valuing trust, respect and creative thinking equally for decision making.

Consensus decision making process

<p>Information and clarification</p> 	<p><i>If blocked or unable to reach agreement – reform proposal through discussion & debate</i></p>	<p><i>What are we trying to decide?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ what decision needs to be made by the team ⇒ use facilitated discussion to reach clarity
<p>Discussion and debate</p> 		<p><i>What is our clear proposal of action?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ leading discussion to share opinions ⇒ use brainstorming or other method ⇒ seek more information or clarification ⇒ open discussion to encourage the strongest proposal to emerge
<p>Making a proposal</p> 		<p><i>What is our proposal?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ write the proposal down ⇒ ensure it is clearly understood by the team ⇒ check that it has a solution ⇒ discuss and debate further if required
<p>Friendly amendments</p> 		<p><i>What are the signs of team agreement?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ enhancements may be suggested to improve or add clarity ⇒ emerging group agreement
<p>Restate the proposal and test for consensus</p> 		<p><i>Is the team clear about the proposal?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ clarity so that the team can decide ⇒ are there any road blocks – can they be overcome or are those people who can't agree willing to stand aside and let the proposal move forward
<p>Agreement</p>		<p>The team has made a decision based upon active participation that everyone agrees with.</p>

How to delegate in a team

Successful delegation requires democratic decision making. In volunteer teams responsibility is more readily accepted if the team has participated in the decision making process and has had the opportunity to make constructive contributions. This can also help to induct new volunteers and assist them in a sense of belonging to your AFS team.

In delegating, consider the following:

- empowering your team – through information, responsibility and sharing tasks
- sharing and developing skills – grouping skilled volunteers with interested volunteers, who can learn from their expertise and experience
- reducing the size of the task – consider breaking up tasks into smaller parts so that they can be shared amongst the team.

An empowered and skilled team will keep attracting volunteers and help the team achieve success and move forward.

The success of a volunteer team depends greatly on the way its team members work together and delegate tasks. For a stronger team consider sharing tasks and responsibilities as evenly as possible. Your goal should be to have a stronger and healthier AFS team by avoiding a core of stressed people and getting new volunteers involved at an earlier stage.

Team problem solving tips

When you are considering problems your team is facing, brainstorm a list of problems, or issues for the team. You can list them under the following categories:

- “acts of God” we just have to live with
- “acts of lesser gods” we probably have to live with but we can let them know
- issues we share with others and resolve jointly
- issues that are ours alone.

This will allow your team to gain perspective on your team issues and realize some problems we just have to live with.

When considering which problem the team should invest energies into, it is useful to categorize these by thinking about:

- the size of the problem – how many people are affected
- the seriousness of the problem – how much damage is it doing or likely to do
- the likelihood and ease of success – in solving the problem
- the potential for growth once the problem has been solved.

In problem solving, take the time to effectively sort out the problem rather than adopt a quick solution. Often, the attention given to trying to solve the problem has a greater positive effect than the solution itself.

In seeking solutions to problems facing your team, it is useful to recognize that people come from different positions and often seek different results. In solving problems, remember to focus on the problem not the person. Use processes that assist in working logically through the problem rather than simply debate and focus on individual interests. Help guide the team to uncovering alternatives and finding win/win solutions.

It is useful to remember that many of the challenges in problem solving relate to the difficulty in identifying the cause of the problem rather than its many symptoms.

Your team may also have a problem or issue that is a grievance about something or someone connected to AFS-USA, but is outside of the team. In these circumstances, refer to the Grievance Policy in the Passport to Volunteering for more information on how you can address these sorts of issues.

**For more information about AFS-USA's
Grievance Policy:**



- ✓ Talk to your Area Team volunteers
- ✓ Contact your Regional Service Center
- ✓ “*Your Passport to Volunteering*” – a volunteer guide on AFS-USA volunteer policies and procedures

Conflict management

Conflict can occur for many different reasons and is a typical of any relationship. It is often the case in AFS, that the “small stuff” has been left unresolved and then escalates into a bigger issue. Encourage those volunteers concerned to talk frankly about what might be bothering them. It is best that they air their issues in a healthy and constructive manner, rather than leaving them unsaid, which can have the potential to become part of a bigger problem.

When problems do escalate they can be harder to resolve and achieving a good outcome becomes more difficult. Good conflict resolution means that you are facilitating a discussion; you can consider using the following steps in resolving conflict:

1. Resolve – parties involved have to be willing
2. Identification – of the problem has to be made
3. Empathy – has to be demonstrated
4. Listen – without comment, list the needs and concerns
5. Question – to gather information
6. Clarify – what you have heard and provide feedback
7. Seek – points of agreement, solutions and compromise
8. Approach - agree on an outcome.

In helping others to resolve their conflict, your role is to maintain objectivity and neutrality, not to take sides and not to fix the problem.

And remember that:

- ⇒ achieving a win/win outcome is always ideal, but not always feasible
- ⇒ a willingness for compromise often helps
- ⇒ conflict can be healthy – it should not be viewed negatively – it is often the way that we learn about another point of view.

Responding to new ideas or challenges

Sometimes your team may be challenged by the suggestion of a new idea or asked to explain why a decision has been made. This can be upsetting to the team, especially when planning is well underway. At these times the most suitable response is that the team agreed at the time to make the decision, based upon the facts and team input.

At other times, new ideas and challenges may arise that were not considered earlier. These might sound as if they can add value or benefit to the team responsibilities. At these times, the person who proposed the idea should be willing to gather more information or facts that can clarify the idea, to allow the team to evaluate the idea using the same criteria of their previous decision.

Encouraging your team to be open to looking at alternative ways of doing things or when appropriate being challenged by team members helps to generate new and different ways to work together and gain the benefits of new ideas.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a technique used for solving specific problems, stimulating creative thinking, or developing new ideas by spontaneous participation in discussion. Brainstorming allows for all members of a team to contribute their ideas.

