



In May 2007, the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits released *One Voice Arizona: A Nonprofit Agenda*. This publication summarizes and synthesizes the views of more than 275 Arizona citizens who participated in one of six sessions conducted across the state in 2006 called the **Town Hall on the Nonprofit Sector**. These citizens represented the diversity of Arizona's nonprofit sector and its supporters: in Arizona communities from Yuma to Flagstaff, from social service organizations to government agencies, from arts groups to business leaders, from civic organizations to health advocates. Drawn from the views of the Town Hall participants, *One Voice Arizona* articulates a vision for the sector, challenges it faces, and five major strategies to overcome those challenges.

Strategy #1: Speak with One Voice

The many missions of nonprofits create a chorus of community across the state, and nonprofits uniformly recognize their need to sing in unison, rather than solo. Town Hall participants made very clear their desire to unite the many diverse melodies of their missions into a harmony of community across Arizona, unifying the sector and thereby enhancing and supporting everyone's efforts. The result will be a stronger sector, with stronger connections to others in the community.

Strategy #2: Promote Collaboration and Networking

Possibly the most repeated buzzword in the nonprofit community in recent times is "collaboration." This theme appeared throughout the Town Halls, as participants expressed general support for collaboration, which includes everything from simple networking and sharing of best practices to resource sharing and organizational consolidation. The challenge clearly facing nonprofits is having access to successful models to evaluate and engage effectively in collaboration. Participants indicated that other stakeholders in the community, especially funders, call for and sometimes demand collaboration, but nonprofits do not always have the capacity to respond successfully.

Strategy #3: Increase Public Awareness

One of the most consistent themes expressed by Town Hall participants was the lack of recognition and respect in their communities. Nonprofits provide essential services that contribute to the quality of life in our communities, and yet people working in nonprofits often feel misunderstood, both from an organizational and professional standpoint. Nonprofits are looking for more understanding of their contributions to the quality of life and recognition of their value from the rest of the community.

Strategy #4: Connect with Resources

It is commonplace to observe that the greatest challenge facing nonprofits is securing and sustaining an adequate level of resources. Acknowledging that past and current resource development norms often fail to sustain vital organizations, Town Hall participants challenged themselves to innovate new models and build new connections to partners that can put nonprofits on more stable financial footing. Moreover, these models are essential to obtain and support the other core resources and values of the organization: talent and expertise among staff and volunteers; leadership throughout the organization; and diversity of the workforce.

Strategy #5: Promote Accountability

Throughout the Town Halls, nonprofits discussed the need for better accountability within their own organizations and throughout the sector as a whole. While nonprofits recognize the importance of accountability, they also expressed frustration over the lack of time and resources necessary to address concerns. Another issue is the difficulty that nonprofits have in meeting the differing accountability expectations necessary to secure and maintain funding from local, state, and national funding sources.

For each strategy, the report includes issues to consider in order to advance the recommendations; steps that individuals in nonprofits can take to participate; and possible responses from the Alliance. The Alliance will use *One Voice Arizona* as its report card to the sector in the future.

