



CREATING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES



Highlights of
Arizona Town
Hall Sessions

Since 1962, Arizona Town Hall has created solutions to complex problems by educating, engaging, connecting, and empowering Arizonans.

Community Town Halls and Future Leaders Town Halls (events held for high school and college students) allow a greater number of Arizonans to experience positive civic engagement. These programs also incubate solutions for statewide issues and develop a grassroots network of informed citizens ready to work together to maximize Arizona's potential.

To ensure informed discussion, Town Hall participants review background information developed by the Arizona Town Hall Research Committee.

Participants at the Statewide Town Hall consider the information in the background report as well as recommendations from the various Community and Future Leaders Town Halls.

This publication is a summary of key points from the background report, the Community and Future Leaders Town Halls, and the report of recommendations developed at the Statewide Town Hall held January 24-26, 2022.

Completed 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 digital copies, for free, online at www.aztownhall.org.



HOW DO WE CREATE VIBRANT COMMUNITIES?

1. **Shift the Paradigm.** Go beyond individual sectors and behaviors to address holistic social conditions, systems issues, and structural inequities.
2. **Change Policies, Systems, and Environments.** Transform problems by developing transformational changes both “on the ground” and at the systems level.
3. **Support Community-Driven Solutions and Build Trust.** Work with a community rather than for a community. This includes community power-building. It all starts with trust.
4. **Utilize Multi-Sector Partnerships.** Engage stakeholders from multiple sectors to improve vibrancy innovatively, efficiently, and effectively.
5. **Embed Equity.** There is no one-size-fits-all approach. The most effective solutions come through the voices of communities experiencing the largest vibrancy gaps.

CREATING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

A vibrant community is a healthy, supportive, resource-rich environment that inclusively taps human, economic, and natural capital to thrive and grow together. Communities are vibrant when fourteen interrelated elements of health and well-being are contributing and robust.

To create vibrant communities, we must understand the root causes of vibrancy and the impacts of existing systems, and we must collaborate across community sectors. This requires sector knowledge, community-driven insight, and big-picture thinking. The places we live, work, and play matter to health, well-being, and thriving. Communities are vibrant for all only when they have fairly offered options for development, mobility, and autonomy.