Brainstorming is used to:

- open up the group for creative thinking
- create a new idea that has not been tried before
- generate as many ideas as possible - without evaluation
- energize the group
- encourage participants to share ideas who might be hesitant to share out loud
- inform participants of the diversity of ideas in the room.

How brainstorming is used:

1. identify the need to brainstorm
2. post the topic that you are brainstorming about in front of the team
3. review the rules of brainstorming
4. identify a recorder and a facilitator (if necessary)
5. begin brainstorming – keep to the rules
6. clarify and combine duplicate items on the list
7. get agreement from the group that the list is complete.

Rules for brainstorming:

- quantity not quality - the more the better
- piggyback on other's ideas
- no evaluation of ideas - yet
- short time frame - set a timer.

Types of brainstorming:

- ⇒ popcorn - everyone takes a turn in random order
- ⇒ carousel - around the room clockwise or counter-clockwise
- ⇒ brain writing – write an idea on a card and toss into the center, pick up someone else's card, read it, and add to it
- ⇒ stand up and deliver - have everyone stand around flipchart and give ideas
- ⇒ snowflake – write an idea on a post it note, everyone sticks them on the wall

When the team is finished brainstorming, the result is typically a large list of ideas, perceptions, opinions or solutions. The team can then review the ideas, discuss, short list options, evaluate and then put in place a plan of action and agreement.

Brainstorming is a great tool to encourage and generate creative thinking. Once used, you soon become hooked.

The parking lot

The parking lot can be a useful tool used during team discussions to ensure your team does not get sidetracked or distracted by other issues. It is also very useful for keeping track of an off-topic item that is important and worth revisiting at a later time.

Keep a flip chart or separate note paper that is designated as the “parking lot”. When an item or point that is important is raised, but threatens to sidetrack the current discussion, suggest that the item be added to the parking lot. This will allow for the discussion to return immediately back to the topic. It is important to ensure that the parking lot items are addressed either at the conclusion or are included on the meeting notes or action points for future discussion.

Planning the team agenda

Planning your agenda well in advance of your team meeting will help to ensure that all necessary topics will be covered and discussed. It will also help to avoid the team spending too much time dwelling on relatively unimportant topics.

An agenda lists the points to be discussed at a meeting. It is (presented as an ordered list) distributed to a meeting's participants prior to the meeting, so that they will be aware of the subjects to be discussed, and are able to prepare for the meeting. The agenda is usually headed with the date, time and location of the meeting.

Points on a typical list of agenda may include:

- welcome and introductions
- agenda review
- apologies for absence
- approve minutes or action points of the previous meeting
- matters arising from the previous meeting
- a list of specific points to be discussed
- any other business
- arrange/announce details of next meeting
- closing the meeting and appreciation
- evaluation.

In preparing your agenda:

- give everyone chance to contribute to the agenda
- make action points and key decisions clear in minutes
- circulate the minutes afterwards, and check the action points at the next meeting

In planning and using an agenda it means that:

- ☑ all the topics will be covered
- ☑ the meeting won't drag on for too long
- ☑ avoid wasting time on unimportant topics
- ☑ all the team had the opportunity to contribute.

Your team meetings will be more effective in achieving results by planning your agenda in advance and getting agreement on the agenda before the meeting starts.

Welcoming meetings and get together

Keeping a team focused can often be influenced by the way you conduct your meetings. The way you start a meeting will influence the outcome.

In AFS-USA your team may meet, to:

- ⇒ share ideas, make decisions, ask volunteers to share the workload
- ⇒ check on the team's progress
- ⇒ make plans for short or longer term activity
- ⇒ review things that have happened and talk about what has been learned
- ⇒ have a social focus for the team
- ⇒ give your team encouragement, support and motivation
- ⇒ give the team a sense of belonging.

Make new people feel welcome, an AFS meeting can be fun if you set the mood with a lively and positive tone. Appealing and successful meetings ensure that:

- someone is at the door to meet and greet as people arrive – new or old should get treated the same

- introductions are made at the start
- an explanation is provided on how your meetings work
- the purpose of the team is clear and your recent activity is explained
- in-jokes and jargon are avoided – AFS can be very confusing to a newcomer, if jargon is necessary remember to explain it
- new volunteers are mixed evenly with more experienced volunteers
- agenda topics are clear before launching into discussion
- you stop and allow for questions and clarification
- plenty of opportunities for new volunteers to take on tasks is created – they need to also feel comfortable and capable of doing the task
- a buddy is assigned to new team members – it will help new volunteers to understand topics and questions during the meeting as well as make them feel valued and comfortable
- feedback is sought – meetings can always be improved by suggestions made from others

If you are a new team or just need to add some energy into a meeting, consider using an icebreaker, a game or an activity. Icebreakers can be a fun way of introduction or assisting in establishing some familiarity. Games or activities can add energy and enthusiasm, and give your team a break from constant focus on the “hard stuff.”

Like any tool it is important to understand that activities, games or icebreakers need to be used at the appropriate time to achieve results.



For more information about team games, activities and icebreakers – go to page 66 in the Resources Section of this guide.

Tips for welcoming new volunteers into your team

You can make new volunteers feel welcome to your AFS team by ensuring that they are provided with the relevant materials that will help them become familiar with your team and their operations.

Welcoming new volunteers to your team could include:

- an AFS-USA welcome packet with a personalized letter of welcome, contact details of volunteers in the team, AFS-USA merchandise, information about meetings, copies of recent minutes or activities and your newsletters
- orientation and information about the team
- access to volunteer resources to support them in their role
- announcing and welcoming your new team members in your regular team communication, email or newsletter.

You may also want to consider how you can induct a new or existing staff member from your Regional Service Center into your volunteer team. In giving them information about your team, not only are you helping them to become familiar with your team, but they will be better equipped to understand your team's needs.

