Strengthening Democracy through Citizen Engagement:
Insights for Public Administrators

**Report to the
Ewing Marion Kauffman
Foundation**

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NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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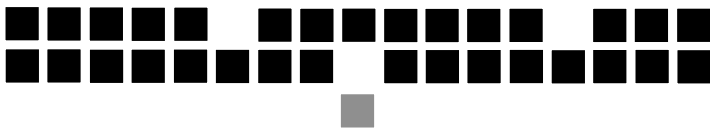
Strengthening Democracy through Citizen Engagement: Insights for Public Administrators

Panel

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FOREWORD

Democracy cannot thrive without a thoroughly engaged citizenry. Recognizing the immense importance of citizen engagement, the National Academy of Public Administration issued a June 1999 report entitled *A Government to Trust and Respect,* which urged public officials to take strong measures to rebuild the poor relationship between citizens and government before effective democratic government becomes steadily harder to achieve. A 10-member Academy Panel, chaired by former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul A. Volcker, produced the report. Focusing on the need to improve the performance of government itself, the report argued that citizens and government must reach agreement on the measure of good government.

In June 2000, the Academy appointed another Panel to identify effective ways to implement the findings of the prior report, with particular attention paid to youth and other highly disaffected groups of citizens. Members of the Panel included Gail Christopher (Chair), Former Executive Director, Institute for Government Innovation, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; Chris Gates, President, National Civic League; Edie Goldenberg, Professor, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan; Elizabeth Hollander, Executive Director, Campus Compact, Brown University; and Brian O'Connell, Professor, University College of Citizenship and Public Service, Tufts University. The project was funded by a grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

On behalf of the Academy, I extend our deepest thanks to the Panel and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation for their efforts to make this project a success and a meaningful contribution to more effective citizen engagement.
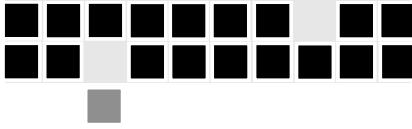
Howard M. Messner
President

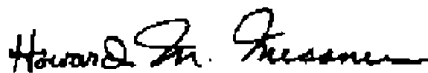The National Academy of Public Administration is an independent non-profit, non-partisan corporation chartered by Congress. Founded in 1967, it provides trusted advice to leaders on issues of governance and public management. The Academy works closely with all three branches of government at the federal, state, and local levels; with philanthropic and non-governmental organizations; and with foreign and international institutions that request advice or assistance.

The Academy's 500 Fellows are elected from the nation's top policy makers, public administrators, and scholars of public policy and public administration. They include public managers and scholars, business executives and labor leaders, current and former cabinet officers, members of Congress, governors, mayors, state legislators, and diplomats.

THE ISSUE: GETTING TO EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE THROUGH EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Throughout our society there are serious concerns about the state of our citizenship and government. Fortunately, there are many efforts underway to understand and address the various challenges to our democracy.

Sorting out what is really wrong and what can be done about it is clouded by a wide range of opinions about the state of our society, the effectiveness or usefulness of government, and whether anything can be done to turn the public around. Some views and the publicity they seem to attract and generate make it particularly hard to be objective and hopeful.

Georgie Anne Geyer, in her recent popular book, *Americans No More: The Death of Citizenship*, provides a frightening analysis of the state of citizen involvement and influence in this country.

Stephen C. Craig titles his book, *Malevolent Leaders: Popular Discontent in America*, and writes, "We know for a fact that Americans have been mad as hell for quite a few years. What remains to be seen is whether they're prepared to let their leaders know that they refuse to take it anymore."

Daniel Yankelovich begins a *Kettering Review* article with these words: "The American public is in a foul mood. People are frustrated and angry. They are anxious and off balance. They are pessimistic about the future and cynical about all forms of leadership and government."

