



Alliance
OF **ARIZONA**
NONPROFITS



PROCEEDINGS
TOWN HALL ON THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

TUCSON, ARIZONA
MARCH 2006



Town Hall on the Nonprofit Sector - Tucson, Arizona MARCH 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 Tucson Town Hall – the first Town Hall of the series – conducted in March 2006.



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

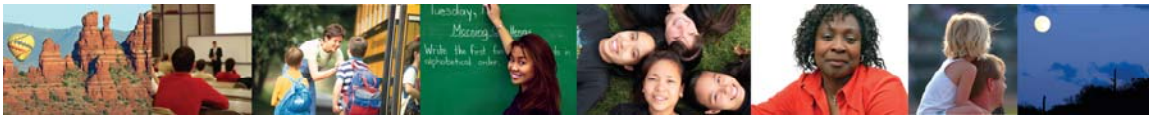
The Tucson Town Hall was the first one held in Arizona. Approximately 50 participants gathered to discuss the state of the nonprofit sector in Tucson and Southern Arizona. The event began with a welcome from Tomas Leon, CEO of the Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Steve Alley, the CEO of the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona also welcomed all attendees and thanked them for making time to participate in the Town Hall. Patrick McWhorter, President & CEO of the Alliance then walked the participants through a powerpoint presentation that outlined the birth of the Alliance and provided information about Alliance's next steps across Arizona.

Tim Delaney, Town Hall facilitator and senior advisor to NCNA for the National Nonprofit Congress, next began his facilitation of the Town Hall by asking participants to introduce themselves and change seats to ensure organizational diversity at each table. Tim then walked the participants through an Arizona nonprofit timeline that he had designed and posted on the wall. The timeline included Arizona historical information and the growth and development of the Arizona nonprofit sector (i.e. Father Kino's establishment of Mission San Javier del Bac, the founding of the Tucson Art Museum, and the beginning of the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, etc.). More recent elements of the timeline included the start of the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona and the start 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 establishment of Child and Family Resources, the start of NSFRE and AFP, the beginning of the YWCA, etc.

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 .



Tucson 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 dependent on **FUNDRAISING**
- Nonprofit organizations are dependent on **VOLUNTEERS** (and staff)
- Nonprofit organizations are focused on **MISSION DRIVEN WORK**
 - “Nonprofits provide services that enhance community well-being and have a mission to serve.”
 - “Nonprofit missions are truly focused on the benefits and services they provide to, with, and for people, rather than prioritizing the profits of shareholders.”
 - “The bottom line of nonprofit organizations is mission and not profit.”
- Nonprofit organizations have a **PASSION** for the work they do
 - “We feel a sense of passion for the cause that motivates us but that passion also blinds us to the business of running our organizations.”
- Nonprofit organizations have the same **TAX STATUS**

Additional responses included the following:

- Nonprofit organizations are working for the betterment of the community
- Nonprofit organizations provide services that the “for-profit” sector will not provide or doesn't provide
 - “Nonprofit organizations provide services that you can't make much money providing.”
- Nonprofit organizations are under-represented
- Nonprofit organizations have a Board of Directors (often composed of volunteers)
- Nonprofit organizations have a value system based on helping people and improving the community.
 - “Nonprofits are based on the premise of people helping people.”
- Nonprofit organizations have an inferiority complex
- Nonprofit organizations have a sense of entitlement
- Nonprofit organizations have low wages and hard working people working for those low wages

- Nonprofit organizations are working for the common good

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

The top five responses included the following:

- The Nonprofit sector should be **COLLABORATIVE, COORDINATED,** and **UNIFIED** (the sector should have **ONE VOICE** including collaborative publicizing, communication among all nonprofits, and one website listing all nonprofits)
 - “The nonprofit sector should be a coordinated effort to meet the health, educational, social, environmental, civic, cultural, and recreational needs of the community – by and for the community.”
- The Nonprofit sector should have **ADEQUATE RESOURCES** available to successfully complete the work (financial and people)
- The Nonprofit sector should be **RECOGNIZED** and **APPRECIATED** for the work that it is accomplishing
 - “Nonprofits should work to increase visibility and respect for the sector, thereby improving funding opportunities, building collaborative capacity, and attracting employees to the work.”
 - “The nonprofit sector should be recognized as a professional and legitimate sector.”
 - “The nonprofit sector should receive recognition as a ‘giver’ and not just as a ‘taker.’”
- The Nonprofit sector should have better **ACCOUNTABILITY**
- The Nonprofit sector should have fewer organizations and more **MERGERS**

Additional responses included the following:

- The nonprofit sector should have best practices available
- The nonprofit sector should offer an education process for employees (degrees, trainings, workshops, etc.)
- The nonprofit sector should avoid “cut-throat competition”
- The nonprofit sector should value all areas within the sector and all types of nonprofit organizations (big or small – wealthy or poor)
- The nonprofit sector should serve as a clearinghouse for information
- The nonprofit sector should have group benefit packages
- “The nonprofit sector should be providing cutting edge services to the community.”
- The nonprofit sector should be ethical
- “The nonprofit sector should have increased visibility which will facilitate collaboration and increased visibility will decrease duplication and increase cohesion.”
- “The nonprofit sector should be sharing resources, unified at the local, state, and national level with a diversified voice representing diverse opinions.”

3. What are the obstacles common to all nonprofits?

The top five responses included the following:

- The nonprofit sector **LACKS FINANCIAL RESOURCES** and therefore **LACKS ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE**
 - “The nonprofit sector is especially lacking in multi-year funding opportunities.”
 - “The nonprofit sector suffers from the perception that ‘administrative costs’ are bad and unnecessary.”
- The nonprofit sector **LACKS COLLABORATION** and **BREEDS COMPETITION**
- The nonprofit sector has **DIFFICULTY MEASURING SUCCESS, DOCUMENTING OUTCOMES,** and **BEING ACCOUNTABLE** for the work
- The nonprofit sector has **DIFFICULTY FINDING** and **RETAINING GOOD STAFF** and **VOLUNTEERS**
- The nonprofit sector **LACKS TRAINING** and **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Additional responses included the following:

- The nonprofit sector lacks a positive public perception and has a poor reputation
- The nonprofit sector battles redundancy of services
- The nonprofit sector lacks technology expertise
- The nonprofit sector lacks leadership (particularly incoming leaders)
 - “Nonprofit leadership is not treated as a career choice.”
- The nonprofit sector is overwhelmed with day-to-day work
 - “The nonprofit sector is dealing with day-to-day work and it prevents advocacy of the sector as a whole.”
 - “The nonprofit sector has time constraints for planning and thinking creatively.”
- The nonprofit sector has a hierarchy of nonprofit organizations, usually based on money
- The nonprofit sector lacks affordable benefits
- The nonprofit sector lacks business competence
- The nonprofit sector lacks partnerships with the business community

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

The top five responses include the following:

- Unite as **ONE VOICE** with the nonprofit sub-sectors working together
- Foster **COLLABORATION** within the nonprofit sector
- Facilitate **MERGING** of nonprofit organizations to eliminate competition and duplication of services
- Develop **ONE CLEARINGHOUSE** for information (create web bulletins, message boards, blogs, etc.)
 - “I think that having a clearinghouse would help identify which organizations are providing the same or similar services. Perhaps there could be room for collaboration or a merger. It would mean more funding for a concentrated cause.”
- Facilitate the **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT** of **AAN** and **SAAN** and advocate that nonprofit organizations become members of these organizations

Additional responses included the following:

- Hold town halls annually across the State of Arizona
- Provide leadership development opportunities, particularly for up and coming leaders in the nonprofit sector
 - “No child grows up and says that they want to run a nonprofit. We want to change that. Phoenix is fortunate to have the ASU Center for Nonprofit Leadership and Management and we have nothing here in Tucson.”
- Increase communication within the nonprofit sector
- Educate nonprofits about accountability and provide more data about outcomes
- Increase nonprofit salaries
- Develop better marketing for the nonprofit sector
 - “Nonprofits have a positive message to get out to the public and nonprofits need to be recognized for the good work that they do.”
- Collectively meet with local media
- Lobby, lobby, lobby
- Facilitate joint fundraising efforts

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

The top five responses include the following:

- **CHANGE THE “CONVERSATION”** with the nonprofit sector portrayed as **VALUE ADDED**
 - Hire an image consultant to re-make the sector’s image
 - Develop “The Apprentice Nonprofit” (based on the NBC television reality show)
- Facilitate **MERGERS** to reduce competition and duplication of services
- Establish **OUTCOMES** and **STANDARDS** of **ACCOUNTABILITY**
 - “Nonprofits need to develop effective impact measurements to support their message.”
- Create a **NONPROFIT RESOURCE CENTER** in Tucson to provide professional education, nonprofit management skills, and board and staff training
- Develop **AAN and SAAN** and facilitate nonprofit participation in them
 - “AAN operates as a nonprofit matchmaker; facilitating, sharing, training, and collaborating.”

Additional responses include the following:

- Increase salaries in the nonprofit sector
- Adopt the town hall model as an annual event in Arizona
- Nonprofits need to involve themselves in the political process, including lobbying
 - “Nonprofit organizations need to engage in dialogue with government and the private sector about the value of nonprofits.”
- Create an MSO to consolidate back office operations
- Play a bigger role in the business community
- Fund Pima Community College or the University of Arizona to provide nonprofit training
- Form like-minded alliances specific to each constituency
- Eliminate taxes and fees paid by nonprofit organizations

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