Making the most of meetings

Good meetings are rarely spontaneous. They are planned in advance and are organized to bring your team together for a range of reasons. Your meeting could be to plan an event, review and make a decision, communicate some key achievements or work out the next steps that your team will be taking in supporting your volunteering function.

Meetings should not become the key focus of your AFS-USA activities; they should not take over your lives. They need to be balanced with socializing and with taking action. In organizing your team meeting, consider the following:

- **open** - accessible to everyone, no matter what their experience or background
- **effective** - needs to produce results, stand out and get the job done
- **informed** - debate and discussion ensures the most effective and relevant method or solution is agreed upon
- **inclusive** – encourage input and a diversity of ideas so that everyone feels that they belong and can contribute
- **democratic** - spend time determining how team consensus will be achieved and avoid conflict later
- **organized** - meetings need to be structured to ensure they are democratic and effective
- **enjoyable** - meetings can (and should) be fun and dynamic
- **empowering** – make the team walk away from meetings feeling better for having been there.

By making the most of your meetings, your volunteer team will believe they can make things happen and will look forward to taking action.

Varying your meetings

Not all meetings will required to have a formal planned structure. There are many different things you can do with your meetings to vary the structure and content that keeps your team energized and engaged.

To vary your meetings, at times, you could consider:

- inviting a speaker – for more information, inspiration, experience or a different perspective
- learning or sharing skills - with other AFS-USA teams or groups or look to other volunteer groups in your community
- organizing some training – a great way to have a meeting and to learn at the same time
- taking action - don't just talk about it, get together and do it and produce the results
- socializing – meetings don't always have to be in a formal environment, plan to meet in a different location occasionally and do something different together that you can all enjoy
- working on a variety of issues – to keep interest and interaction, consider variety and addressing some long-term and some short-term issues
- holding planning meetings separately - from the main meetings, so new or occasional members don't have to sit through the unfamiliar
- think about inviting one to two new people to every meeting
- an annual retreat (overnight or a weekend) is a great team builder and a good place to evaluate and set goals for the coming year.

It is important to avoid making your meetings too long, but when you think your meeting is going to run over time, check with the team to get agreement to finish later, reduce the number of items on the agenda or move to the next meeting

In planning your meetings you should try and aim for a balance of being able to get the necessary work done and maintain a healthy balance for your team needs. Consideration to what your team can achieve and is committed to will enhance the meeting.

For your next meeting take some time to plan it in advance, think about how you can:

	<i>Check</i>
	✓
⇒ Actively <i>facilitate</i> the meeting or find someone to take on the role	
⇒ <i>Plan your agenda</i> to keep the meeting positive – put some quick easy decisions at the top so your team gets a sense of achievement early on	
⇒ Schedule some <i>social time</i> before or after the meeting - the meeting will then be focused and short	
⇒ Keep it all encouraging - when looking for ideas use <i>brainstorming</i>	
⇒ Have a <i>break</i> in the middle of long meetings - keep blood sugar levels up with a snack	
⇒ <i>Smile</i> and check your body language	
⇒ <i>Evaluate</i> and learn from your meeting so that you can improve for the next time your team meets	

Keeping a record of your meetings - minutes and action points

Minutes

These provide a written record of the meeting. They often give an overview of the structure of the meeting, starting with a list of those present, a statement of the various issues and a record of the decisions or action to be taken. Minutes can be short and concise and be a list of the resolutions adopted or decisions made during the meeting.

Action points

You can save time and effort by just writing down action points and key decisions. Identify what action is needed, who is doing it, and when it needs to be done by. They can be reviewed at the end of the meeting to remind everyone what they agreed to do. You may choose to also review them at the start of your next meeting so that progress can be shared.

When distributing the outcomes of your meeting, ask if anyone has any changes to make, as people can take different ideas away from a meeting. Your team might also rotate the minute taking or you may have a volunteer who likes this role.

Keeping track of your meetings either by taking minutes or recording action points can help involve team members who could not attend. You might have other volunteers on your distribution list who are interested but aren't able to attend meetings regularly. These volunteers still want to be involved, be aware of upcoming activities and opportunities to participate, so sending them copies of the minutes of the meeting is a great way of keeping all volunteers informed and engaged.



For ideas on how to develop action plans for your team talk to your Area Team or contact the Regional Service Center.

Keeping in contact – communication in a healthy AFS team

While meetings are an important way of a team keeping in touch, they are not always practical or realistic. To be a healthy team, your group needs good communication systems that incorporate different communication tools. The way you maintain contact will vary depending upon the needs of the team. No one communication tool will work best for everyone, but often a combination of several different approaches helps to keep the team informed and aware.

Minutes, meeting summaries or action points:

- assist the team in focusing on what has been said and done
- act as a useful tool for keeping track of success and achievements
- assist in helping to focus the team's energies on what is most important
- help to keep the team informed and in contact.

Email lists:

- effective in some areas and less effective in others
- remember that not every one will be a regular user or check emails daily
- are able to quickly disseminate information; but they can also be very subjective to the writer and can result in miscommunication
- can be good for sharing general information - but trying to make a decision or get people to volunteer is far less effective.

The phone tree:

- calls originate from one person and then goes down the list
- if your team is big, then you might find a tree an efficient method of keeping in phone contact.

Newsletters:

- provide a positive upbeat focus on the team's activities
- help to communicate to a wider audience
- share success and recognize achievement.

Keeping in regular contact means that as a team:

- contact details are shared for phone, address and email
- there is shared responsibility for the different tasks
- actions that are required from that contact are clear
- communications are positive and easy to understand
- meetings or other dates are planned and agreed upon.

By maintaining regular contact with your team, you will help to keep the team focused, informed and energized. You will also be able to avoid covering “old ground” for when you do meet in person.



