

**Report of the
101st ARIZONA TOWN HALL
“Civic Leadership for Arizona’s Future”
Scottsdale, Arizona
November 25 - 28, 2012**

Introduction

This is the third time since 1990 that Arizona Town Hall has brought citizens from across the state together to discuss the topic of leadership. This is no accident. Civic leadership is a perennial topic for good reason. Arizona is a diverse state with varying needs and communities. In addition to discussions on leadership and leading up to Arizona’s centennial, citizens taking part in Arizona Town Hall have had the opportunity to reflect about the foundations of the state. In November 2010, Arizonans came together to discuss Arizona’s Government: The Next 100 Years. In April 2012, the 100th Arizona Town Hall focused on civic engagement. Bringing the trilogy to a conclusion, this 101st Arizona Town Hall attempts to address Civic Leadership for Arizona’s Future.

This report captures the consensus that emerged from those discussions. Although not every Town Hall participant agrees with every conclusion and recommendation herein, this report reflects the overall consensus achieved by the 101st Arizona Town Hall.

Definition of Civic Leadership

Leadership, regardless of setting or constituency, involves identifying and articulating a vision, and inspiring and empowering others to make that vision a reality. The concept of civic leadership shares these fundamental tenets with other leadership structures. Part of what distinguishes civic leadership from other forms of leadership is that, as to the above, the vision is generally a shared vision that involves community betterment or the greater good, and motivating others often requires a special appreciation for diversity of backgrounds and interests, as well as an approach that is inclusive, collaborative, adaptive and inspiring. A civic leader is a “team player” who realizes that there may be times when his or her viewpoint is not the prevailing viewpoint. When this occurs, an effective leader will support the decision of the group. Civic leaders work across various sectors and constituencies in our society to build consensus and achieve results for the community at large.

You don’t have to be elected to be a civic leader—and not all elected officials are effective civic leaders. Civic leadership is something that all Arizonans can take part in. Arizonans, in looking at civic leaders, want trustworthy leaders who embody the qualities of humility and empathy, and who bring integrity to their work. Arizonans also want leaders to have a sense of our common values and have the ability to articulate those views to the community. This is an important skill, as good civic leaders need to be able to build consensus with the community, having heard from everyone, including traditionally disenfranchised and vulnerable populations. However, we also look to civic leaders to be good stewards and to have the courage to compromise or advance unpopular opinions and views when needed. Civic leaders serve communities rather than exist above them.

The Impact of Civic Leadership

Strong civic leadership can create a ripple effect that impacts us as individuals, in our local communities, and ultimately statewide in a positive manner. Good and positive leadership can create strong and vibrant communities and ultimately a better place to live, allowing others' lives to be impacted by the process. Conversely, poor civic leadership can be destructive.

Effective civic leadership can have immediate positive impacts by helping individuals meet their basic day-to-day needs. Civic leadership provides individuals an opportunity to be engaged on issues of collective importance and promotes having a voice in their communities, whether that be their city or town or a community organization of which they are a member. A community's or the state's direction in areas such as health care policy, education, safety, sustainability and the arts all are impacted over the short and long term by civic leadership in Arizona. All of the above impact the state as a whole, as the decisions made within Arizona impact the image and reputation of Arizona and its communities to the rest of the country and the world. This can impact our economic development and competitiveness in attracting business to Arizona.

Current Status of Civic Leadership in Arizona

Different communities and individuals have unique perspectives that inform their analysis of the current status of civic leadership in Arizona. On the state level, it appears that civic leadership is hampered by polarization and partisanship, and there appears to be a disconnect between the priorities and actions of elected officials and the values and goals of their constituents. At all levels, this results in a lack of public confidence and trust. In local communities, individuals have varying levels of awareness of and opportunities to become a civic leader, in addition to access to support and training in civic leadership. The quality of civic leadership varies across different communities and different regions of the state. Overall, Arizona maintains easy access to civic and political leadership as compared to other parts of the country. However, this could be improved by better encouraging the participation of additional community members.