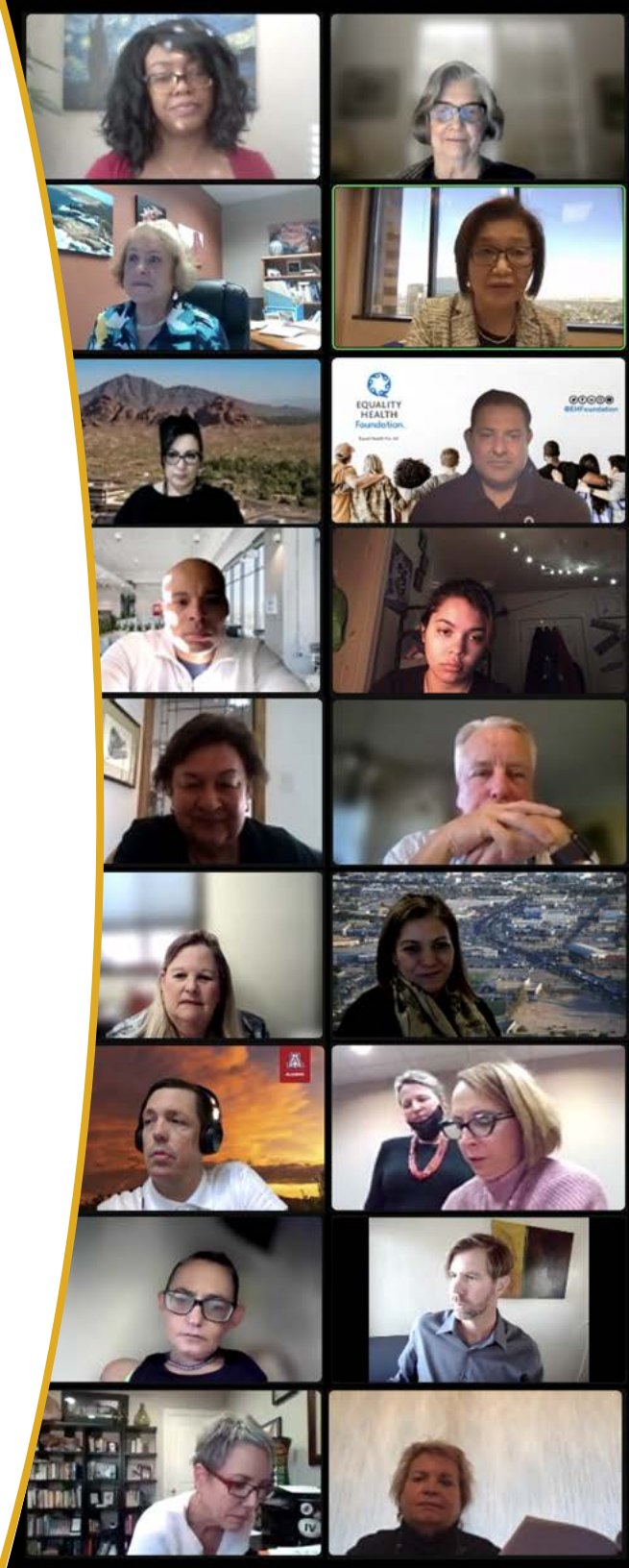


For additional links and resources, visit: http://aztownhall.org/113_Town_Hall

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STATEWIDE TOWN HALL

The 113th Statewide Town Hall convened virtually January 24-26, 2022. Participants considered the Background Report and recommendations from Community and Future Leaders Town Halls. Below is a summary of the recommendations for action. Read or download the complete report at www.aztownhall.org.

- Act with urgency to take advantage of the funds available from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Act (CARES), the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and other time sensitive resources and find ways to interweave funds across silos.
- Present Governor Ducey with a plan developed by a cross-section of communities on how these funds should be expended and insist on transparency.
- Increase civil dialogue between legislators, governmental agencies, and citizens to find and implement solutions to improve and support vibrant communities.
- Consider changes to election processes which could result in more diverse representation and better governance outcomes.
- Increase support for schools and libraries which provide educational resources and community hubs for families to access information, food, and social services.
- Expand affordable, reliable high-speed internet and wi-fi, as defined by ARPA standards, across the state, particularly in low income, rural, and tribal communities.
- Leverage institutions that already have infrastructure available, such as schools, public libraries, faith-based organizations, and industries, such as utilities and telecommunications.
- Initiate, prioritize and act upon Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs).
- Reduce barriers to healthcare, streamline services, foster partnerships, encourage cultural change, and produce cross-organizational plans to improve the social determinants of health.
- Create or enhance clearinghouses to be cross-sector collaboratives that include businesses and government and provide a place for Arizonans to offer input.
- Continue to hold inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible community and statewide town halls on the social determinants of health
- Use social media with corporate and philanthropic funding to increase participation in community collaborations.
- Promote collaborations by identifying issues where an intersectional problem exists.
- Align resources to provide a one-stop shop solutions for intersectional issues.
- Effectively engage community leaders in political discourse to reduce and hopefully eliminate the myriad party divisions and political distractions.
- Seek funding from businesses as well as government to implement and fund these initiatives.
- Promote nonprofits that demonstrate success in building community resiliency.
- Build a network of collaborative partners to build community knowledge and work towards solutions that build vibrancy, health, and resiliency.
- Compile a community connections reference list with individual contact information.
- Continue to ask if what we are doing now is still serving us and are there other models that would serve us more effectively.



Pictured: Participants during the virtual plenary session of the 113th Statewide Town Hall on “Creating Vibrant Communities”



Top to bottom: Participants of the Prescott, Mohave County, and Sun Health Virtual Community Town Halls

COMMUNITY TOWN HALLS

At the Community Town Halls that occur before the Statewide Town Hall, participants develop ideas for local and statewide solutions and commit to individual actions. Their recommendations inform the statewide Town Hall and their actions create continued momentum

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

- Small, rural communities face challenges in developing good jobs.
- Access to high-quality educational and workforce training resources is not universal.
- Public transportation options are inconsistent and insufficient.
- Leverage the use of parks and recreation facilities, libraries, and educational resources.
- Build on the social cohesion, collaboration, and spirit of volunteerism.
- Establish common goals and ongoing activities between and among sub-communities.
- Use regional organizations across Arizona to build respectful civic engagement.
- Improve accessibility to quality affordable healthcare services.