Share your good communication ideas with AFS-USA's volunteers to help them keep in regular contact with their team.
Post your ideas and suggestions at [AFSONline](#)

Acknowledging your AFS team efforts

Volunteering is not necessarily about rewards and recognition. Most volunteers choose to volunteer their time with AFS-USA because of their respect for the mission and what they get from their volunteer efforts. Taking the time to appreciate and acknowledge the efforts of your team is an important aspect of a healthy AFS team.

Acknowledging the efforts of your team can be as simple as remembering to say thank you and can vary depending upon the needs of your team and what is appropriate at the time. They can be fun or formal and can acknowledge individual or group efforts. How you choose to recognize and appreciate the efforts of your team is up to you. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Be sure to:

- promote team projects and individual volunteer accomplishments
- praise volunteers openly
- arrange thank yous from either staff or volunteers outside of your team
- recognize individual efforts by having a volunteer of the month
- use your local media to promote and acknowledge your team's achievements
- promote volunteer achievements in your regular team communications
- arrange a social get together
- send cards or letters to say thank you
- celebrate birthdays
- give certificates of appreciation and merit awards
- take a cake or some other treat to share at the meeting.

At other times of the year, use:

- ⇒ special AFS-USA to present awards to volunteers
- ⇒ promote your team achievements during National Volunteer Week – last week of April
- ⇒ acknowledge the efforts of hosting during host family recognition month - March
- ⇒ something a little different – have a special social occasion that acknowledges your teams efforts
- ⇒ local community events that can acknowledge your team’s volunteer efforts
- ⇒ external opportunities that might offer training or personal development to volunteers

If your team works with a staff member, you may also wish to think about how you can acknowledge and thank them. Mutual appreciation between volunteers and staff helps to build sustaining relationships. Your team may choose:

- emailing their supervisor to say what a great job
- a simple thank you
- a card
- an invitation to a team meeting or social event.

A healthy team continues to recognize the efforts of the team. Done well, team or individual praise can go a long way in making the team feel valued – even when the going gets rough.



For more information about AFS-USA’s volunteer recognition programs contact your Regional Service Center.

Keeping your AFS team healthy for the future

AFS-USA recognizes and understands that volunteering roles are not without limits. No matter how important your volunteering role is, we believe that the same volunteers should not be expected to take on more work than is reasonable.

Healthy AFS teams are active groups that continue to grow and develop. In staying healthy volunteers don't take on all the work, even if they like being indispensable. An AFS team will maintain its health by volunteers recognizing when they need to take a step back and allow for newer volunteers to have their turn.

If a few volunteers do all the work, they create barriers for other volunteers to develop their skills, interests and talents. They are also creating a situation in which other volunteers get used to relying on them to complete the task or take an attitude of "passing the buck". When these volunteers really could do with help or assistance and can't complete the task on their own, few are willing to put their hand up.

It is important to try and balance the health of your team, with your own needs and the expectations of your team. Encourage new volunteers to take on responsibility - share your skills and talents, even if it seems like it would be quicker to do it yourself at first. Accomplishing things together helps to generate success and maintain your healthy AFS team.

Building successful new volunteer team relationships – the first stage in succession plans

AFS-USA's success as a volunteer based organization relies on continuing to attract potential volunteers. In attracting new volunteers AFS-USA can continue to support our current programs, expand on potential, maintain our quality and uphold our mission.

Ideally, when a new volunteer joins AFS-USA they are warmly welcomed, introduced to their team, provided with an orientation and have a clear sense of their own purpose in belonging to the team.

Unfortunately, at times new volunteers can sometimes feel or encounter either open or subtle resistance from experienced volunteers. This is not always intentional, often in the process of being a busy and active volunteer with a great deal of experience we can overlook the feeling of what it is like to be new and the struggle that we can feel with the unfamiliar.

Building successful volunteer team relationships between experienced and new volunteers needs to take into account the experience of the long serving volunteers and newer volunteers who bring their own enthusiasm and a different perspective into an established team. Like any group of people, some time may need to be given for the team to feel more comfortable with whom they now are and how they are going to work together.

Some suggestions in helping volunteers to become more comfortable working together include:

- names tags plus space for a special area of interest or experience – will help generate interest and conversation
- orientation and training for new volunteers led by experienced volunteers – include some two way learning where new volunteers can share some of their own knowledge

- skill identification and matching – new and old can learn from each other and share their knowledge that is either outside or inside of AFS-USA
- buddy or mentor system - ensure that it includes responsibility and a timeline for when the relationship should end
- encourage new ideas from new volunteers – aim for positive aspects to be listed first
- give them a chance – even if it has been “tried” before or sounds familiar, there might just be something different about it this time that can make the idea work
- rotating positions – not only can new volunteers have an opportunity to learn from experienced volunteers, but this also gives strength to the team with a broader depth of knowledge.

Encouraging positive volunteer relationships in the team builds healthy and successful AFS teams. The more inclusive a team is the more welcoming it can feel to newer volunteers.

Succession plans

Most volunteer turnover will occur at the end of the busy season or at the time of your annual meeting. A succession plan is necessary to provide opportunities for potential volunteers to move up into key volunteer positions. Creating succession plans, allows your team to identify and develop volunteers in readiness, allow for a smooth transition and avoid disruptions to your team operations.

Where to start

A simple starting point for the identification of your team succession is identifying key volunteer role vacancies in your team. Your succession planning process should:



- determine the key positions where successors are necessary
- identify the duties required
- list the essential volunteer skills
- the expected timeframe for replacement
- assess internal team talent and identify gaps
- create external volunteer potential
- include development plans for recruitment of qualified individuals
- provide support for succession candidates.

A good succession plan means that the team should be able to allow for volunteer team turnover to avoid stagnation. They should be able to recognize where there is a void and help to identify potential volunteers to fill this void. By encouraging new volunteers to join your team you are helping to put in place your succession plans. You can encourage your team to identify appropriate skills or qualities in seeking to recruit new volunteers.