Civic leaders are developed and supported in many different ways throughout the state, but there appear to be correlations between certain types of communities and the manner in which they develop and support their civic leaders. Rural or smaller communities often rely on community- or faith-based organizations, or even personal outreach, to identify and develop civic leaders. Many tribal communities are working diligently to develop civic leaders through tribal and non-profit means. In addition to these methods, formal leadership academies and training programs are more abundant in urban areas, though both their visibility and effectiveness vary. Efforts could be made to promote greater awareness of and access to such programs and increase support for the leaders who emerge from them, including the creation of an infrastructure to help those individuals identify future leadership opportunities. Along those lines, additional development of our infrastructure for identifying, training, and supporting civic leaders needs to occur in all areas and at all levels to improve the status of civic leadership in Arizona. In the course of building that infrastructure, Arizona should be mindful of the fact that we need to develop civic leaders who understand and

appreciate the importance of historical and institutional knowledge—and the values and goals of our growing, changing population and communities.

Role of Technology

Technology is a tool that can help “level the playing field” in the realm of civic leadership in many ways. Technology can be utilized to share information, provide access to public records and proceedings, increase access to civic leadership training, and connect civic leaders with the constituents and communities they serve. Assuming access, which remains an issue in some rural and tribal communities as well as among populations that are economically disadvantaged, technology can serve as a way to increase access of all Arizonans to their civic leaders. This, in turn, empowers the public (including groups that might otherwise be underrepresented) and makes it easier to hold our civic leaders accountable for their actions and positions. One of the powers of technology, and social media in particular, is the ability to build up and tear down ideas and people very quickly. That power can be (and often is) used for both constructive and destructive purposes, and with corresponding effects.

Further, while technology creates a number of opportunities, civic leaders should beware of depending solely on technology. In addition to the access issues referenced above, civic leaders should be aware that there are segments of the population that lack proficiency with technology, which creates an impediment. There is no substitute for personal interaction between civic leaders and their communities. As civic leaders increase their use of technology, it may be necessary to review applicable laws to avoid unintentional violations of, for example, open meeting laws. Our community may need to revise these laws to meet our modern needs.

Role of Businesses

Civic leadership and the business community affect each other in many respects. The relationship between the two has the potential to be symbiotic in that the business community can support and improve civic leadership, which produces an improved climate for business, fostering economic development and growth. The business community’s impact derives from the efforts and activities of individual businesses and their leaders, as well as business and professional organizations. These organizations promote open dialogue between business and civic leaders on matters of community importance and help create an environment in which business leaders are motivated to be actively engaged in the community.

Businesses in Arizona, both large and small, can and do support civic leadership in a variety of ways. Many business leaders also serve as civic leaders. In addition, individuals who participate in civic leadership gain experience, skills and ethics that benefit the businesses they work for. Businesses encourage their employees to be active in civic organizations and assume positions of leadership by creating a culture of community engagement and providing various incentives for such activities (e.g., through performance evaluations, design of compensation and benefits programs, and matching contributions or providing other types of financial support). Businesses can serve as conduits of information by, among other things, promoting opportunities for civic leadership, offering their expertise,

and sharing success stories and best practices. The ability and/or interest in a business endeavoring to support civic leadership in Arizona varies depending on several factors, including industry, size, resources, location, employee base—and the extent to which the business has a connection with Arizona and its community.

Role of Education

Vibrant communities are not made overnight. Education plays a critical role in encouraging community involvement and improving the quality of civic leadership, but more definitely needs to be done. Education's role starts early in life, establishing a foundational understanding in Arizona's citizens. Young people need to be exposed to civic leadership both in the classroom environment, as well as being encouraged and provided opportunities to become involved in civic leadership outside the classroom. This approach needs to be embedded in standardized and reviewed curricula that are appropriately funded at all levels of the formal education process. Students also should have opportunities for internships and scholarships that encourage and support their development as future civic leaders. To highlight the relevance of the subject matter for students, this education should not be focused solely on understanding the basic processes of government, but also hopefully encourage them to see public service or other types of civic leadership as something that improves the quality of their daily lives—or even as a viable career option. Effective education for future civic leadership should extend beyond formal civics courses and apply an interdisciplinary approach, the teaching of critical thinking and analysis, and include extracurricular community activities.

