



# CIVIC LEADERSHIP FOR ARIZONA'S FUTURE



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Highlights of the 101st  
Arizona Town Hall

November 25-28, 2012  
Scottsdale, Arizona



Charlotte Harris, Wayne Benesch, and Sandy Benesch at the 101st Town Hall in Scottsdale.

**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.

- From the 101st Arizona Town Hall Report of Recommendations

**F**or over 50 years, Arizona Town Hall has engaged, educated and empowered Arizonans to create solutions to critical policy issues.

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.

Prior to the Town Hall session, participants from throughout the state reviewed a comprehensive background report developed by the University of Arizona. Meeting in facilitated small groups for two days, the participants addressed a common set of discussion questions. Trained recorders captured points of consensus and the entire group gathered for a plenary session on the third day to adopt a report of findings and recommendations. Although not every Town Hall participant agrees with every conclusion and recommendation, their report reflects the overall consensus achieved by the 101st Arizona Town Hall.

This publication is a summary of the complete report including the background research and the report of recommendations. Town Hall reports are published and made available to Arizona Town Hall members, elected officials including the Arizona Legislature, public libraries, and the general public. Download or order copies online at [www.aztownhall.org](http://www.aztownhall.org), or call 602-252-9600 to request a copy.

# Key Points from the Background Report prepared by the University of Arizona

## Setting the Stage

When Arizona became a state, Governor George W.P. Hunt called its citizens to civic leadership—to be Arizona’s “champions and stewards.” He was only one of many Arizona officials to call attention to the importance of establishing a strong civic leadership tradition.

## A Formula for a Bright Future

- The speed of change, issues’ complexity, scarcity of resources, shifts in attitudes and behaviors, and effects of past choices about government and institutions make 2012 different. Times have changed and civic leadership must also.
- Civic leadership is reflected in the capacity of a community (or state) to identify, analyze, and solve pressing societal issues through the collaborative efforts of residents and public, private, and nonprofit organizations.
- Civic engagement + knowledge of policy and institutions + civic leadership = positive movement on the items that Arizonans have said are important to them. Observers have called this a formula for a bright future.

## Perceptions of Leadership

- Outlooks have changed a lot about leadership overall but the trend is downward when it comes to how today’s residents are looking at the quality of leaders. As shown in a variety of Arizona and US studies, leadership to address society’s problems is perceived to be in short supply.

## Leading Across the Sectors

- Contemporary issues are too complicated to be solved by just one group or sector. Working across the public, private, civic, and nonprofit sectors is the trend.
- Civic leadership across the public, private, nonprofit and civic sectors has never been more essential or more difficult.
- Effective cross-sector leaders are often “boundary spanners,” bringing people together, despite their differences.
- There is an entrepreneurial quality of cross-sector leaders, a stick-to-itiveness to hang in for the long haul. It also takes courage to be self-reflective and learn from criticism.

## Creating Collaborative Leaders

- Definitions of leadership have changed over time and continue to evolve.
- Past leaders could lean on authority and hierarchy. Today’s leaders are one among many.
- Results are increasingly the measure of leadership.
- Leaders have to look to vision and values, align resources, love their work, unify stakeholders and produce outcomes.

## Four Interdependent Sectors

- Through the lens of leadership, the similarities among the public, private, nonprofit, and civic sectors stand out more than their differences.
- The sectors are interdependent today, even as perceptions of their differences remain.
- The sectors technically operate independently of one another, yet are part of a larger system. As such, change and movement in any one sector impacts one or more of the others.

## Higher Education & Leadership

- Universities, community colleges, and other educational institutions are vital contributors to a deep pool of potential civic leaders.
- Today’s efforts are more collaborative and extensive than ever before.
- Skills are gained increasingly from experiences in communities.
- It is necessary to nurture knowledge, but also to foster confidence. Leadership can be developed by engaging students in the real-life process of government, business, and research.

## Thinking in Time: Past, Present, and Future

At their best, notable past leaders:

- Set partisanship aside.
- Looked to the long term.
- Worked for the statewide interest.
- Marshalled resources for opportunities.

## Civic Leadership for Arizona’s Future

- Recent mechanisms for bridging from civic engagement to civic leadership hold promise.
- Some of the strengths of past civic leadership can be seen in a variety of current examples.
- Arizona’s next civic leaders are already among us.