A good succession plan should:

- ensure knowledge transfer – thorough documentation, minutes, records or planning materials to help bring the team member up to date
- include orientation - into the team and their volunteer role
- provide a welcome information pack – of relevant AFS materials
- include an invitation to meetings – if the potential volunteer is considering the role

Check on my AFS healthy team progress

 My AFS team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	 Will review
Know and value the importance of AFS teams			Go to page 11, 18 – 19, 21
Works and demonstrates mutually supportive partnerships			15 – 17
Is effective in using different forms of communication to keep in regular contact			47 - 48
Works together using consensus and other decision making tools			30 – 31,
Can work well together to achieve results			36 - 38
Meetings are welcoming, regular and inspiring			39 – 41, 43 - 45
Encourages and welcomes new volunteers to the team			42
Celebrates success and acknowledges efforts and contributions of the team			49
Understands the importance of maintaining a healthy AFS team			10, 18 - 19
Can plan for succession			52 - 55

My Passport to Building a Healthy AFS Team Volunteer Resources



AFS-USA glossary

Commonly used terminology in AFS-USA	
AFSONline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AFS-USA volunteer intranet • Available only to registered volunteers • All hosted participants are listed and can be selected here
AFS Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A country where AFS operates • Sends and hosts AFS participants
Area Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A volunteer group that covers a certain area and consists of local communities and chapters • Specific geographic area in the U.S. • The boundaries of an Area Team are defined by zip code ranges
Area Leadership Team Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The volunteers responsible for the management and coordination efforts of the volunteers belonging to their Area Team
Admissions Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff located in the Admissions Office • Responsible for placing participants for review on AFSONline and processes requests
Bios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted student profiles posted to AFSONline • Available weekly during the hosting cycle
Chapter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local community group of volunteers who work together to achieve agreed goals for AFS-USA with the Area Team or Regional Service Center if there is no Area Team
CSIET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council on Standards for International Educational Travel • Private, non-profit organization which monitors all exchange programs
Field Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff located in the Regional Service Centers • Directly responsible for assisting volunteers with hosting, sending, volunteer development and training
Field Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff located in the Regional Service Centers • Directly responsible for overseeing a number of teams
Host Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A family or individual who have been screened and accepted to host an AFS participant
Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The volunteer assigned to provide support and guidance to a participant and host family for the duration of their program • Provides documented monthly contact with participant and host family
Natural Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family who have sent or are sending their son or daughter on an AFS program
NH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Hemisphere (relates to school Year Program) arrivals • Summer arrivals in August
Participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers to anyone (student, educator or other) who is currently on an AFS program either in the USA or abroad
Participant Support Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff located in the Regional Service Centers • Responsible for handling support issues with Area Teams or chapters
Returnee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An American Abroad who has participated on an AFS Program
SH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Hemisphere (relates to school Year Program) arrivals • Winter arrivals in January

Where can I go for help

Volunteer Contact by Position	<i>I would contact this volunteer for questions or information on.....</i>
Area Team Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Area Team structure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Overview of the area and culture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yearly calendar of events
Area Team Treasurer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance and fundraising on area and local level
Area Team Sending Coordinator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sending programs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sending orientations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sending training
Area Team Hosting Coordinator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hosting programs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hosting orientations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application process for host families and participants <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hosting training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Host family recruitment tips
Area Team Support Coordinator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support of the participant, host family or school <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monthly contact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support and/or liaison training, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participant support crisis situations
Area Team Orientation Coordinator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hosting/sending orientations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Orientation training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Orientation schedule within the Area
Area Team Volunteer Coordinator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Volunteer development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chapter development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Volunteer registration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New volunteer recruitment, orientation and integration
Area Team Returnee Coordinator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Returnee activities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engaging returnees as volunteers
Regional Council Representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Typically the Regional Council Rep also holds one of the Area Leadership Team volunteer positions. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Issues related to the chapter that might impact the region and vice versa.

Staff Contact by Position	<i>I would contact this staff member for questions or information on.....</i>
Regional Field Team Coordinator (located in Regional Service Center - RSC)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Questions about starting a new chapter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training needs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hosting or Sending materials (applications, marketing materials) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Volunteer development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Host family recruitment tips
Regional Field Team Manager (RSC)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your contact when the Regional Field Team Coordinator is not available
Participant Support Coordinator (RSC)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participant support situations as they arise
Participant Support Manager (RSC)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your contact for participant support situations when the Participant Support Coordinator is not available
Travel and Logistics Coordinator (RSC)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Orientations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arrival and departure information for our hosted participants
Admissions Advisor (located in Portland, OR)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Questions about the application process for host families and participants
Volunteer Registration Coordinator (Portland)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Questions about volunteer registration process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AFS online password and id

My volunteer contact file

My local AFS-USA Chapter	
Chair:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Local volunteer responsible for:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Local volunteer responsible for:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Local volunteer responsible for:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Local volunteer responsible for:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
My AFS-USA Area Team	
Area Team Hosting Coordinator:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Area Team Chair:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Area Team Support Coordinator:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Area Team Treasurer:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Area Team volunteer responsible for:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>

My other contacts in my local community	
Name:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Name:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Name:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Name:	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Address</i>
	<i>Email</i>
My Regional Service Center	
Regional Field Manager:	<i>Name</i>
	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Regional Field Coordinator	<i>Name</i>
	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Participant Support Coordinator:	<i>Name</i>
	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Participant Support Manager:	<i>Name</i>
	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Travel and Logistics Coordinator:	<i>Name</i>
	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Admissions Advisor:	<i>Name</i>
	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Email</i>
Volunteer Registration Coordinator:	<i>Name</i>
	<i>Phone</i>
	<i>Email</i>

Using AFSONline and the AFS-USA website

AFS Online is our secure intranet that allows you as an AFS volunteer to stay connected by accessing tools, materials and resources for your volunteer role. AFSONline is made available to all volunteers as part of your registration process.