Even more balanced titles and texts cause one to be discouraged. A Charles Stewart Mott Foundation report entitled *America's Tattered Tapestry* provides examples of the crushing concerns that cause many to feel helpless and threatened:

•fear that we are a nation devoid of values
•fear that the family as we know it is collapsing

•fear that the children of our inner cities will not live into their twenties
•fear that our promise is lost and that our children will never enjoy a standard of living equal to our own
•fear that our systems of education, government, and medical care cannot meet the needs of today, let alone tomorrow
•fear that the jobs and pensions of today will be gone tomorrow
•fear that there is no way out of the despair and hopelessness brought about by persistent poverty
•fear of competing cultures
•fear of each other
•fear that no one really cares
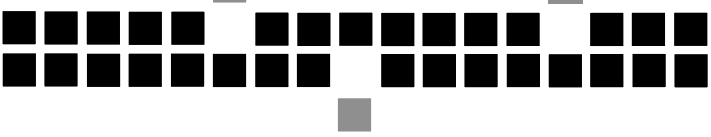
John W. Gardner covered his own list of "grim problems," adding insights into the negative social and political realities that thwart optimism and progress:

The arena of national politics is dispiriting. Pit bull partisanship. The sleight-of-hand of the image manipulators. Politicians walking the tightrope over an angry electorate.

The problems are frightening but in themselves are not as perplexing as the questions they raise concerning our capacity to gather our forces and act. The prevailing mood is cynicism. To mobilize the required resources and bear the necessary sacrifices calls for a high level of motivation. Is it possible that our shared values have disintegrated to the point that we can no longer lend ourselves to any worthy common purpose?

Those who struggle to figure out what has gone so wrong and what can be done about it also face a contradiction that seems at first to obscure any possible clarity. On the one hand there is wonderfully encouraging evidence of how many Americans participate as effective volunteers in a vast array of
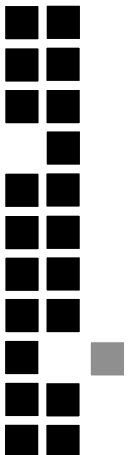
community agencies and national causes. On the other, there is alarming evidence about our negative attitudes about government and our unwillingness to participate in it.

This public schizophrenia was illustrated dramatically in a Kettering Foundation-Harwood Group report called *Citizens and Politics: A View from Main Street America*, which documented the public's sour and often bitter attitudes toward government. Yet it also showed people's distinct willingness to help others through voluntary organizations. The authors state, "civic duty is far from dead…citizens are still actively participating in public life…" but add, "Americans are frustrated about politics—at a depth not previously revealed—and feel pushed out of the whole process."

The consequences that flow from these very different attitudes and behaviors are severe. For example, most things that citizens are trying to do through their voluntary efforts, such as improving education, the environment, health care, civil rights, culture, and prospects for peace, ultimately require a significant government presence. If citizens do not get involved with government, the crises will only get much worse than they already are. We make a terrible mistake if we exaggerate what voluntary activity can do, particularly if it allows us to exaggerate what government need not do. The mistake is compounded seriously when citizens sit on the sidelines as cynics and critics, forgetting that in a democracy we are the primary office holders of government.
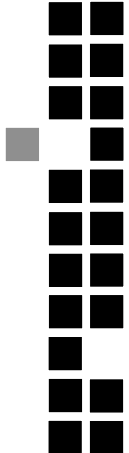
A Healthy Starting Point

Though the contradictions are confusing and disturbing, there is at least the healthy premise that Americans do care about the quality of our communities and nation and are willing to get involved. The large next step is to apply more of that caring and talent to the greater effectiveness of government.
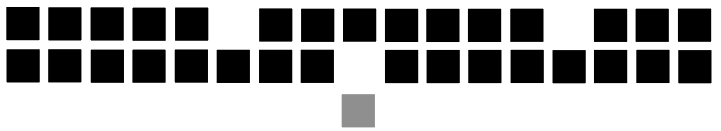
Volunteers usually work together to increase their reach and results. There are more than one million charitable organizations officially registered with the Internal Revenue Service, ranging from small community groups to national crusades. That number does not include most religious congregations, mutual assistance groups, or local chapters of large national organizations, such as the American Cancer Society. Also not counted are the less formal groups involved with everything from prenatal care to cemeteries. Altogether the total is at least three million organizations and growing. Whether one's interest is wildflowers or civil rights, arthritis or clean air, oriental art or literacy, the dying or the unborn, organizations are already at work. If these do not suit our passion, it is still a special characteristic of America that we can go out and start our own.

