

ARIZONA TOWN HALL FACT SHEET

Arizona Town Hall is a private nonprofit civic organization created in 1962 to establish, through research and discussion, an ever-increasing body of Arizona citizens accustomed to the processes of searching analysis and well-informed on the many facets of the state's economic, cultural and social life. It is governed by a sixty-two member board of directors, representing a composite of leadership from Arizona's fifteen counties and from approximately twenty diverse occupations and interests. Board members are elected to two-year staggered terms with bylaw stipulation that no board member may serve more than two consecutive two-year terms. There are currently over 1,500 Town Hall members throughout the state. Membership is attained only by participation in an Arizona Town Hall.

Twice each year the Arizona Town Hall brings together a wide cross section of approximately 150 prominent Arizona citizens to consider and discuss a topic of major concern to Arizona's future. The 87th Arizona Town Hall is scheduled for October 30– November 2, 2005. The subject is “Maximizing Arizona’s Success in the Biomedical sciences and Biotechnology.” Topics are chosen almost a year in advance, using input from an annual poll of the statewide membership. One of the state's three universities then develops a comprehensive research document on the subject. This important contribution by the universities plays a strategic role in the development of each Town Hall.

The Town Hall will be at the Grand Canyon.

Since the very specific Town Hall process cannot encompass all of Arizona's more than four million citizens at one time, individuals are nominated for invitation to each session by the sixty-two Board members. The 150 invitees are considered from among more than 2,000 recommendations for each session. *If an individual is interested in taking part, they either should contact one of those Board members, expressing interest, or send a résumé to the Town Hall office for consideration. Greatest consideration for invitations are given to those who are very active in their communities with the realization that those are the individuals who will have the greatest opportunities to disseminate the information to their communities following a Town Hall as well as to help assure that the Town hall recommendations are enacted.*

The Maricopa Community College District is allocated up to five students and one staff for each Town Hall. The Center for Civic Participation is responsible for distributing the applications to each of the Colleges in the District and, with the Student Life Directors, choosing the appropriate candidates for the Town Hall. Student eligibility for the program includes a recommendation from the Student Life Director or the Honors Coordinator, a completed application form, current and continued enrollment at an MCCD campus with a minimum of six credit hours and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above to be maintained during both Fall and Spring semesters.

The Town Halls follow a carefully developed process. The background research is sent to invitees well in advance of each three-day conference. Those Town Hall participants then meet in small groups for four sessions over a two-day period, all groups using the same discussion questions. On the third day, at the close of these informal, no-holds-barred discussion sessions, participants meet in plenary session to adopt a final report of findings and recommendations. That official report is then bound with the research and distributed to Town Hall members, all members of the Arizona Legislature and other elected officials, all public libraries and to the general public.