



**Alliance**  
OF **ARIZONA**  
NONPROFITS



**PROCEEDINGS**  
**TOWN HALL ON THE NONPROFIT SECTOR**

**PRESCOTT, ARIZONA**  
**AUGUST 2006**



## Town Hall on the Nonprofit Sector - Prescott, Arizona AUGUST 2006

### Background

With financial support from APS, the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits convened more than 275 participants in six Town Halls across the state from March through September, 2006. Titled *Town Hall on the Nonprofit Sector*, these sessions were held in Flagstaff, Phoenix, Prescott, Tempe, Tucson, and Yuma. Each session included diverse representation from the nonprofit sector and its supporters: from social service organizations to government agencies, from arts groups to business leaders, from civic organizations to health advocates. You are holding the proceedings of the Prescott Town Hall conducted in August 2006 in partnership with the West Yavapai Nonprofit Alliance.



Each of the six Town Halls followed a similar format with the same five questions posed to the participants. The questions were:

1. What do all nonprofits have in common?
2. What is your ideal vision for the nonprofit sector in your state?
3. What are the obstacles common to all nonprofits—regardless of mission— that prevent us from reaching this vision?
4. What key short-term steps can nonprofit organizations collectively take to eliminate these obstacles?
5. What key long-term steps can nonprofit organizations collectively take to eliminate these obstacles?

Participants responded to these questions individually, then discussed them in small groups, and finally shared their responses with the entire room. Discussion was facilitated at all but one session by Tim Delaney, president of The Center for Leadership, Ethics & Public Service and one of the founders of the Alliance. In addition to collecting the individual and small group response forms, the sessions were fully documented by Susan Perkins Fry, a Tucson-based consultant.

All documentation was shared with the National Council of Nonprofit Associations (NCNA), and used as part of a briefing book for delegates to the National Nonprofit Congress in Washington D.C. in October 2006. Those delegates developed a list of national priorities for the nonprofit sector, including

- Advocacy and grassroots community involvement
- Public awareness of the value of the sector
- Organizational effectiveness, with special focus on leadership and accountability

These national priorities are remarkably consistent with the Arizona agenda, developed as a synthesis of ideas and dialogue throughout these Town Halls. The Arizona agenda was published in the spring of 2007 as *One Voice Arizona*, which is available from the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits (find it online at [www.http://www.arizonanonprofits.org/arizonanonprofits/one\\_voice\\_arizona.aspx](http://www.arizonanonprofits.org/arizonanonprofits/one_voice_arizona.aspx)).

### Town Hall Process

The Phoenix Town Hall was the fourth one held in Arizona. Approximately 35 participants gathered to discuss the state of the nonprofit sector in Yavapai County. The event began with a welcome from Cindy Craig representing Youth Count and the West Yavapai Nonprofit Alliance. Patrick McWhortor, President & CEO of the Alliance, then outlined the history of the Alliance and provided information about Alliance's next steps across Arizona.

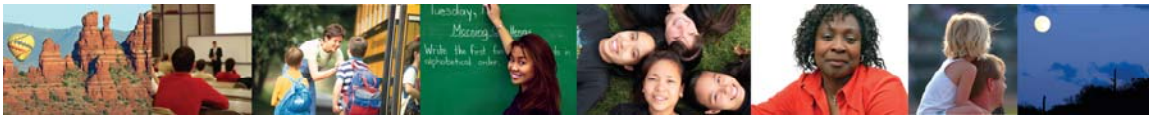
Tim Delaney then began his facilitation of the Town Hall by walking the participants through an Arizona nonprofit timeline that he had designed and posted on the wall. The timeline included Arizona historical information along with the growth and development of the Arizona nonprofit sector including

establishment of the Arizona Community Foundation and the beginning of the Arizona State University Center for Nonprofit Leadership and Management.

Tim then asked the Town Hall participants to take time to write down some additions to the timeline that were pertinent to them and to the organizations they were representing at the Town Hall. Additions to the timeline included the recent 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Big Brothers Big Sisters in Yavapai County, the founding of the United Way in 1986, the establishment of West Yavapai Guidance Clinic in 1966, and the beginning of the Youth Volunteer Corp in 2003.

After the timeline exercise, Tim asked each of the participants to spend 15 to 20 minutes responding to the five questions to be discussed in the town hall. Forms were completed individually at each table. The five questions were then discussed at each table, with a facilitator designated at each. Finally, table facilitators reported out each table's responses. The tables' responses, along with selected individual responses are documented below.

After the Town Hall, the individuals' forms along with the tables' forms were sent to NCNA for their use in developing the briefing book for delegates to the National Nonprofit Congress in October 2006.



