



Youth Town Hall *Civic Leadership for Arizona's Future*

Civic Leadership FAQs

Q. What is civic leadership?

A. Solving problems and achieving goals by working with different groups of people and points of view

Civic leadership refers to the collaborative efforts of residents, leaders, and organizations in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to solve problems and achieve goals. It requires vision, process, ideas, compromise—not to mention an understanding of public policy and politics.

Q. Why is it important to me now?

A. Without strong civic leadership, Arizona's quality of life and competitiveness could suffer.

Good jobs, quality education, vibrant arts and culture, outstanding science and technology, sustainable communities...The problems—and potential—facing communities and the state are unlikely to be solved or realized without civic leadership. Today's issues are too complex to be addressed by just one sector or institution. If you aren't involved, someone else will make decisions that affect your future opportunities and prosperity.

Q. What most defines a civic leader today?

A. Being able to collaborate across sectors to get things done.

There is consensus on some major characteristics, including:ⁱ

- Sharing commitment—Leaders work together to identify their common interests, understand the opportunity to be grasped or the problem to be solved, and agree on a strategy for moving forward together.
- Sharing responsibility—Leaders agree to share the benefits and the burdens of taking on a shared mission and shared responsibilities.
- Sharing power—Leading across sectors is “leading when no one is in charge,” where power-sharing is the likely way forward. This does not mean forsaking one's own formal authority or deeply-held values and beliefs, but rather using one's power where it will do the most to reach the goal.
- Sharing capacity—The point of such collaboration is to solve a public problem that could not otherwise be accomplished. Contributions can, and must, come from many places.
- Sharing credit—Collaborative leaders can “check their egos at the door” and share the credit for accomplishments within and across organizations and sectors.
- Sharing accountability—What success and failure look like and how to measure both are critical.

Q. What are some examples of civic leadership in Arizona?

A. It took civic leadership to...

- Build light rail through metro Phoenix and get community buy-in for the Tucson street car
- Develop state rules to protect groundwater
- Adopt tougher standards for high school graduation
- Develop new bioscience jobs

ⁱ (Archer and Cameron 2009; Bingham and O'Leary 2008; Crosby and Bryson 2005; Emerson et al 2012; Linden 2010)