WHAT ARIZONA'S ELECTED LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

- Our education system needs to receive full funding to ensure better outcomes.
- Embrace data-driven decisions. Lead with values and focus on the common good.
- Diversify leadership and encourage youth and people of color to participate.
- Be outspoken against racism, sexism, ageism, and all forms of discrimination.
- Increase efforts to educate high school students and voters on civics, current events, and significant issues.
- Ensure that reliable, affordable access to broadband is available statewide.
- Encourage partnerships among various levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and nonprofits.

- Expand affordable housing and invest in housing with wraparound services.
- Restore the previous level of funding to the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund.
- Provide communities with more resources to create self-sufficient economies.
- Support public education that provides science-based, fact-based, and life-long learning opportunities.
- Represent your whole community and foster inclusion, collaboration, and a sense of caring for all residents, regardless of party lines or political affiliations.
- Use what we have learned from the pandemic to prepare for future challenges.
- Get out in the community and collect more input before you make decisions
- Stop cutting taxes. Fully fund the basic services needed to promote vibrant communities.
- Address climate change and our water supply. Promote environmental resiliency.

TAKING ACTION

- Provide a “safe space” for community members to speak out on issues.
- Emphasize communities’ interdependence and the social imperative for mutual support.
- Enhance our data collection and analytics systems to better equip ourselves to improve all the elements of vibrant communities and point us toward needed reforms.
- Educate ourselves and speak out about issues such as systemic racism, social injustice, economic inequality, and other barriers to creating and nurturing vibrant communities.
- Use community design to remove “pockets” of income inequality, high crime, and isolation to provide equal opportunities for all residents.

- Vote, run for office, get involved in civic organizations, engage in civil discourse, and promote diversity in our organizations.
- Create a directory of organizations with comparable missions to facilitate collaboration.
- Assess the jobs available to identify the skill requirements and narrow the workforce training and education programs to be provided.
- Provide scholarships for financially challenged students to attend college and encourage pathways to enter professionals that are in short supply.
- Fund and leverage schools and libraries as community hubs to offer even more resources.
- Focus on infrastructure and industry-ready development to attract future industries that will create local employment opportunities and contribute to economic prosperity.
- Showcase role models from underrepresented populations to encourage people to take active leadership and become fully engaged in developing the future vision for their communities.

COMMUNITY TOWN HALLS

- Sun Health Virtual Community Town Hall (x4)
- AzAEYC Virtual Community Town Hall (x2)
- American Planning Association Arizona Chapter Conference (online)
- SEAGO Virtual Community Town Hall
- Prescott Virtual Community Town Hall
- Mohave County Virtual Community Town Hall
- Southwest Arizona Town Hall Foundational Forums “Human Opportunities;” “Access to Health & Quality Affordable Food;” “Equitable Living;” “Community Safety;” “Community Infrastructure;” and “Social Equity” (online)
- Sierra Vista Virtual Community Town Hall
- Pima County Virtual Community Town Hall
- Greater Tucson Leadership & Alumni Virtual Community Town Hall
- American Planning Association Western States Planning Conference (online)
- Gila Valley Community Town Hall
- Verde Valley Community Town Hall (hybrid)
- UnitedHealthcare Community Town Hall



Above: In person participants at the Gila Valley Community Town Hall, Thatcher, and the Verde Valley Hybrid Community Town Hall, Clarkdale



Participants of the Pima County Virtual Community Town Hall



FUTURE LEADERS TOWN HALLS

Arizona Town Hall, in partnership with community colleges, universities, and other organizations, held Future Leaders Town Halls that included high school and college students throughout the state. Following are some of the key points from the gatherings.

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand interaction among people in different neighborhoods and communities.
- Ensure that adults reach out directly to young people to hear their voices and get them involved in making the world a better, more peaceful place.
- Increase educational opportunities and extracurricular programs.
- Improve the resources and safety measures for the LGBTQ community.
- Create more accessible youth centers that help youth learn about college and life skills.
- Utilize social workers in the area to help residents be resilient.
- Enhance transportation options and access to affordable public transportation.
- Address food insecurity, unequal access to healthy food, and the stigma associated with using a food bank.
- Improve community safety, especially in high crime areas.
- Ensure that missing black and brown individuals receive the same level of attention as whites who go missing.
- Approach each public issue proactively with comprehensive solutions.
- Recognize the positive lessons from the pandemic.