For specific resources and links with best practices, download the full interactive report from the “Past Town Halls” page of our website:

[www.aztownhall.org](http://www.aztownhall.org)



Carolyn Lukensmeyer from Tucson and Doug Bartosh from Cottonwood participate in discussions with other members of Panel Cholla.

**Y**ou don't have to be elected to be a civic leader—and not all elected officials are effective civic leaders.

- From the 101st Arizona Town Hall Report of Recommendations

# Report of Recommendations

After reviewing the full background report prepared by the University of Arizona, participants in the 101st Arizona Town Hall convened in Scottsdale from November 25-28, 2012. The result: a consensus of recommended actions to improve and enhance civic leadership in Arizona.

## GOVERNMENT, ELECTED OFFICIALS AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

- Encourage civic leaders to run for elected office and interested Arizonans to apply for appointed positions on boards and commissions.
- Reevaluate and modify or repeal the public funding portions of the Citizens Clean Elections Act, while retaining its informational provisions.
- Examine the effects of term limits and whether to modify or repeal them to strengthen institutional memory and experience.
- Develop or improve formal orientation and training programs for elected leaders.
- Adopt and implement tools of self-accountability such as “Codes of Conduct” or pledges of statesmanship which focus on mutual respect and civility
- Create a policy research office to improve the availability of non-partisan, independent information for the legislative and executive branches.

## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- Critically evaluate the curricula of educational institutions at all levels to ensure that civic engagement and leadership are embedded.
- Have the State Board of Education integrate civics education standards and testing across the curriculum at all grade levels.
- The Arizona legislature must provide adequate funding for any additional requirements necessary to implement civics education.

- Educate students in the journalism schools and departments at Arizona colleges and universities about the relationship and impact of civic leadership and media.
- Identify and pursue civics education content partnerships for Arizona teachers and students through the educational content delivery portal of Arizona Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

## BUSINESSES AND BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

- Recognize in tangible ways business leaders and businesses that encourage civic engagement and leadership among their employees.
- Help find funding solutions for civic leadership initiatives through economic development groups.

## NONPROFIT AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- Look for ways for organizations providing leadership academies or training programs to expand their reach and offer programs throughout the state, including in rural and tribal communities.
- Organizations that promote civic leadership and discourse should engage with entities that currently honor distinction in civic leadership to assist in raising the visibility of these recognitions.



Monday evening's speaker was **Mickey Edwards**, Vice President of the Aspen Institute and Director of the Aspen Institute's Rodel Fellowships in Public Leadership.

*Individuals who participate in civic leadership gain experience, skills and ethics that benefit the businesses they work for.*

- From the 101st Arizona Town Hall Report of Recommendations

- Identify, measure and share the results and best practices of effective leadership academies and training programs.
- Expand forums to facilitate collaboration and information-sharing among community organizations involved in civic leadership development programs and activities.
- Create a statewide clearinghouse of available civic leadership opportunities, training programs and other resources to be housed on the website of the Arizona Center for Civic Leadership.
- Expand the "Business-on-Board" program and post a link to board and commission openings on the website of the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits.

### INDIVIDUALS

- Each of us needs to be a role 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.
- Speak up and be proactive in seeking out ways to support and improve civic leadership in our communities.
- Seek out diverse sources of both qualitative and quantitative information in order to make informed decisions.
- Encourage engagement in civic leadership among all members of our community, regardless of their background. One way of doing so is the encouragement of mentoring relationships, both serving as a mentor and seeking mentors.
- Have civic leaders take the responsibility for developing respectful relationships with the media in their communities.
- Participants of the 101st Arizona Town Hall personally commit to identifying two or three recommendations to present to personal contacts.

## Edwards' 10 Steps to a Better Congress

Mickey Edwards once represented Oklahoma in the US Congress. He now directs the Aspen Institute-Rodel Fellowships in Public Leadership and has contributed to the *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, and National Public Radio, among other media outlets. In his latest work ***The Parties Versus the People: How to turn Republicans and Democrats into Americans***, Edwards identifies 10 steps to a more productive, efficient Congress that might also be productive in individual states.

1. Take away the right of the parties to control access to the ballot.
2. Take away the parties' control over redistricting.
3. Reduce spending, increase competition.
4. Establish a nonpartisan congressional leadership.
5. Establish nonpartisan congressional committees.
6. Restore democracy to Congress.
7. Eliminate the trappings of partisanship.
8. Longer workweeks, more interaction.
9. Eliminate one-party White House strategy sessions.
10. Sign no pledges, stand up to bullies.