Another positive sign and building block toward progress in civic engagement is embodied in a one-line statement in an otherwise discouraging report. In a book titled *Why People Don't Trust Government*, from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., dean and editor, discusses the public's loss of confidence in government. However, after giving the statistics and details, Nye provides a helpful balance by adding "the public overwhelmingly thinks the United States is the best place to live [80 percent] and we like our democratic system of government [90 percent]." Concludes Nye, "something is steady."

In the same book, former Harvard President Derek Bok provides fascinating examples of how far off the mark some of our impressions and even some of our largest concerns about government turn out to be. In his chapter "Measuring the Performance of Government," Bok reports on a series of extreme misperceptions, such as "most people estimate that more than 50 cents of every dollar in the social security program is eaten up in overhead. The true figure is less than 2 cents." Bok describes more than 75 "specific objectives of importance to most Americans" [in terms of such things as the economy, housing, and the percentage of students graduating from high school]. He concludes that despite the public's assumptions to the contrary, "the United States has made definite progress over the past few decades in the vast majority of [the 75] cases." He acknowledges that some things are very wrong, but maintains that we can make progress by zeroing in on what is really wrong.

Rationality Can Ease Concern

Even when we focus on some of our toughest problems and worries, it helps to be rational rather than hopeless or mean spirited. For example, some, if not many, of the people who are disillusioned, angry, and even frightened might find their concerns eased if they gained a better perspective on the issues.

Even the fear of crime, which surveys tell us is the gravest worry of more Americans than anything else, yields to citizen outrage and action. People are taking back their neighborhoods and growing more aware that failure to confront crime and such attendant issues as drugs and poverty is no longer tolerable.

Many Americans also are alarmed about the changing makeup of the U.S. population, particularly the new waves of refugees and immigrants. Though the problems that come in their wake are real, it is helpful to realize that most of us are descendants of people who started here in the same circumstances and that much of America's strength stems from the values of immigrants, such as hard work, belief in education, and religious faith. In *The Seeds of Urban Renewal*, Michael Sviridoff wrote eloquently about the positive side of our current population mix: "Masses of new people arrive each day, uplifting forsaken neighborhoods in ways beyond the expectation of earlier and failed urban redevelopment. They demonstrate, as did the older migrations, that new people possessed of a sturdy work ethic and stable families matter more than buildings."

Another example in which understanding may ease concern has to do with the so-called "common values" that so many people seem to espouse. But whose values and exactly what values would these people have us embrace? Many of those who plead for or insist on a return to common beliefs and behavior in worship, patriotism, and unity hold rigidly to their own, often skewed, perceptions of those values. In his book, *One Nation, After All*, Alan Wolfe indicates that Americans still hold to the same basic values and accept that we all must be involved in achieving civility,

including respecting differences in the way people look, speak, and worship.

The central point is that the problems that frustrate, frighten, or distance citizens are the responsibility of citizens to address. The evidence is increasingly clear that progress occurs when citizens get aroused, involved, and organized.

Dorothy Ridings, president and CEO of the Council of Foundations, made an interesting observation about the 2003 All-America City awards, a program of the National Civic League. She wrote, "Those who lament the demise of community in America should have been with me at a very special event this summer where instead of seeing people 'bowling alone'—to use the current phrase that describes those who have lost their sense of community— the doubters would have been bowled over by evidence that civic life is alive and well."

