



PROJECT CIVIL DISCOURSE

Project Civil Discourse, created in 2008, is a statewide initiative of the Arizona Humanities Council (AHC) to create respectful dialogue and discourse on public issues. Working in collaboration with organizations throughout Arizona, Project Civil Discourse brings individuals and groups together to apply proven skills of collaborative problem-solving to enhance and improve debate and discussion about important issues that affect our future. By bringing such diverse partner organizations together, we are able to utilize different mediation strategies to create innovative public programs.

Some of our partners include:

- American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Arizona
- Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education
- Arizona Association for Conflict Resolution
- Morrison Institute for Public Policy & College for Public Programs, Arizona State University
- The O'Connor House
- Maricopa County Colleges, Center for Civic Participation

Project Civil Discourse townhalls and forums have included “Speaking, Not Shouting: A Community Conversation about Health Care Reform,” Arizona’s Sales Tax Referendum Town Hall: A Demonstration of Civil Dialogue and Discussion,” and “A Community Conversation on Immigration.”

AHC also created the **Project Civil Discourse** Speakers Bureau to provide issue-related insights and to engage participants in thoughtful discussion. The AHC Community Book Discussion program includes a list of book titles that unite humanities content with civil discourse techniques.

With support from the National Endowment for the Humanities’ *We the People* grants, AHC awards **Project Civil Discourse**-based Project Grant proposals that promote critical thinking and community conversation. Past awardees include Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education’s *Project Citizen Program*, and Aguila Youth Leadership’s *2010 Annual Leadership Symposium*.

Project Civil Discourse gives people the opportunity to voice diverging perspectives, to listen and to be listened to, and to better understand each other’s points of view. To date, PCD-related programs and grants have engaged over 2,500 participants from across Arizona.

Looking ahead, in addition to conducting more townhalls on timely subjects, **Project Civil Discourse** and partner, ASU College of Public Programs, are creating a practical workbook on civil discourse and mediation strategies designed for local organizations. **Project Civil Discourse** is also cited as a resource for the *Christina-Taylor Green Promote Civil Discourse Bill of 2011*. This bill would encourage schools across the nation to help students develop the capacity to conduct and engage in civil debate. Ultimately, the Arizona Humanities Council will continue to provide these value programs to the public through the **Project Civil Discourse** initiative to promote a just and civil society, and to preserve democracy not only here in Arizona but nationwide.

