

# *Equity for All Arizonans*

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH FUTURE LEADERS TOWN HALL**

**November 4, 2023 – Phoenix, AZ**

### **DEFINING EQUITY AND ITS IMPACT**

Equity is making sure everyone has the resources they need. Equality is when everyone gets the same resources regardless of need. Equity is when everyone gets the resources they need to succeed, and those resources are tailored to their needs. Equity comes into play when considering access to voting, education, and health care. A child with special needs may receive different resources than other children because that is what they need to succeed. Equity brings a community together. Students facing challenges in school, such as those experiencing homelessness, may receive extra help or special considerations based on those challenges; that is an example of equity. Job Corps is a program that incorporates equity and equality because everyone gets the same opportunity but there are resources available to address special needs.

### **OPTIMIZING EVERYONE'S POTENTIAL AND IMPROVING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EQUITABLE APPROACHES**

Equity is an important factor in optimizing the potential of people, communities, and our state. Everybody brings something different to the table, and people need help and resources from one another. For example, for students who were not successful in their school experience programs such as student choice that provide opportunities for credit recovery, which can be very helpful to securing a high school diploma. Some people start out ahead in life because of generational wealth—assets they inherit from their family, or wealth that pays for resources they need, while other people do not have the benefit of family wealth and may need more help from public resources.

Equity can improve our community when considering homelessness, education, access to high-speed internet, and even therapy. In each of these areas there are people who lack access to what they need. Caring individuals can help create a moment in time or opportunity for people to thrive. A commitment to equity should be incorporated in every community and major institution. To promote equity in the community it is important to address the general mindset, to get people in a community on the same page.

### **NEXT STEPS AND ACTIONS**

State and local governments should lead efforts to take advantage of opportunities to use equity as an approach to community improvement. However, while they have resources available to address the issues, they have not taken the initiative. People are experiencing homelessness and food insecurity, and the government is not addressing these issues to the extent needed. We need more programs like Community Bridges (CBI), which provide assistance to people experiencing homelessness, and a path to shelter, education, and jobs, and Bridging Success, which provides full scholarships to youth who were in foster care.

Consequently, much of the responsibility for dealing with these issues must be addressed by local communities and individuals. As Michael Jackson said, look in the mirror—it starts with you. The greatest opportunities are where there are caring adults. People can come together to address opportunities through group meetings such as the Arizona Town Hall, through “peace and love” protests, and by collaborating with one another. When elected officials do not take the actions that are needed, it's up to the people to hold them accountable. School districts can be held accountable for creating greater

diversity and equitable access to resources, through election of and discussion with school board members.

### **INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS TO ACTION**

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with each individual, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions during the Opportunities for Youth Future Leaders Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

#### ***I WILL...***

- Use social media to raise awareness and make a difference.
- Educate myself, talk about the issues, and encourage others to make change.
- Take what I learned today to the board of Foster Advocates to raise awareness of the issues.
- Talk to my principal about not only teaching students basic learning, but to also talk about how to prepare for college.
- Speak out more.
- Ask for what I need and accept help from others.
- Be more present.
- Get active in advocating for these issues.
- Support and love everyone as I want to be supported and loved.
- Educate my friends and young siblings on how to make changes in their communities and encourage them to speak their minds.
- Be more involved with the Arizona community and see the better light in things.
- Educate myself.
- Talk about equity and start the conversation.
- Get involved with DEI, volunteer, look for campus/work opportunities to get the changes out to the masses.
- Be more involved with my community.
- Learn more about the association between community, intersectionality, and policies that are within my power to change.
- Vote and support change in education, and more for equity rather than equality.
- Use my voice and speak up when I feel it is needed.
- Do anything in my power to help and continue being present.
- Try my best to keep a positive attitude and not let what others think disturb me so I can have a better mindset without negativity.
- Put into practice the information I took in and encourage others to do the same.
- Live my life the best way I possibly can.
- Influence the next person because I don't know who or what impact they might have, like to be the next president or a coach.
- Talk with my friend about equity and offer her resources.
- Call my representatives.