It was also gratifying that the country's response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 included an extraordinary degree of patriotism, unity, and trust in government. At the same time, however, the words of the <u>Boston Globe</u> columnist Eileen McNamara about the municipal elections in New York City and Boston, which took place just two weeks after the planes left Boston and slammed into New York, are worth noting. McNamara wrote, "…in both cities more flags were flown than ballots cast as voters stayed away in droves from the polls on primary election day." Her words put a glaring spotlight on the disconnect that bedevils us all.

Efforts Already Underway

Against all the negativism, cynicism, and worry, there is a lot of good news and a great stirring to get at the sources of what still ails us. These efforts take many forms and entail differing reforms. In the composite, however, they represent encouraging prospects for the country.

Here are just a few examples of the strands of study and activity that may lead to more effective citizenship and governance:
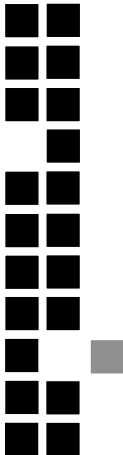
- reform of education at all levels to once again prepare students for a lifetime of active citizenship and service to society
- election reforms, including efforts to boost voter turnout
- campaign finance reform to make elected officials more responsive to their constituents than to their campaign contributors
- reform of the education of public administrators to prepare them for their partnership with citizens and for public-private partnerships' re-emphasis on encouraging young people to enter government service
- neighborhood revitalization
- grassroots organizing
- promotion of volunteer work and philanthropy
- greater protection of freedom of speech and the right of association to enable citizens and their organizations to influence public policies and programs
- civic journalism to encourage the news media to devote more of their time and space to help the public understand and deal with major community issues
- use of the many recent studies, reports, and books that contribute to an understanding of the fundamentals of citizenship, democracy, and pluralism
- teacher and teaching material preparation
- efforts to translate the patriotism and unity of September 11 into continuing participation and impact

Aside from being encouraging in their numbers and seriousness, these examples raise other important considerations, such as:

- Is there more that could be done to call attention to these efforts and their lessons?
- Is there a real, not contrived, common denominator to all or some of these strands?
- Is it best to let these strands proceed without the encumbrance of even informal liaisons? Or are there things that might be done to unite them, even loosely, to produce a sense of shared mission or generate combined power and influence?
- If we could envision and define what success in all these efforts would be, what would it look like? How would the country be changed?

- Is there enough urgency, passion, and mass to achieve the dimensions and power of a real crusade?
- Are the events of September 11 likely to increase public understanding of the role of government over the long term as well as the power of individual acts to "lend a hand?"

John W. Gardner ended his paper, *National Renewal,* with words that might help define what is underway and its importance:

People want meaning in their lives; but in this turbulent era context of meaning is rarely handed to us as a comfortable inheritance. Today we have to build meaning into our lives, and we build it through our commitments. One such commitment is service to one's community. And in a day when so many conscientious citizens actively avoid public life, it is worth adding that running for and serving in elective office is an honorable and courageous commitment.

Let's tell people that there is hope. Let's tell them there's a role for everyone. We can save the family and the children. We know how. We can demand and get accountable government. We can counter the mean-spirited divisiveness that undermines positive action. We can regenerate our shared values. We can release human talent and energy, and renew our institutions.

Now is the time to reach within ourselves, each to his or her own deepest reservoirs of faith and hope. Let's say to everyone who will listen:

"Lend a hand – out of concern for your community, out of love for our country, out of the depths of whatever faith you hold. Lend a hand."

As a people we are capable of laxity and self-indulgence. We are also capable of greatness. We have tremendous resources of strength and spirit – but we need to strike a spark to release that spirit. The time has come.

THE THOUGHT LEADER GATHERING

The questions raised in the first section of this report framed this project funded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. To help answer them, the Academy's Citizen Engagement Panel convened a group of "thought leaders" from a variety of stakeholder organizations from key sectors—government, business, and nonprofit. The goal was to assess what the Academy can do in conjunction with other national organizations to improve attitudes about government and governance as it relates to greater citizen participation, particularly young people and other highly disaffected groups of citizens.