In evaluating policy that could be implemented to support the initiatives described above, consideration should be given that the polarized, partisan political environment we currently live in creates challenges for schools and teachers in attempting to teach and promote civics. Further, it is important to examine what is currently part of early childhood and K-12 curricula as some schools may be further down this path than others. Some of Arizona's schools already place a special emphasis on leadership and community service, and their programs may serve as models for other schools to adopt or modify. Finally, while it is easy to focus on early childhood and K-12 in discussing the role education plays in supporting civic leadership, civics education must be a lifelong focus. Our communities must continue to develop post-secondary and other opportunities (including outside of the formal education process) for learning in the area of civic leadership.

Role of Community/Faith-Based Organizations

Other community organizations (including arts, cultural, faith-based, and community service organizations) play important roles in civic leadership and developing Arizona's civic leaders. These organizations are uniquely positioned to encourage and develop civic leadership because they generally operate independently of governments and other partisan organizations. They bring attention to community needs and deliver solutions through grassroots efforts. In doing so, they attract high-quality leaders, work across sectors, and utilize a collaborative approach that is a central tenet of effective civic leadership.

These community organizations support civic leadership in a variety of ways. Many arts and cultural organizations provide opportunities for community involvement to individuals searching for an “entry point” that aligns with their passions or talents. Such entry points provide civic leadership experience and can lead to future opportunities for civic leadership. The arts also reflect and prompt critical thinking about our social and civic environment. Some community organizations offer opportunities for civic leadership that are tailored towards young people. Again, these groups’ positions in the community enables these community organizations to support the efforts of educational institutions and others to get youth involved in civic leadership. Other community organizations focus on research and education that specifically supports civic leadership through policy initiatives, information-sharing, and other means. Finally, community organizations of all types offer important training and development opportunities to nurture future civic leaders.

Role of Media

The news media has traditionally played the role of educating and informing the public about the actions of civic leaders and the policies being presented. This traditional role of the media focused on objective, fact-driven reporting and analysis. The media serving as a “watchdog” over civic leaders enabled community members to hold their leaders accountable.

The role is shifting to a business focus rather than its role in democracy as the fourth estate. Modern consumer-based news has shifted from solely fact-based reporting to more sensational, opinion-based or “gotcha” journalism being provided on a 24/7 news cycle. While perhaps more entertaining, this shift can create some real challenges for the encouragement of civic leadership and the development of civic leaders. The blurring of lines between news and commentary, as well as the rise of bloggers as independent journalists, has made the task of differentiating between biased and unbiased journalism and commentary far more difficult, resulting in a heightened danger of skewed views by members of the community. Community members need access to resources to increase media literacy and techniques for “fact checking”.

Social media creates new opportunities to connect with a diverse range of opinions and ideas, and to interact with civic leaders directly. Moving forward, both traditional media and social media should strive to either return to a more objective form of reporting or at least be more transparent about the bias coloring the story or comments. Otherwise, we run the risk of harming both the quality of leaders entering into civic leadership and the discourse as a whole. Potential leaders may not get involved in civic leadership due to much of modern media’s focus on the personal lives of potential leaders and the people they know. This is a line the media treads – between its “watchdog” role and delving into the personal lives of our leaders.

Resources and Civic Leadership

Effective civic leadership requires a variety of resources, both formal and informal. Further, for these resources to be effective in supporting civic leadership, our civic leaders and the community at large need to be aware of and have access to these resources.

One vital resource is people. The people of Arizona who serve as civic leaders are resources, both for the communities and constituencies they serve and as mentors and role models for other civic leaders. Arizonans give of their time, talent, and treasure in support of civic leaders and the community goals they endeavor to achieve, including improvement of civic leadership itself. An educated and informed citizenry is another important human resource.

Groups and organizations of all types (including corporations, non-profit entities, universities and other educational institutions, community organizations, leadership training programs, and others) are resources for Arizona's civic leaders. These entities provide civic leaders important development and training opportunities, can play an important role in generating research and data, and create opportunities for building connections within our communities.

The importance of technology as a resource for effective civic leadership has increased over time. Technology can be used both as a stand-alone resource (e.g., online databases for sharing information about leadership opportunities or training programs) and as a tool to overcome geographic or other differences in access to other resources.

Generally speaking, these resources are abundant in Arizona, but their quality and availability varies across our state's various regions and communities. Different types of resources may be needed in different areas or communities to account for unique cultural or other circumstances. Urban areas may benefit from the additional infrastructure needed to support certain kinds of formal resources, such as large-scale leadership training academies, whereas rural areas may be challenged in delivering those types of programs.

