



NEWS RELEASE

COMMUNITIES INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN NEW "FIVE COMMUNITIES PROJECT" May 16 Deadline to Submit Letters of Intent to Center for the Future of Arizona

PHOENIX – The Center for the Future of Arizona has announced the "Five Communities Project," an initiative to help communities develop action plans and secure national funding to move them forward in areas such as job creation, education, the environment and civic engagement.

CFA, a Phoenix-based nonprofit organization led by former Arizona State University President Lattie Coor, will work collaboratively with five communities to develop their action plans. In addition, CFA will jointly apply for national funding to implement the five plans over a three-year period. The center is interested in communities that offer the most cost-effective financial strategies possible given the feasibility and potential impact of the ideas offered. CFA suggests that funding levels could range from approximately \$25,000 to \$100,000 annually for each of the five communities over a three-year funding period. Because it is premature to define the funding needs of communities for action plans that have not yet been developed, the range is only a guideline.

All proposed projects must support specific goals that reflect the Gallup Arizona Poll findings. The poll and resulting "The Arizona We Want" report previously released by Gallup and CFA provide a clear and compelling picture of what citizens think about life in Arizona communities and what they want for the future.

In making the announcement, CFA Chairman and CEO Lattie Coor invited interested parties to **submit letters of intent by May 16, 2011**. Those eligible to apply include entities with clear geographic boundaries such as municipalities, school districts, tribal communities, economic development regions, religious communities and large neighborhood organizations.

CFA hopes to receive proposals that reconnect citizens with each other and their leaders, and expand the concept of citizen involvement beyond voting and volunteering. "The Center for the Future of Arizona believes strongly in the strength of local communities, the talent available, and the advantage of coming together with a unified vision for the state," Coor said.

Detailed information and guidelines are available at www.thearizonawewant.org. In addition, CFA, in partnership with local and regional organizations, will host regional workshops prior to the May 16 deadline to provide information and answer questions about the Five Communities Project.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

EAST VALLEY/TEMPE: Wed., April 13 (10:00 a.m. - noon)
Host: East Valley Partnership
Location: ASU Tempe Campus, Old Main, 400 E. Tyler Mall

YUMA: Thurs., April 14 (10:00 a.m. - noon)
Host: Yuma Community Foundation
Location: Yuma Main Library, Room A, 2951 S. 21st Dr.

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FLAGSTAFF: Thurs., April 21 (1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)
Host: United Way of Northern Arizona
Location: City of Flagstaff - Flagstaff Aquaplex, Community Room, 1702 N. Fourth St.

WEST VALLEY/AVONDALE: Thurs., April 28 (9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.)
Host: City of Avondale
American Sports Center, Multipurpose Room, 755 N. 114th Ave.

CENTRAL PHOENIX: Thurs., April 28 (2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.)
Host: Phoenix Community Alliance
Location: Phoenix Community Alliance, Boardroom, 234 N. Central Ave.

TUCSON: Mon., May 2 (7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.)
Host: Community Foundation for Southern Arizona
Location: YWCA Frances McClelland Leadership Center, 525 N. Bonita Ave.

SELECTION PROCESS

From the pool of letters of intent, the center and its selection committee will identify up to 20 community projects to undergo a feasibility assessment. From these, 10 finalists will be selected to develop a final proposal. Each of the 10 finalists will receive a \$5,000 development grant to help offset the cost of finalizing their grant proposals.

In addition, the 10 finalists will be honored guests at the September 22-23, 2011 National Conference on Citizenship's 66th Annual Conference. The two-day event will be co-hosted by the Center for the Future of Arizona on the Phoenix and Tempe campuses of Arizona State University. This will mark the first time the annual conference will be held outside of Washington, D.C.

The conference will feature a national roster of keynote speakers and panelists, as well as the 10 Five Communities Project finalists. Activities will include Arizona's second annual "Day of Civic Action." Additional details and registration information will be announced in the coming months.

CFA was selected from 10 finalists around the country to host the conference because of its leadership in conducting civic engagement research and putting it into action.

BACKGROUND

The Five Communities Project builds upon previous work by the Center for the Future of Arizona related to civic involvement. The October 2009 Gallup Arizona Poll commissioned by CFA identified several areas of consensus regarding what Arizonans want for the state. CFA established a citizens' agenda called *The Arizona We Want* based upon the Gallup research.

Proposals for the Five Communities Project must support one or more of the eight goals that make up *The Arizona We Want* citizens' agenda. They include creating quality jobs, making Arizona "the place to be" for talented young people, preparing all citizens for careers in the 21st century workforce, protecting Arizona's natural environment, empowering citizens and increasing civic involvement, and building a modern, effective transportation system and infrastructure.

"The Five Communities Project is the natural next step," Coor said. "None of the eight goals can be achieved without greater citizen involvement and a much greater sense of connection to one another."

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The 2010 "Arizona Civic Health Index" report found Arizona ranks quite low on virtually all major indicators used to measure civic health in the United States. These include following or discussing news regularly, exchanging favors with neighbors regularly, registering to vote and voter turnout. The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) and the Center for the Future of Arizona last September released the report, which uses data from the NCoC and the U.S. Census Bureau.

In addition, the Gallup Arizona Poll found:

Only 12 percent of Arizonans believe people in their community care about each other.
Only 10 percent believe their elected officials represent their interests.
Only 10 percent think their elected officials are doing a good job.

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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF ARIZONA

The Center for the Future of Arizona (www.arizonafuture.org) is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Phoenix. It is helping to shape and define Arizona's future through an action-oriented agenda focused on issues and topics critical to the state. More than a think tank, the center is an independent "do tank" that combines public-policy research with collaborative partnerships and initiatives that will create opportunities and quality of life for all Arizonans.

During the past 18 months, the Center for the Future of Arizona has systematically worked to increase citizen involvement and reconnect citizens with their leaders. Center representatives have made more than 100 presentations, encouraging organizations to adopt the eight goals of *The Arizona We Want* citizens' agenda as part of their work and made them part of public discussions and state policy decisions.

Eighty organizations and 10,000 citizens to date have taken the Gallup Arizona Poll online to compare their personal and organizational views with the collective views of all Arizonans.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP (NCoC)

The National Conference on Citizenship (www.ncoc.net) was founded in 1946 and chartered by Congress in 1953. Its mission is to advance the nation's civic life. NCoC produces "America's Civic Health Index," an annual study that measures America's civic habits across a wide range of indicators in an effort to strengthen citizen participation in their communities, states and nation. In 2010 NCoC also partnered with 13 states and the Center for the Future of Arizona to publish state civic health studies.