The participants (listed in the Appendix) met on December 5, 2001 at the Academy's conference center in Washington, DC. Before the meeting, the Panel did research on citizenship and trust in government and prepared a background paper entitled *Effective Citizenship and Effective Governance,* which it provided in advance to meeting participants. This paper serves as the preceding section of this report.

The specific questions addressed at the meeting were:

- What are the most promising strands of activity in the field of citizen engagement today?
- Can we identify important gaps?
- Who is doing what?
- What would an engaged citizenry look like? How do we measure civic health?
- Are there useful ways the various actors or strands of activity can interact to produce value added?
- Are there models for collaboration across the strands of activity? What are the conditions for successful collaboration? What are the barriers?
- What might the Academy do to increase the overall impact of disparate strands of activity?

After the meeting, the Panel conducted additional research to help it integrate and synthesize the information collected from the participants. What follows is a summary of the Panel's major findings from this effort, recommendations for action, and a conclusion.

A note about the *In Focus* boxes: Throughout this report are interwoven shaded boxes that focus on important issues addressed or special projects described at the December 5 meeting. One box, for example, examines in more depth how to integrate service learning and civics education. Another looks at how to use technology to increase citizen participation in public decisionmaking. Some boxes spotlight new programs or organizations represented at the meeting and about which public administrators would want to know more. In some cases, the intention is to educate public administrators about organizations that have been around for some time, but with which they may be unfamiliar.

FINDING 1. A CLUSTER OF MOVEMENTS
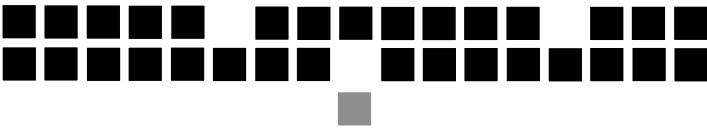
Citizen engagement efforts take many shapes and pursue differing trajectories for reform. It may be useful to think about the subject as a cluster of movements covering different strands of study and activity, each working to produce more effective citizenship and effective governance.

The December 5 meeting produced 11 citizen engagement movements the Panel believes are the most relevant for the public administration community today:

The Trust in Government Movement.
Adherents of this movement worry that mounting public distrust and cynicism are leading to political apathy, depriving our democratic system of the kind of citizen activism that promotes reform. They believe young people turn off when political figures
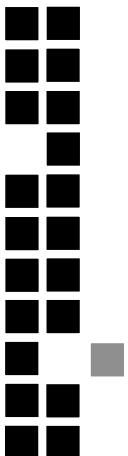
do not "talk straight" or are not "real" with them. The antidote, according to them, is twofold:

1. Improve trust in public officials by forcing candidates for office to adhere to higher standards of honesty and accuracy and pay more attention to issues, avoid personal attacks on opponents, and eschew empty antigovernment rhetoric.
2. Increase public accountability by adopting performance-based management systems that require governments to measure and report progress toward program goals.

Real change will not happen, however, unless government agencies also broaden citizen input into public policymaking and implementation, the first step being to agree on what constitutes good government. The measure of good government, say trust in government supporters, is not whether it does all things well for all people, but whether it does—and does well—those things that are the province of government, as defined by legitimate and open processes of public dialogue and debate. (See *In Focus* on the Institute for Government Innovation at Harvard's John F Kennedy School of Government.)

The Campaign Finance Reform Movement.
According to members of this movement, soft money is a principal cause of mistrust and cynicism about our current system of government. They say many Americans are convinced that powerful special interests control the political process through large campaign donations and question why they should bother to participate. In March 2002, President Bush signed a ban on unlimited donations to national political parties that could come to be the biggest change in the nation's campaign fundraising laws since the post-Watergate reforms. While the law took effect after the 2002 elections, it still faces considerable court challenges from opponents who contend the legislation is unconstitutional. Eleven of these suits brought by 84 plaintiffs were consolidated into one case: McConnell v. FEC. The U.S. Supreme Court is scheduled to hear oral arguments in September 2003, and its decision will determine the structure of the campaign finance system. The campaign finance reform movement, however, is not just about what is happening in Washington, DC. Its members also are concerned about the huge amounts of money pouring into state and local campaigns, which are not covered under the new law, and may get even larger if corporate and other large donors shift soft money contributions to state organizations. Currently, campaign finance reform advocates are trying to pass companion legislation in a number of states. The National Civic League reports the number of cities with campaign finance rules that cover more than contribution disclosure increased from in 75 in 1998 to 134 in 2002.