WHAT ARIZONA'S ELECTED LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

- Focus on the populations most affected by climate change to ensure equality and equity.
- Mobilize youth to increase the vibrancy and resiliency of a community.
- Increase adult mentors and expand city youth programs.
- Create safe spaces for adults and youth to talk one-on-one.

- Give feedback and acknowledge that young people have been heard.
- Spend a day with children from different communities and cultures.
- Reinstate in-state tuition for undocumented students.
- Provide more free mental health resources.
- Increase the availability of and mental health training for school counselors.
- Raise awareness of the effects of harmful substances and behaviors.
- Use the design of communities to break down barriers.
- Enhance online infrastructure to facilitate neighborhood associations.
- Identify neighbors who can help those near them (ex. Meals on Wheels).
- Support safe neighborhoods with a neighborhood watch, community cameras, and police officers who are properly trained about diversity.
- Reduce response times of public safety and law enforcement.
- Clean up the parks and remove gang activity. Ensure that we have a well-lit community.
- Add more lanes for the buses.
- Create safer sidewalks by adding rails or barricades for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Keep the policy for free transportation implemented during COVID.
- Provide more healthy food options such as community gardens and seed banks.
- Devote greater attention to human and child trafficking.
- Provide designated safe places for specific populations (ex: a women's only gym).
- Conduct awareness campaigns about the unique community issues and solutions.

Participants of the Tucson Virtual Future Leaders Town Hall.

TAKING ACTION

- Increase/enhance access to counselors and mental health services.
- Protect the environment and educate ourselves and others about how to do that.
- Focus on prevention through healthy foods and lifestyle instead of acute care.
- Reduce drug abuse through programs and discussion in schools, reduce advertisements for smoking and alcohol, and zone to reduce the number of liquor stores.
- Provide high quality education for all, including vocational training, job apprenticeships, and trade school programs.
- Find ways to ensure civic engagement is embedded into the student experience.
- Encourage communities to be proactive in determining their needs and desires.
- Recognize that flourishing neighborhoods require representative leadership.
- Utilize the Arizona Town Hall process in future public engagement activities.
- Balance being outspoken constituents, responsible citizens, and considerate neighbors.
- Show others, especially those in need, that they aren't alone and someone cares.
- Rebuild trust by listening to all sides and showing respect for different opinions.
- As the ones experiencing these challenges, accept the responsibility for taking action.
- Encourage youth to be something great no matter their situation. Don't underestimate ourselves and each other.

FUTURE LEADERS TOWN HALLS

- Tucson - In collaboration with Tucson Young Professionals, Greater Tucson Leadership, Pima County, University of Arizona, and Arizona State University-Tucson (online)
- Mesa Community College (online x2)
- Paradise Valley Community College (online)
- South Mountain W.O.R.K.S. (online)
- AzCASE (online)
- Yavapai Community College - Prescott Campus
- In collaboration with Opportunities For Youth - Ombudsman Charter School; Year Up; Arizona Center For Youth Resources (x2); YMCA Maryvale; EastPointe High School; Bostrom Alternative Center for Education; and Linda Abril Education Academy

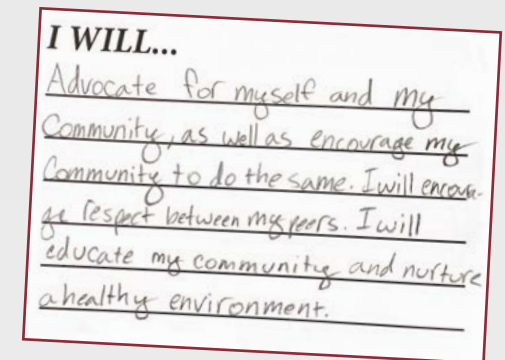


Participants of the Paradise Valley Virtual Future Leaders Town Hall.



Above: Participants of the Eastpointe High School Youth Town Hall, Phoenix and Verde Valley Future Leaders Town Hall, Prescott.

Below: A participant's personal commitment statement written on an I Will card.





We welcome your involvement,
questions, and perspectives.

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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, socioeconomic status, and geographic areas of the state. A private, nonprofit civic organization, Arizona Town Hall serves as a catalyst for conversations and recommendations that create significant changes in Arizona's public policy. Countless local, state, and national leaders cite 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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