In all cases, access to financial resources is needed to improve the quality of these resources, and to increase their efficacy through access and awareness. Arizona also needs to improve the connections between already existing resources for effective civic leadership. For example, we need to support civic leaders who emerge from leadership training programs in "taking the next step" by helping them identify specific opportunities as well as potential obstacles they need to address to ensure they can apply their new skills for the benefit of the community. Finally, we need to assess our existing resources in a systematic way, with an emphasis on measuring success and results, so we can maximize their effectiveness and undertake improvement efforts in a strategic way.

Support for Development of Civic Leaders

Arizona and its citizens have a number of resources that support the development of future civic leaders. The most easily identifiable is the wide variety of training programs that exist to train leaders. However, as has been previously discussed, these programs are not always easily accessed by those who live outside of metropolitan areas. Further, limited access to financial resources can be an impediment to participating in some programs. One proposed solution, among many possibilities, would be the creation or further development of "train the trainer" programs where participants could return to their communities and conduct trainings themselves.

Every section of the community plays a role in the development of civic leaders. Families play a role in encouraging young people to get engaged. Our educational system nurtures and builds confidence in future civic leaders through both coursework, and in developing relationships with both businesses and governments to create experiential opportunities. Employers have a multitude of ways in which they can encourage civic leadership and civic engagement—from financial resources to providing time for their employees to get individually involved. As we evaluate the ways in which we develop and encourage civic leaders, it is important to acknowledge that neither individuals nor businesses have unlimited time available to them to be involved. An underutilized resource is Arizona’s retired population, who bring time and talent to the table.

The development of leadership needs to focus not only on encouraging those who are already motivated to be civic leaders, but in efforts to identify those in our community who should consider being civic leaders. Additionally, it can be difficult to transition from one of the many sorts of leadership programs to a civic leadership role. This struggle to identify “entry points” for new civic leaders must be addressed.

Finally, once identified, the retention of civic leaders is critical. The likelihood of retention can be impacted by how they are treated. Efforts to promote civil discourse, mutual respect and appreciation are important in supporting future civic leaders.

How do Arizona’s political systems impact civic leadership?

Arizona’s political systems and processes encourage civic leadership in some ways but discourage it in others. On the one hand, established political parties currently are an integral part of our system of government and play a key role in identifying and cultivating leaders within their ranks. On the other hand, partisan politics often create a toxic atmosphere that discourages participation. Similarly, the party system and other Arizona political processes marginalize independents (a growing population in our state) by reducing their ability to get on the ballot or appointed to boards and commissions. Independents also tend to have less access to funding and other resources that are often necessary to assuming elected civic leadership positions and being effective in those positions.

Although Arizona has implemented various policies and processes, such as term limits and open meeting laws, with the goal of increasing participation and improving civic leadership, those policies and processes have sometimes created unintended consequences and should be reexamined.

There are a number of changes to Arizona’s political systems and processes that Arizonans should consider to improve civic leadership. For elected and appointed government leaders, formal orientation and training programs should be developed, which focus on a variety of relevant skills, including basic job responsibilities, critical and analytical thinking, best practices, and ethics. We should also equip these leaders with the historical perspective and institutional knowledge they need to be effective, through formal training and informal mentoring relationships. We should better promote and advertise opportunities for civic leadership, including openings on appointed boards and commissions. To elevate the prestige of civic leadership positions and attract the most qualified, dedicated civic leaders to

fill them, we should recognize and celebrate the successes of our civic leaders and consider other appropriate incentives, including higher salaries.

Arizona should also look for ways to promote civil discourse and mutual respect in our political systems and processes. Direct communication between government leaders and their constituents focusing on important policy issues rather than political propaganda should be encouraged. Finally, Arizona should continue to examine campaign finance laws and regulations with a goal of increasing fairness and transparency while promoting participation. Ultimately, there continues to be a need to articulate a vision for what a highly functional and participatory political system would look like in Arizona, and to identify the changes required to make that system a reality.

Roles of Respect and Collaboration

Respect and collaboration are cornerstones of effective civic leadership. While high levels of respect and collaboration seem to be the norm in faith-based and community-based organizations, these principles are lacking in our political process. This needs to change.