The Voter Participation Movement.
Members of this movement are concerned about declining voter participation rates in our nation, particularly among young adults and within vulnerable population groups, such as low-income minorities, those born in other countries, and the disabled. In the 2000 presidential election, only one-third of citizens earning less than $10,000 per year voted, only half the rate of people earning more than $50,000. In the case of Americans age 18 to 24, only 28 percent did. The reasons people do not vote are complex, ranging from a belief one's vote does not count to voter disenfranchisement. Calls for reform fall into four categories: upgrading election technology and machinery, establishing uniform standards for casting and counting votes, improving voter education and participation, and passing federal and state legislation to provide greater access and accommodation for a nation of diversified voters. In October 2002, President Bush signed the Help America Vote Act of 2002 into law. This legislation authorized $3.9 billion dollars to improve state and local election systems. Every state also has introduced some type of reform legislation.

The Community Service Movement.
Members of this movement argue that community service is a foundation for other types of participation—the first step a young person takes toward a lifetime of
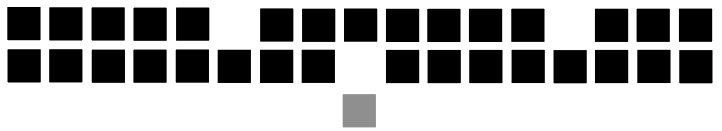
civic engagement and involvement. Millions of Americans make time to do some form of community service, whether it is volunteering at their church soup kitchen, working at a community-based organization dealing with homelessness, or participating in a grassroots coalition trying to stop global warming. In May 2002, a bipartisan group of House congressional leaders introduced the Citizen Service Act of 2002. The legislation reforms and extends the Corporation for National Service, which currently engages two million Americans each year in service to meet critical community needs. During his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush called upon all Americans to devote the equivalent of two years over the course of their lifetimes to serving their communities. At the same time, he created USA Freedom Corps, a

comprehensive service initiative to provide more opportunities for Americans to serve at home and abroad. AmeriCorps is a network of service programs that seek to improve education, public safety, health, and the environment. Senior Corps mobilizes older citizens to address community issues. Some in the community service movement are suggesting that the way in which young people now approach service in their communities—participatory (rather than hierarchical), shared (rather than individual), inclusive (instead of a few), and specific (instead of generic)—may ultimately lead to a new style of governance, one more suitable for solving some of the social problems our society finds so intractable.

The Civics Education Movement.
Members of this movement believe a major

## *In Focus*
Increasing Trust in Government:
The Example of the Institute for Government Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government
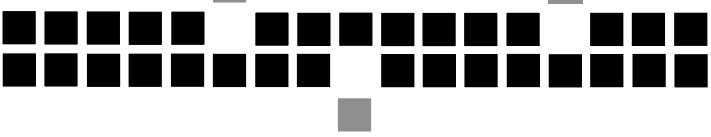
The Ford Foundation launched the Innovations in American Government Program at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government in 1985. Since that time, the program has become a significant force in identifying and promoting excellence and creativity in the public sector. Through its annual awards competition, administered by the Kennedy School and the Council for Excellence in Government, the program has recognized 295 innovative government programs and awarded them $17.9 million in grants. By offering recognition and grants, the program provides concrete evidence that government can work to improve the quality of life for citizens. By highlighting exemplary models of government innovation, the program catalyzes continued progress in addressing the nation's most pressing public concerns.