After you are registered you will receive an email with your user id, password and instructions on connecting to AFSONline.

We recommend that you ask an experienced volunteer or Area Leadership Team volunteer to help you become familiar with AFSONline. You can also contact your Regional Field Coordinator with questions about how to use and understand the many features available to you.



To get access to AFSONline

AFSONline: www.afsonline.org

For questions contact: Your Regional Field
Coordinator

Volunteer training

AFS-USA is committed to ensuring that as a volunteer you are well orientated and trained in your volunteer role. This ensures a community of committed and skilled volunteers supporting a quality intercultural exchange program.

AFS-USA has staff who work on training and organizational development in each Regional Service Center. Their role is to support or facilitate the design and implementation of effective training for all AFS-USA volunteers

and staff. They work with a team of volunteer trainers and staff who are available to provide local training.



For more information about available training - please contact the Field Coordinator or the Field Manager in your Regional Service Center.

Publicity and marketing standards

AFS-USA has standards for how we publicize and promote our organization and programs. These standards have been developed by AFS-USA, AFS International and meet the requirements set by CSIET and U.S. Department of State.

The AFS USA Marketing Department develops templates for press releases, public service announcements, letters to the editors, etc., which can be modified to meet your local needs. These templates are easy to use and meet the standards by which we need to market our programs. You can find these templates on AFSONline.



For more information AFS-USA's media policy and procedures - please contact the Field Coordinator or the Field Manager in your Regional Service Center.



Go to AFSONline

You can also go to the library section on AFSONline and search for “AFS-USA Media Policy and Procedures”.

Building trust, accountability and clear lines of communication – an optional team exercise

It is important to maintain a healthy AFS group dynamic that builds trust, open communication and respect for each other. As a team you can help to build trust, accountability and support for each other in undertaking your responsibilities by discussing this as a team.

You will need:

- flip chart paper
 - colored pens
 - colored dots
1. start with a relationship building exercise (e.g. how each member of the team came to volunteer with AFS-USA) or use an icebreaker to get the team energized
 2. then as a team explore some or all of the following bullet points, you can use flip chart paper to make the notes, encourage the team to think creatively to explore each option, in order to establish group norms:
 - how will we keep in regular contact
 - how will we hold each other accountable
 - how can we inspire each other
 - what does it mean to belong to this team
 - how will we value each others opinions
 - how can we best support each other
 - how will we celebrate our successes
 - what actions should we take when team members do not meet their commitments
 - how will we grow and continue to maintain a healthy AFS team
 - what do we want to accomplish as a team, how do we help each other get there.

Ice Breakers and Energizers

Get people laughing and moving and put them at ease. These are meant to be fast and fun. Use at the beginning of your meetings, when things are beginning to drag and to when you need your team to refocus after breaks.

“What If” You Had a Great Icebreaker?

To get your group laughing and talking right off the bat, start your session with a quick game of “What If”.

Directions: Give each participant a small piece of paper. Ask them to write a “What if” question, such as “What if the sky was purple?” or “What if we all had three arms?”. When everyone has completed their question (encourage them to work quickly), ask them to pass their question to the person on their right. Next, each person writes the answer to the question they've received. They should answer the question as if they had written it. For example, if Tom hands his question (“What if I won the lottery?”) to Susan, she should answer the question as if she had won the lottery, not Tom.

When everyone has written their answer, select someone to read **ONLY** the question they have in front of them. Ask the person to their right to read the **ANSWER** to their question. They should then read the question on their paper and the person to their right reads the answer, etc. Even though the questions and answers are unrelated, you'll find some hilarious combinations!

Materials/Time Needed: For a group of 15-20 people, this exercise will take about 10-15 minutes. No advance preparation is required, but you'll need pens or pencils and note paper.

Alphabet Search

Divide the participants into small groups. Instructions: Search your person for objects that you have on you or with you ranging from A-Z. Make a list. First group to get all 26 letters represented wins. Exercise can explore how diverse we are - insight into our individual selves. If done as a small group lends itself well to a small team building exercise as the group works together through the alphabet.

Animals

Objective: Have fun! Get acquainted.

To get ready: On a slip of paper, write the name of an animal that makes an obvious noise. Create five to ten slips for each animal.

Give each slip of paper out and instruct the group that they have to find the people in the room who have the same animal as them without talking. Give them a few minutes. They should make sounds and jesters that let them know what animal they

are. Once they find each person in their group they should continue around until they find all the monkeys, or all the dogs, etc.

Circle of Friends

This is a great greeting and departure for a large group who will be attending a session or meeting for more than one day together and the chances of meeting everyone in the room is almost impossible.

Form two large circles (or simply form two lines side by side), one inside the other and have the people in the inside circle face the people in the outside circle. Ask the circles to take one step in the opposite directions, allowing them to meet each new person as the circle continues to move very slowly. If lines are formed, they simply keep the line moving very slowly, as they introduce themselves.

Dinner Partners

Pair people up together. Ask them to spend 2 ½ minutes each talking about themselves. Ask them if they could have dinner with anyone, alive or dead, who would it be and why. Tell them that at the end of 5 minutes we will come back together as a group and you will introduce each other. Ask them to tell the persons name, their position and their dinner partner.

Note to facilitators – this is a great exercise to help you understand the personality of the class. For example you may have a lot of people who want to have dinner with political figures or movie stars it gives you a clue that politics are important to this group or they are movie goers. If you have a lot of people who want to have dinner with religious figures again it helps you understand the basic personality of the group.

Five Things in Common

Split the group up into pairs. Each pair will have 30 seconds to find 5 things they have in common. At the end of the 30 seconds, put two pairs together and give the foursome a minute to find something all 4 students have in common. Finally, each group can present the list of things they have in common. You can use this activity to form groups.

Ha

This exercise asks the participants to pass the word 'ha' around a circle. This activity is generally more effective when used during the later stage of the training program or session. It takes about 7 minutes and is best suited for a group of 20 or less participants.