Words matter. It is one thing to attack an idea and it is something completely different to attack the person supporting the idea. Arizonans want civic leaders who act as living examples of promoting respect and collaboration. Compromise and collaboration are virtues that should be encouraged. They are an important part of the leadership process and should be championed as such. Arizonans look to our civic leaders to facilitate collaboration and resource-sharing among different sectors and organizations. Training or participation in a process like Arizona Town Hall would provide civic leaders insight on skills in building consensus.

Community members can encourage increased respect and collaboration by our civic leaders in a number of ways. We could work to create ground rules for civil discourse and statesmanship, and hold our civic leaders accountable. A “Code of Conduct” could be created and disseminated, seeking our civic leaders’ commitment to such ideals. Civic leaders who meet these expectations should be applauded and recognized in the community for their efforts.

Recommendations

Effective civic leadership is critical to improving our quality of life, enhancing Arizona’s image and reputation outside the state, and fostering economic development, in addition to innumerable other benefits. In short, with effective civic leadership, Arizonans are able to create and sustain the types of communities and state in which we want to live.

Arizona currently benefits from the dedication and efforts of many effective civic leaders, and our state and communities support civic leadership in several ways. Still, we have significant challenges, especially in the areas of political leadership and civil discourse, which discourage potential civic leaders (as well as the community at large) and need to be addressed. With a view towards addressing these challenges and building on Arizona’s existing resources and strengths, this 101st Arizona Town Hall identified the following proposed actions as having the most potential impact:

Government, Elected Officials and Political Processes

1. Effective civic leaders should be encouraged to run for elected office.
2. Interested Arizonans should be encouraged to apply for appointed positions on boards and commissions as a way of providing civic leadership for the benefit of our communities.
3. Originally intended to improve the legislative process, term limits have instead had a negative impact. The prospect of limited terms has driven legislators to ignore the complex and long-term policy effects of proposed legislation in favor of short-term matters such as introducing bills with superficial electoral appeal rather than beneficial long-term effect. The legislature should act to examine the effects of term limits, and whether to modify or repeal them in order to strengthen institutional memory and experience. That process should include significant citizen involvement. Citizens may act by initiative to modify or repeal term limits if the legislature fails to examine and act on the issue.
4. Rules for inclusion of candidates on the ballot regardless of party affiliation should be standardized. Additional reforms are needed to level the playing field between the main political parties and independents.
5. Arizona should re-evaluate and modify or repeal the public funding portions of the Citizens Clean Elections Act, while retaining its information provisions (such as candidate forums and informational brochures). The Act has had the unforeseen consequences of exacerbating political polarization by allowing candidates with a narrow appeal to avoid the need to seek broad support. Simultaneously, campaign finance laws should be revised to require full and complete transparency with respect to private contributions to political candidates and organizations.
6. The Arizona Commission on Indian Affairs should be utilized to extend the existing requirement for tribal consultation from the executive branch to the legislative branch. Exchange programs between tribal and elected Arizona government leaders should be promoted. An Indian Town Hall already takes place and a joint Town Hall with Arizona Town Hall should occur with a focus on tribal and Arizona issues. The purposes of these recommendations are mutual respect, establishing a shared vision, and strengthening relationships.
7. Arizona should develop or improve formal orientation and training programs for elected leaders at all levels of government. Programs should encourage ethical behavior, respect, collaboration, and civil discourse in public service. Resources developed by nationally recognized leadership programs should be utilized, including bringing these programs to Arizona whenever possible for maximum participation and cost-effectiveness.
8. Governing bodies and civic leaders should adopt and implement tools of self-accountability such as “Codes of Conduct” or pledges of statesmanship, which focus on mutual respect and civility. Compliance with these Codes of Conduct or

pledges of statesmanship should be monitored and reported to the public by the media or third party non-partisan organizations to ensure accountability.

9. Civic leadership training should incorporate respect and diversity training, building leaders' abilities to be adaptive and inclusive in their approaches.
10. A policy research office should be created to improve the availability of non-partisan, independent information for the legislature and executive branch.