## Prescott Town Hall Report

### Table Sessions

1. Each person answered five questions on his/her own
2. The tables discussed the questions as a whole
3. One person from each table shared the table's responses

### 1. What do all nonprofits have in common?

The top five responses included the following:

- Nonprofit organizations are **MISSION DRIVEN**
  - “We share a mission to create a healthier community meeting unmet needs, addressing issues that are not always popular, and uniting the community through a strength-based approach.”
  - “We seek to do positive things and alleviate social problems.”
  - “We all share a common vision to improve the quality of life in our community.”
  - “We all desire to improve our communities.”
  - “We have a shared mission where our purpose is to create a healthy community.”
  - “We have the genuine desire to help those of our fellow citizens whose needs are not being met.”
  - “We have heart, but we struggle to keep our doors open.”
- Nonprofit organizations struggle with **FUNDING and SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**
  - “We are building our organizations with limited funds.”
  - “We have a consistent need for support – volunteer, money, etc.”
  - “We’re always looking for something.”
  - “Nonprofits struggle to attain constant funding sources.”
  - “Nonprofits build their organizations with limited funds.”
  - “We need money!”
  - “We struggle to bring all the desired programs to fruition.”
- Nonprofit organizations need better **PUBLIC AWARENESS**
  - “We need better visibility.”
  - “There are mixed messages about nonprofits. There is no strong message to the public on the work of the nonprofit sector.”
  - “Nonprofits lack community support and the understanding of our needs and the community's needs.”

- Nonprofit organizations need **STAFF and VOLUNTEERS**
  - “We all have a need for volunteers.”
  - “We struggle with limited volunteers.”
  - “We must maintain qualified people.”
  
- Nonprofit organizations struggle with **DUPLICATION of SERVICES and TERRITORIAL ISSUES**
  - “We suffer from territorialism.”
  - “Nonprofits have a lack of collaboration with other nonprofits and we lack effective partnering.”

Additional responses included the following:

- Nonprofits have tax exempt status.
- Nonprofit organizations are “innovators.”
- Nonprofits are “working on topics that are not popular.”

## 2. What is your ideal vision for the nonprofit sector in your state?

The top five responses included the following:

- The nonprofit sector should have a **UNIFORM VOICE**
  - “We need a voice in the community.”
  - “With one voice, we can have better collaboration within the entire nonprofit sector.”
  - “Nonprofit need to speak with one voice!”
  - “We need a uniformed voice representing all types of nonprofits in Arizona.”
  - “We should be recognized by the Arizona Legislature as an important sector to be listened to.”
  - “We should be equal with other sectors.”
  
- The nonprofit sector needs to **COLLABORATE**
  - “We need better communication within the sector so we can collaborate effectively.”
  - Nonprofits need to work in an environment that promotes a willingness and ability to share resources and collaborate.”
  - “We need a well funded collaborative of organizations that shows measurable improvements for the quality of life.”
  - “Nonprofits need to share resources.”
  - “We need a well funded collaborative of organizations.”

- “A well funded collaborative of organizations providing services in the community to improve individual choice and independence.”
- “We need to support cohesive efforts with key state priorities identified.”
- “Nonprofits should be working together in a cooperative effort for the good of the community.”
- “We must increase collaboration for better use of funding, volunteers, and public service.”
- The nonprofit sector needs **RESPECT** from the community and **VISIBILITY** in the community
  - “We need visibility and recognition.”
  - “Nonprofits need to educate the community to understand the problems we address.”
  - “We need to raise public awareness.”
  - “Nonprofits need to gain greater respect from those who stand in the way of our goals, making it more likely that our organizations will succeed.”
- The nonprofit sector needs a **GENEROUS DONOR COMMUNITY**
  - “I hope that funding will continue and that we won’t face more financial cutbacks.”
- The nonprofit sector needs a competent **WORKFORCE**
  - “Nonprofits need a rich pipeline of educated and experienced nonprofit professionals.”

Additional responses included the following:

- Cohesively articulated legislation for nonprofits
- Nonprofits need pooled resources to support individual organizations (i.e. health benefits, operational tools, insurance, etc.)

### 3. What are the obstacles common to all nonprofits?

The top five responses included the following:

- The nonprofit sector lacks **COMMUNICATION** between nonprofits and with the public
  - “We explain the deficiencies and the needs; we need an assets approach to everything we do. We are seen as a ‘charity’ and not as an absolutely necessary engine in our society.”
  - “We need education of the community.”
  - “We lack public awareness and understanding from the community.”
  - “We need to learn about nonprofits’ strengths.”
  - “We don’t know the full extent of who is doing what.”