Ask the participants to form a circle. When they are ready explain that the object of this activity is for the participants, without laughing, to pass the word "ha" around the circle. Designate one participant to be the head of the circle. That participant begins by saying "ha". The person sitting to his or her right must repeat the "ha" and then say another "ha." The third person must say ha ha and then given an additional "ha." In this manner the "ha" continues around the circle. It ends when

all of the participants, trying not to laugh (a virtual impossibility), have repeated the "ha's" that preceded them and then added their own "ha."

Variations: Use another word in place of "ha." For example: "yuck," "har," or "tee hee." or ask all of the participants to repeat the "ha's" stopping only to let the person whose turn it is pipe in with his or her own. You can continue the exercise for five minutes regardless of how many times the "ha's" go around the circle.

Hum That Tune

This activity is a fun way to break participants into groups.

What you will need: Songs Examples that work well: Row, Row, Row, Your Boat, Rock-a-by Baby. The National Anthem, The Itsy-bitsy spider, Old McDonalds, etc. Write down the names and cut them apart. The number of songs you choose depends on the number of groups you want.

Each person in the group is given a small piece of paper with the name of a nursery rhyme or other song written on it. Participants are to go around humming their tune until they find everyone else singing the same song. Then they form a group.

Lap Sit

We have seen this work with 250 people in a big hotel meeting room. It works well with large groups of people. Have everyone get in a huge circle side by side. Instruct them to turn half a turn to their right. This should now look like everyone is in line facing the back of the person in front of them. Have them put both hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Then ask everyone to sit. They sit back on the knees of the person in back of them.

You have to be careful where large and small people are placed. Small people should always be in front of large folks! This usually works great and gets everyone laughing.

Name Tag Match Maker

Each group member will need a 5" x 7" card for a name tag. Then give the following directions:

1. Put your name in the center of your card.
2. In the upper left corner, write four things that you like to do.
3. In the upper right corner, write your four favorite singers or groups.
4. In the lower left corner, write your four favorite movies.
5. In the lower right corner, write four adjectives that describe you.

When everyone finishes, have them mingle with the group for a few minutes. Without talking, they are to read the upper left corner of the other group members' cards. When time is up, they are to find one or two people who are most like them and visit for a few minutes. When time is up, they are to mingle again reading the upper right corner of the other group members' cards. They then find the one or two people most like them and visit. Repeat with the lower left corner and lower right

corner information. To make sure everyone visits with several people, you could implement a rule that no two people can be in the same group more than once.

M&M's

Pass around a bag of M&M's. Tell the participants to take as many as they want. Once everyone has M&M's, tell them that for each M&M they took they have to say one thing about themselves. For instance, if a person took 10 M&M's, they would have to say 10 things about themselves.

Meet 'n Greet

Objective: Get acquainted - help discover common backgrounds and interests.

Procedure: At the beginning of a meeting or class, ask people to introduce themselves to as many others as they possibly can in two minutes' time. After those 2 minutes tell them to get into groups of three people. Tell them that their assignment for the next two minutes is to find at least three distinctive things that the three of them have in common. The only rule is that the three things cannot be job related (i.e. they work for the same organization.) Ask them to identify the three things as quickly as possible and to shout out loudly when they've done so. Provide a token prize for the first team to complete the task. Some examples of areas of commonality could be:

- all are from the same home state
- all have an older brother
- all drive a SUV
- all have degrees in the same field, etc.

After most have completed their assignments, call on a few groups to tell their areas of commonality.

Discussion questions:

1. How did some of you complete the task so quickly?
2. Did some of you have difficulty finding common backgrounds or interests?
3. Did anyone discover some startling or surprising information about the others (all are twins.)

Approximate Time needed: 10-15 minutes.

Once Upon a Time

Objective: Quick ideas to get people focused in the room on each other; also ready to participate.

Procedure: Go around the table (or circle) and complete one of these sentences:

- Once upon a time, I...
- My ideal vacation is...
- The riskiest thing I ever did was...
- The wildest thing I ever did (that I'll admit to) is...

People Bingo

Make a 5 x 5 grid, like a bingo grid. Write "FREE" in the center space. In all the other spaces, write things such as "Born in another state," "Is the youngest child in family," or "Beatles fan" (tailor musical group to your audience). Fill in all the grids with items of interest to the participants. Run a copy for each person.

The participants are to get the signature of a person who meets the criteria for each section. You might want to implement a rule that a person can only sign another person's paper in two spots. The first person with a completed card wins.

Run Away With the Circus Ice Breaker!

Overview: Participants will pick a circus character and explain how that character relates to themselves or why they would chose to be that person for a day.

Goal: To learn more about the participants in the group and to demonstrate that they can be spontaneous and fun during the session.

Time Required: 4 - 5 minutes

Material Required: Colored Paper, Markers, Crayons

Instructions: Provide the participants with the hand out below and allow them to make notes and select a character that they would like to be if they had ran away with the circus for a day. Tell participants to be as wacky as they would like and to have fun. Let them know they can color and illustrate if they wish to.

Discussion: Take a few moments to share a few examples and laughs as a group.

- Ask why they chose that character?
- Ask how the character relates to themselves?
- Ask how the character does not relate to themselves?

Say Cheese, Please

As each participant arrives, take their picture with a Polaroid camera and hang their photo on a piece of flip chart paper in the entrance area of the meeting room. Hang them in groups of two or three photos (depending on size of meeting - you may have only 2 per group or more if the group is large). Use your creativity and decorate the flip chart paper to extend a Warm Welcome and set the tone of the meeting. Once all participants have arrived, ask them to find their partner from the photo display on the easel. They are to spend about 5 - 10 minutes getting to know the person. Then have them introduce their partner to the rest of the group and share something they discovered they have in common.