Educational Institutions and Curricula

1. Educational institutions at all levels (early childhood and K-12, community colleges, universities, etc.), and their governing bodies and associations, should critically evaluate their curricula to ensure that civic engagement and leadership are embedded throughout the curricula. These institutions should also emphasize the importance of civics, extra-curricular activities, experiential learning, and an interdisciplinary approach where appropriate. All higher education institutions should highlight opportunities and encourage students to participate in civic leadership programs.
2. The State Board of Education should integrate civics education standards and testing across the curriculum at all grade levels.
3. The Arizona legislature must provide adequate funding for any additional requirements necessary to implement civics education, recognizing that additional curricular materials, training, and extra-curricular activities will incur additional costs.
4. The journalism schools or departments at Arizona colleges and universities should educate students about the relationship and impact of civic leadership and media.
5. Arizona PBS via its educational content delivery portal (az.pbslearningmedia.org) should identify and pursue civics education content partnerships for Arizona teachers and students.

Businesses and Business Organizations

1. Business leaders and businesses that encourage civic engagement and leadership among their employees in tangible ways should be recognized.
2. Economic development groups should help find funding solutions for civic leadership initiatives, recognizing that improving civic leadership is itself an economic development strategy.

Non-Profit and Community-Based Organizations

1. Organizations providing leadership academies or training programs (e.g., The Flinn-Brown Civic Leadership Academy) should look for ways to expand their

reach and offer programs throughout the state, including in rural and tribal communities, to increase access and participation. These organizations may be able to use technology and/or collaborate with other organizations to achieve this in a cost-effective manner. “Train the trainer” programs could also be implemented where appropriate.

2. Recognition of civic leaders demonstrating the skills and competencies described in this report is important to encourage civic leadership. Several organizations currently honor distinction in civic leadership, such as the Arizona We Want Institute with its Gabe Zimmerman Award. Organizations that promote civic leadership and civil discourse should engage with the entities providing these types of recognition and assist in raising their visibility.
3. The results and effectiveness of leadership academies and training programs, as well as other organizations involved in activities supporting or relating to civic leadership, should be measured—and best practices should be identified and shared. Further, leadership organizations should develop a method to keep graduates of these programs in touch with fellow participants in order to support and hold each other accountable in acting on the leadership training they have received.
4. Within the next two years, forums should be expanded to facilitate collaboration and information-sharing among community organizations involved in civic leadership training programs or other activities. As a general matter, this collaboration should be encouraged and facilitated for purposes of improving effectiveness, access, and awareness.
5. To the extent that it does not already exist, a statewide “clearinghouse” of available civic leadership opportunities, training programs, and other resources should be created. This clearinghouse should include an exhaustive list of opportunities and resources, and also create a mechanism that allows an individual to filter the postings based on interest, location, education, etc. This clearinghouse should be widely available (including via the Internet) and should be maintained and regularly updated. This information is proposed to be housed on the Arizona Center for Civic Leadership website.
6. The Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits should post a link to board and commission openings on its website and expand its “Business-on-Board” program.

Individuals

Any discussion on ways to improve the quality of civic leadership in Arizona must ultimately end on what we, as Arizonans, can do as individuals to accomplish our collective goals.

1. We need to be role models. Each of us needs to be a model of effective civic leadership by displaying the behaviors that we want and expect to see in others,

including mutual respect and a commitment to civil discourse. We need to hold ourselves accountable in doing so.

2. We need to speak up and be proactive in seeking out ways to support and improve civic leadership in our communities. Each of us should take personal responsibility and be accountable for producing results.
3. We need to seek out diverse sources of both qualitative and quantitative information in order to make informed decisions.
4. We need to encourage engagement in civic leadership among all members of our community, regardless of their background, focusing on the positive changes that can result. One way of doing so is the encouragement of mentoring relationships, both serving as a mentor and seeking mentors.
5. Civic leaders should take responsibility for developing respectful relationships with the media in their communities.
6. Participants of this 101st Arizona Town Hall should personally commit to share the experiences and recommendations set forth in this report in our communities, with our friends and within the organizations we belong. Examples of actions to be taken include personal visits with participants' representatives, publication of recommendations on social media, identifying two or three recommendations to present to personal contacts and reaching back to participants of the civic engagement Town Hall. Further, we need to stay in touch with our fellow participants and work to hold each other accountable for implementing the recommendations within this report.
7. We need to listen to one another.