- “We lack community understanding.”
- “Nonprofits need heightened awareness with business and government.”
- Nonprofits have **LIMITED FUNDS**
  - “Nonprofits have competing models for funding and not enough resources to meet the needs.”
  - “We lack government support...we’ve seen so many cutbacks.”
  - “Nonprofits are chasing the dollar.”
  - “Nonprofits alter their true mission to meet funding sources.”
  - “We feel like we have to compete with one another.”
  - “We struggle with finicky donors.”
- The nonprofit sector has **LIMITED STAFF and a LIMITED WORKFORCE**
  - “Nonprofits lack a competent workforce.”
  - “We have difficulty attracting good employees and volunteers, especially if we can’t pay a competitive wage.”
  - “We need competitive pay and benefits.”
  - “Nonprofits are understaffed and overworked.”
  - “We struggle with staff turnover.”
- Nonprofits lack **COLLABORATION**
  - “Collaboration would help us reduce redundancy.”
  - “Across nonprofits, there is not enough interconnectivity, cooperation, and collaboration.”
  - “We need collaboration within the entire nonprofit sector.”
  - “We suffer from redundancy of services.”
- Nonprofits lack **COMPETENT BOARD MEMBERS and VOLUNTEERS**
  - “We need board development opportunities.”

Additional responses included the following:

- Nonprofits suffer from poor legislation
- “One obstacle to overcome is the sense that some have that those in need have themselves to blame for their circumstances.”

#### 4. What key short term steps can nonprofit organizations take to eliminate these obstacles?

The top five responses included the following:

- **COLLABORATE – COLLABORATE - COLLABORATE**
  - “Nonprofits need to work to create like-minded collaboration.”
  - “We need to support each other.”
  - “We should work to create partnerships.”
  - “Networking with one another would help avoid redundancy.”
  - “Nonprofits should focus on consolidation and economies of scale”
  - “Job sharing”
- Enhance **PUBLIC AWARENESS** and **EDUCATION** about nonprofits
  - “We should focus on community awareness efforts.”
  - “Media!”
  - “We should be informing the public of importance of nonprofit services.”
  - “Nonprofits need to communicate to one another and the community.”
  - “We need greater public and business understanding of the needs of nonprofits.”
  - “Nonprofit does not mean that we are not a business.”
- Develop better **TRAINING** and **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
  - “We are forced to hire part-time employees.”
  - “We need to respect our staff.”
  - “Nonprofits should develop better trainings for board members.”
  - “We need to identify practices for retaining good staff and volunteers.”
- Work with **LAWMAKERS**
  - “The nonprofit sector needs to develop positive political connections.”
- Join the **ALLIANCE of ARIZONA NONPROFITS**

#### 5. What key long term steps can nonprofit organizations take to eliminate these obstacles?

The top five responses include the following:

- Develop a **PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**
  - “Help raise the reputation of the sector such that it is better supported by the community and more attractive to employees.”
  - “Develop a means to collectively broadcast the power of the sector.”

- “Educate the public and government about services that are available from the nonprofit sector.”
  - “Keep the nonprofit sector in the public eye.”
  - “We need greater visibility with positive public relations and we need to collaborate with the media locally and statewide.”
  - “We need open and honest communication to the broader community regarding the scope of services we provide.”
  - “Champion the nonprofit sector.”
  - “Develop a common message so its not you versus us.”
  - “Create an environment of belief in our missions and overcome stigmas, myths, and lack of awareness.”
  - “Speak with one voice.”
- Facilitate better **COLLABORATION**
    - “We need to work together on every level available to us.”
    - “Nonprofits must make a commitment to participate in long-term collaborative efforts.”
    - “...like these town halls.”
- Focus on **ACCOUNTABILITY**
    - “Conduct outcome research to reveal the effectiveness of programs in the community.”
    - “We need a system to hold nonprofits to a higher standard.”
    - “Conduct outcome research for impact.”
    - “Consider accreditation expectations for nonprofits.”
- Concentrate on **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
    - “Implement incentives for organizations to adopt and practice tools to retain staff and volunteers.”
    - “Focus on group insurance to keep employees...buying power.”
    - “Support nonprofit education to build our workforce.”
- Support **DONOR EDUCATION** and create **BETTER FUNDING** opportunities
    - “We need donor education.”
    - “Nonprofits need to educate funding sources.”

Additional responses included the following:

- Create a statewide database of nonprofit organizations
- “Find ‘friends’ in the State Legislature and leverage their impact”

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For questions regarding the Arizona Town Halls, please contact Patrick McWhortor ([patrickm@arizonanonprofits.org](mailto:patrickm@arizonanonprofits.org)) at the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits.