



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



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

**YUMA, ARIZONA**  
**SEPTEMBER 2006**



## Town Hall on the Nonprofit Sector - Yuma, Arizona SEPTEMBER 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 Yuma Town Hall conducted in September 2006 in partnership with the Yuma Area Nonprofit Institute (YANPI).



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 30 participants gathered to discuss the state of the nonprofit sector in Yuma County and southwestern Arizona. The event began with a welcome from Madeleine Coil, Executive Director of the United Way of Yuma County. Patrick McWhorter, President & CEO of the Alliance, then outlined the history of the Alliance and provided information about Alliance's next steps across Arizona.

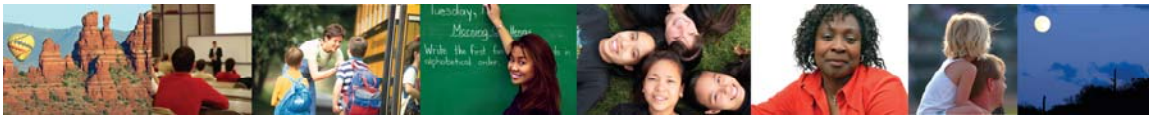
Patrick then began his facilitation of the Town Hall by walking the participants through an Arizona nonprofit timeline that was posted on the wall. The timeline included Arizona historical information along with the growth and development of the Arizona nonprofit sector including establishment of the Red Cross

and the Parent Teacher Association in Arizona, along with the beginning of the Arizona Community Foundation and the Arizona State University Center for Nonprofit Leadership and Management in 1999.

Patrick then asked the 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 this year's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hospice in Yuma, the establishment of Greater Foothills Helping Hands in 1995, the start of the Yuma Community Foundation in 1994, and the beginning of the United Way of Yuma County in 1943.

After the timeline exercise, Patrick 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.



## Yuma 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 faced with **RESOURCE LIMITATIONS**
  - “We need unrestricted sustainable funding.”
  - “We are always looking for resources to expand and provide more services.”
  - “We are forced to generate funds from an activity or service that we provide.”
  - “We have limited paid staff.”
  - “Nonprofits do not have administrative money to pay for salaries.”
  - “Nonprofits need sustainable funding.”
- Nonprofit organizations work to **IMPROVE the QUALITY of LIFE**
  - “Our primary goal is to help the community in various capacities.”
  - “We meet community needs.”
  - “Nonprofits make the community a better place to live.”
  - “We work toward the goal of serving and improving the community.”
  - “Nonprofits are creating a better environment for the community.”
  - “Nonprofits support and administer social programs in the community for the benefit of the community.”
  - “We are helping individuals and families on a daily basis.”
- Nonprofit organizations utilize **VOLUNTEERS**
  - “We are constantly recruiting and trying to maintain volunteers.”
- Nonprofit organizations **SERVE the NEEDS of the COMMUNITY** that are not provided for by the government or the for-profit sector
  - “Nonprofit organizations provide services that government and the for-profit sector cannot or will not provide.”

- Nonprofit organizations need to **GET the WORD OUT**
  - “We struggle to achieve public awareness.”
  - “Nonprofits have a hard time generating recognition.”

Additional responses included the following:

- Nonprofits are tax exempt organizations.
- Nonprofit organizations are mission driven.
- “Nonprofits lack political power.”

## 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 **ADEQUATELY FUNDED**
  - “We need enough resources to meet our missions.”
  - “Nonprofits are constantly looking for a continuing source of stable funding.”
  - “We lack availability of funding sources.”
  - “All nonprofits will have sufficient staff and funding to provide services without having to skimp.”
  - “We need standard pay and benefits for tax-exempt employees.”
  - “We look for adequate funding to stabilize and enhance the viability of organizations.”
- The nonprofit sector should **COLLABORATE**
  - “We should encourage collaboration because of limited resources that are available to nonprofits.”
  - “Support each other!”
  - “Work together for the common good.”
  - “We need to collaborate to avoid duplication.”
  - “Nonprofits must unify as a sector.”
  - “Work together in collaboration with little or no duplication of services.”
  - “We must work together for the common good of all.”
  - “We need coordination and communication.”
- The nonprofit sector needs to be more **VISIBLE and BETTER RESPECTED**
  - “We should be recognized as valid and equal members of the community.”
  - “We are struggling with credibility.”
  - “Nonprofits need to continue promoting their work.”
  - “Nonprofits need to educate the community about their organizations and let the community know what we do.”

- “Everyone in the community needs to know or learn about what services are available to them.”
- The nonprofit sector needs **VOLUNTEERS**
  - “We must always have plenty of volunteers.”
- The nonprofit sector needs better **ADVOCACY**
  - “Nonprofits need to be strong advocates for the sector.”
  - “We need to be telling our stories.”

Additional responses included the following:

- Nonprofits need to focus more on accountability.
- “Nonprofits need ongoing technical assistance and support.”

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

The top five responses included the following:

- The nonprofit sector **LACKS FUNDING**
  - “We seek funding for long-term growth.”
  - “We are constantly looking for new avenues for funding.”
  - “We have inadequate funds available for capacity building and administrative expenses.”
  - “Funding predictability is a problem.”
  - “We’re always looking for money.”
  - “We need funding especially in the area of administration.”
- Nonprofits **LACK VISIBILITY and RECOGNITION**
  - “We have a problem convincing the public that our mission is important.”
  - “The community doesn’t know who we are.”
  - “There is a public perception that nonprofits can’t make a profit.”
  - “We lack recognition of the significance of the nonprofit sector.”
  - “We need to find our voice.”
  - “We need community buy-in.”
  - “We struggle with the public’s perception of what we do and who we are, as well as their lack of understanding of our monetary needs.”
- The nonprofit sector is forced to **COMPETE**
  - “There is competition for the same dollars.”
  - “We are fighting each other for funding.”
  - “Turf battles are a problem.”

- “There is a lack of cooperation among nonprofits.”
- “We are territorial.”
- Nonprofits lack adequate **MANPOWER**
  - “We need to raise-up leaders and pass on support to the next generation of nonprofit leaders.”
  - “We lack human resources.”
  - “Nonprofits need adequate pay with benefits.”
- Nonprofits need better **PUBLIC AWARENESS and EDUCATION**
  - “We lack community education in terms of the services that we provide and the cost and expenses associated with our services.”

Additional responses included the following:

- Nonprofits struggle with scandals.
- “Government interferes with the sector.”

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

The top five responses included the following:

- Facilitate **COLLABORATION and COMMUNICAION**
  - “Nonprofits need to work together and share information.”
  - “We should create avenues for interaction and sharing of ideas.”
  - “Join forces.”
  - “We need better communication.”
  - “Nonprofits need to network to gain understanding of other organizations and what they are doing.”
  - “We should focus on bonding together with other organizations to raise our concerns and issues.”
  - “Collaborate!”
- Develop **BETTER RECOGNITION and COMMUNITY EDUCATION** opportunities
  - “We should be working together for recognition.”
  - “We need to let the community know who we are.”
  - “We need better public awareness.”
  - “The sector should be highlighting model organizations.”
  - “Marketing, marketing, marketing”

- Support the **ALLIANCE of ARIZONA NONPROFITS**
  - “Utilize collectivity which has the potential to reduce organizational costs.”
  - “Support collective bargaining.”
- Develop a **COMMON VOICE**
  - “Nonprofits should focus on developing one voice.”
- Work with the **STATE LEGISLATURE and government**
  - “Nonprofits need to voice their opinions in the Legislature.”

Additional responses included the following:

- “The sector should develop better training opportunities for employees and potential nonprofit leaders.”
- “Increase accountability.”
- “We must stop using the term ‘nonprofit.’”

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

The top five responses include the following:

- Promote **COLLABORATION**
  - “We should work together to support each other.”
  - “Nonprofits need to work closely with government, media, and the private sector to solve social problems.”
  - “We need to collaborate with each other to ensure that we are working together.”
  - “Let’s support collaborative efforts.”
  - “We should consider join efforts to cut costs including advertising, benefits, etc.”
- Develop **ONE VOICE** for the nonprofit sector
  - “Nonprofits need on voice to show the political and economic impact of the nonprofit sector.”
  - “We need a single lobbying voice.”
  - “We must work closely with government as one unified sector.”
  - “We need a single voice representing common causes.”
  - “We should be voicing our ideas and opinions to state government.”

- Develop **EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES** for the community
  - “We need sector marketing and education.”
  - “Nonprofits need to ‘connect’ with the community.”
  
- Consider **RENAMING the SECTOR**
  - “We must change our ‘nonprofit’ label.”
  - “Collective decision to eliminate use of the word ‘nonprofit.’”
  
- Facilitate **CONSOLIDATION and COLLABORATION** among nonprofits
  - Continue the collaborative efforts to reduce and eliminate duplication
  - Consider mergers

Additional responses include the following:

- Work across the sectors
- Rename the “nonprofit” sector

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