In 2001, the Ford Foundation presented $50 million to Harvard to endow the Institute for Government Innovation. The Institute houses and funds the Innovations in American Government Program and serves as the hub for a global network of individuals dedicated to excellence in government: innovators, students, policy analysts, and journalists. As the Institute develops, it will host conferences and training sessions for practitioners, produce publications, establish research fellowships, and help forge institutional alliances to foster innovation in governments around the world.

On the 15th anniversary of the Innovations in American Government Awards in April 2002, the then-PricewaterhouseCoopers' Endowment for the Business of Government released a new book, entitled *Innovation*, which presents lessons learned from the Innovations in American Government Program.

***Website: www.innovations.harvard.edu***
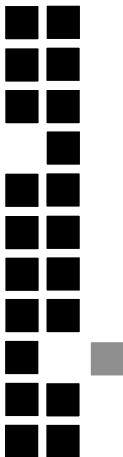
contributing factor to the lack of political awareness and interest among today's youth is the absence of a strong "civics" or government curriculum in the schools. Advocates for this approach suggest that civics instruction can be effective with the right curriculum and teaching methods. They would like to make mastery of basic civic information a condition for high school graduation and devote more resources for teacher training, including identification and dissemination of information about the most effective civic education practices and programs in the country. The Bush Administration formed a working group to create a strategy for restoring civics education in American classrooms. They intend to use the memory of September 11 to galvanize support, and could utilize some combination of federal incentives to states, expansion of service learning, and model civics curricula—plus advice on how to use it for teachers, as well as competitions and prizes to interested students.
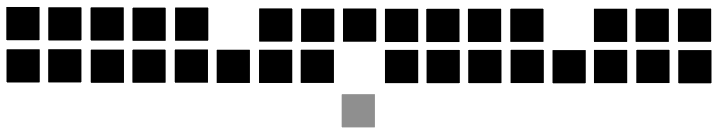
The Service Learning Movement. Service learning provides young people with opportunities to engage in activities and projects that integrate and put into context what they learn in the classroom with "real world" experiences in their communities. The service learning concept has caught on at both the K-12 and higher education levels. Signs of its popularity: Several states have adopted educational policies requiring it in the public schools. Also, Campus Compact, the national organization that promotes service learning at the postsecondary level, counts as members more than 800 public and private two- and four-year colleges and universities across the nation. Because service learning does not always have a civic dimension, the movement is now headed in the direction of creating more "engaged campuses" that would expand traditional service learning programs in ways that would encourage more community and social change. Campus Compact, the Corporation for National Service, and the American Association of Colleges now list civic renewal as critical to their missions. Widespread adoption of this shift will be hampered, however, by the many campus cultures that view service learning as irrelevant to promotion and tenure decisions, and where "social change" initiatives are seen as highly controversial.

The Diversity and Inclusion Movement. This movement is concerned about individuals who have little faith in or have dropped out entirely from the American system of governance, because they have felt excluded or discriminated against. Young people want to believe that they live in a socially just, culturally diverse, racially integrated society, and that our governmental decisionmaking processes are open and accessible to all. Members of this movement are working along several tracks. One is to expand the effective participation of minority and other disadvantaged groups in the nation's political and public policy arenas. A second is to improve the socioeconomic status of these groups, which means addressing serious social inequities in our system, including the widening income gap between rich and poor. A third is to promote communications and relationships across racial, ethnic, and other lines to strengthen the nation's pluralistic society.

The Sustainable Communities Movement. For this movement, flourishing communities are the foundation of a healthy society and the route to them is balancing social wellbeing, economic opportunity, and environmental quality. To members, the fundamentals of sustainable communities are based in process—how people work together to build community, what information they can access, who is involved in making decisions, and how well communities work cooperatively to address shared problems that transcend their borders. In their model, community-based public dialogue, planning, priority setting, and implementation are key. This means bringing people together to identify, prioritize, and learn about key issues in their community; develop a vision of what they want their community to be; set goals for realizing that vision; establish indicators for measuring progress; identify the resources needed to reach the goals; and take actions that will advance them. Establishing civic indicators is particularly critical. Without them, advo-
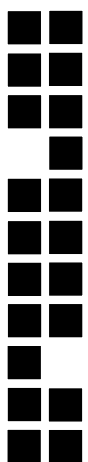
Service learning and Civic Education

Service learning combines service objectives with learning objectives, and aims to change both the recipient and provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge. Examples of service learning projects include programs to reduce racial tension, clean up the environment, work with the hungry and the homeless, and teach children to read—in each case giving students the opportunity to reflect on the meaning and implication of the service.