Edwards acknowledges the difficulty of unifying a hyper-partisan system. His arguments support debate and discourse as resolution to deal with what he sees as a central problem: the U.S. political system is disenfranchising citizens and many have lost confidence in the political process, leading to declining participation and a dysfunctional system.

*Excerpt from the Background Report prepared by the University of Arizona.*



Participants of the Youth Town Hall discuss the principles of civic leadership.

**Y**oung 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.

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# Youth Town Hall on Civic Leadership

On October 24, 2012, the Arizona Town Hall, in partnership with Arizona Students' Association, and Maricopa Community Colleges, held a Youth Town Hall on Civic Leadership that drew hundreds of high school and college students from around the state. Following are the key points developed from the gathering.

## DEFINING CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- Civic leadership is community-based rather than person-based and involves working with others rather than above them.
- Civic leadership involves reaching out to make things happen on a comprehensive, community level.
- Good civic leadership involves many small actions that have a multiplier effect that creates significant and lasting change.

## ROLE OF CIVIC LEADERSHIP IN OUR LIVES

- Civic leaders inspire others to get involved.
- Civic leadership benefits communities by benefiting individuals and vice versa.
- We are brought together and shaped into who we are through civic leadership.

## FACTORS IMPACTING CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- Family, culture, age, economic status, ethnicity and religion all impact the development of civic leaders.
- Having a diversity of backgrounds represented in civic affairs results in higher levels of engagement and stronger civic leaders.
- Civic leaders must seek to understand and incorporate differences in order to develop better solutions.
- By recognizing the perspectives within and amongst groups, we can go beyond differences to find common ground.

## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- Social media is a powerful communication tool.
- Individuals can voice their opinions without fear of reprisal using social media, thereby engaging more people and presenting a greater diversity of viewpoints.

## RESPECT AND COLLABORATION ARE KEY TO CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- Coming to agreement on difficult issues requires respect.
- Negative and biased political coverage hurts civic leadership and reduces the willingness of many people to become involved.
- Extreme polarization inhibits progress on issues that are important to our society.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO BECOME CIVIC LEADERS

- The inspiration to become a civic leader begins with parents.
- Mentoring and hands-on opportunities within the schools are essential for developing future civic leaders.
- Students need to seek out opportunities to develop civic leadership skills through involvement in programs available with school clubs, sports teams, community service organizations, student government, churches, and neighborhood associations.
- Young people can begin to develop as civic leaders by getting a well-rounded education, focusing on learning about others, and being informed about issues in their communities.

## ROLE OF YOUTH IN DEVELOPING CIVIC LEADERS

- By inspiring their peers, young people are already taking up the role of civic leader.
- Mentoring those younger than us is a great way to model civic leadership.
- Civic leadership is a lifelong process. It starts with us and it starts now.



## How You Can Have An Impact

- Be the change. Model the behavior you expect from elected officials, youth and others.
- Use available resources, such as those referenced in the background report for the 101st Arizona Town Hall, to partner with existing organizations and develop ideas for encouraging civic leadership in your community. Download the full report at <http://www.aztownhall.org>.
- Keep up to date on relevant programs in your community and action you can take through the Arizona Town Hall (<http://www.aztownhall.org>).
- Arrange a program in your community. Arizona Town Hall can provide resources, speakers, and printed materials. Use social media and personal networks to share information.
- Share your knowledge and the work of Town Hall participants with family, friends and coworkers.
- To join existing efforts to pursue recommendations from the 101st Arizona Town Hall, contact the Arizona Town Hall office.

During Tuesday's lunch session, former U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords accepts the Shirley Agnos Legacy Award on behalf of herself and her husband Mark Kelly.

**S**trong civic leadership can create a ripple effect that impacts us as individuals, in our local communities, and ultimately statewide in a positive manner.

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We welcome your involvement,  
questions, and perspectives.

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Since 1962, Arizona Town Hall has been educating, engaging and empowering Arizonans. Town Hall recommendations are a valuable resource for policymakers because they do not represent the agenda of a particular group or political perspective. Instead, Arizona Town Hall reports contain the informed consensus of Arizonans from different political parties, professions, and geographic areas of the state. A private, non-profit civic organization, Arizona Town Hall has served as a catalyst for conversations and recommendations that have influenced significant changes in Arizona's public policy over the years. Countless local, state, and national leaders have cited Arizona Town Hall as an important factor in educating people about complex issues, and fostering the development of civic and community leaders.

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