Toilet Paper Go-Round

Material: 1 roll of toilet paper (if you "borrow" it from an office bathroom, be kind and leave some for your colleagues!)

Pass around a roll of toilet paper and say something like "just in case this meeting gets a little messy, everyone needs to take some" (with no other qualifiers or

instruction). Then go on with other business (agenda, minutes, and "housekeeping" items...) as the roll makes it way around the room.

Some folks by nature will take many "squares" and some just a few. Once everyone has had the roll, and you've finished other business, ask everyone to introduce themselves and share with the group as many "things" about themselves as number of "squares" they took! You can suggest the "things" be generic or make it work-related. You choose.

Travel to My Home Town

Objective: Get people acquainted.

Procedure: Divide the participants into groups of 4-6 people. Ask each group to get together in their own location. Their task is to come up with a list of home towns and then develop a geographically-correct number of home towns that represent the number of home towns for the entire group.

Hint: Participants from each group may "travel" to other group tables to obtain needed information.

Approximate time needed: 10 minutes to work in groups and 5 minutes to review answers with entire group.

Optional:

- If you have a map for each group they could pinpoint and mark the home towns or,
- If time allows have each group tell what town they think is the most interesting and why.

Discussion Questions:

- Which group has the most accurate number of home towns?
- Which group finished first?
- If a map is used which group accurately placed all the towns on the map?

Two Truths & a Lie

In groups of three to eight (depending on how much time you want to devote to this exercise) have individuals take turns making three statements about themselves -- two which are true; one that is a lie.

After an individual makes their statements, the other folks in the group discuss among themselves, which seem most plausible and what is most likely to be the lie. Once they come to some sort of consensus, the individual who made the statements not only tells which is the "lie" but also provides a bit more background about the "truths" as well as what made them think folks might have thought the "lie" was a "truth." Groups of three can easily do this in less than 10 minutes.

Note to facilitator - This game works well with groups that are new to one another. It is often surprising how relative strangers can instinctively pick up the nuances between truths and lies based on very little information. The game also works well

with groups that have been together awhile and Think they know a lot about each other.

This exercise can also be done "electronically" with groups that aren't physically located together, but have been "assembled" to work together on some task -- for example a cross-functional task force or a committee that has folks from across the country participating. It takes a little longer -- but provides the same benefits.

Yarn Toss

Start with a ball of yarn. Say your name and an interesting fact about yourself. Then, holding the end, toss the ball to another participant. That person will say his/her name and an interesting fact, then, holding on to part of the yarn, toss the ball to another person. By the time everyone has spoken, there will be a large web of yarn that can be displayed on the wall of the training room with tacks or tape. This activity can also be used as a review tool - each participant says something about the subject, then tosses the yarn.

Whistle While You Work

This energizer is best done outside or in a place where it's okay to make a mess! It is ideal for an evening energizer at an outdoor event. Have a stack of saltines for each team. Break them into groups of 4 - 5. Give each group an equal stack of crackers and have them go to their designated location. Select a team of judges. Allow each team two minutes to plan their strategy. Then which ever team can successfully whistle "Whistle while you work" the fastest wins. The only rule is the person or people who are whistling must have crackers in their mouth the whole time they are whistling!

Who Am I?

For this activity you will need one sticky note per person. On each note write the name of a celebrity, political figure, cartoon character, book character, etc. You can choose one category or mix them up. Use a different person for each note.

Place a sticky note on the back (or forehead) of each participant. The participants are to figure out who they are, but can only do so in the following manner. Find a partner and read each other's sticky notes. You may ask the other person three questions to which there are yes or no answers.

Once your questions have been asked and answered, make a guess as to your identity. If you are correct, move the sticky note to your chest and you become a "consultant" who gives clues to those still trying to figure out their identities. If you are not correct, find a new partner and repeat the process.

Inspirational quotes

Quotes can be a great way to help inspire and motivate your team. Think about using some, all or others of these occasionally. Copy them on to large pieces of paper and put them up on your walls for planning meetings, use as table mats for meetings, include them on volunteer certificates. You could use nice paper and have them laminated. You could as a team activity ask your team to source and contribute other inspirational quotes that recognize the value and contributions made by volunteers.

“Volunteers – ordinary people making extraordinary contributions.”

“There is nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer. With it beats the spirit of service, generosity and compassion...and the health and well-being of our community, our country and our world” – Kobi Yamada

“Volunteering is an act of heroism on a grand scale. And it matters profoundly. It does more than help people beat the odds; it changes the odds.” Bill Clinton


“The broadest, and maybe most meaningful definition of volunteering: ‘Doing more than you have to because you want to, in a cause you consider good.’” - Ivan Scheier


“When we’re in our nineties and we’re looking back, it’s not going to be how much money we made or how many awards we won. It’s really, ‘What did we stand for? Did we make a positive difference for people?’” - Elizabeth Dole

“What I do, you cannot do; but what you do, I cannot do. The needs are great, and none of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.” – Mother Theresa

“In a nation of millions and a world of billions the individual is still the first and basic agent of change.” - Lyndon B. Johnson

Office contact details for AFS-USA





Call 1-800-876-2377

to reach the **Regional Service Center** nearest you

Admissions Center	506 SW 6th 2nd Floor Portland OR 97204 Phone (800) AFS-INFO Fax (503) 229-0753
Central Regional Service Center	2356 University Avenue West, Suite 424 St. Paul, MN 55114 Phone (651) 647-6337 Fax (651) 647-6628
Eastern Regional Service Center	231 E. Baltimore Street, 15 th Floor Baltimore, MD Phone (410) 539 5997 Fax (410) 539-5636
Western Regional Service Center	506 SW 6th 2nd Floor Portland, OR 97204 Phone (503) 241-1578 Fax (503) 241-1653
National Service Center	One Whitehall St, 2 nd Floor New York, NY 10004 Phone (800) 876-2376 Fax (212) 299-9090