In the past several years, service learning has spread rapidly throughout communities, K-12 institutions, and colleges and universities. In the case of higher education, 327 campuses responding to a Campus Compact survey during the 2000-2001 academic year indicated that:

- 28 percent of students had participated in some form of service.
- 13 percent of faculty were offering service learning courses.
- Each campus had an average of 27 service learning courses.
- 9 percent required service learning courses for graduation.

The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that, in the 2000-2001 academic year, more than 13 million school students were involved in service and service learning. It also found that 64 percent of all K-12 public schools had students participating in community service activities that were arranged or recognized by the school, and 57 percent of all K-12 public schools actually arranged community service activities for the students.
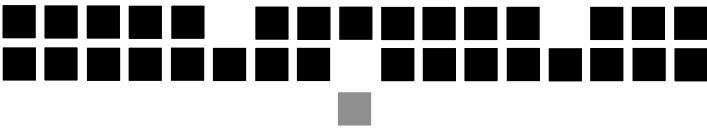
Organizations like Campus Compact now try to foster greater integration between service learning and civic education. Studies show that there is a split in thinking about service and politics for many young people. For them, service is removed and disconnected from politics and government. In their minds they are simply "doing good" for their community.

A notable example of linking service learning and civic education occurs in Philadelphia, where public school graduation has been made dependent on participation in service learning that "furthers academic goals, addresses a real community need and imparts the habits of active citizenship." At the postsecondary level, the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships has received widespread praise for its success in expanding its service learning program to address systemic social problems in its own backyard.

Creating a stronger link between service learning and civic education will not be easy. Challenges include taking on sensitive areas such as institutional missions, curricula, campus cultures, faculty orientation and rewards, administrative leadership, and campus-community partnerships.

See National Service Learning Clearinghouse (www.servicelearning.org) and Campus Compact (www.compact.org)
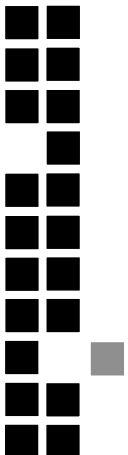
cates say, it is next to impossible for a community to tell if it is making progress towards reaching its goals. To help create a template useful to communities across the country, the National Civic League is working with five communities to develop locally tailored civic indicators. The five communities are Yampa Valley, Colorado; Charleston, South Carolina; Buffalo-Niagara, New York; Jacksonville, Florida; and Baltimore, Maryland.

The E-Government/E-Citizen Movement.

This movement is interested in exploring all the ways technology can be used to help government reach citizens and vice versa. Supporters of this movement believe technology can reform traditional governmental administrative processes and introduce exciting new participatory elements. They also believe this approach has great potential for stimulating young people's interest in government because of the large amount of time young people already spend using communications and information media for other uses. The bottom line for public officials is that they will have to get smart fast about the capabilities of the myriad tools that now exist for communicating with, informing, and engaging citizens (websites, chat rooms, electronic bulletin boards, electronic town halls, e-mail, and so on), and be prepared to meet higher standards of accountability and accessibility. The place to look for some of the most innovative applications of technology to politics and governing is at the state and local level, where the Internet is being used to improve transparency. Backers of this approach envision unlimited benefits for our democracy from technology, including citizen-centric public services that are seamlessly integrated across levels of government and creative new partnerships among government, the private sector, academia, nonprofit organizations, and foundations. (See _In Focus_.)
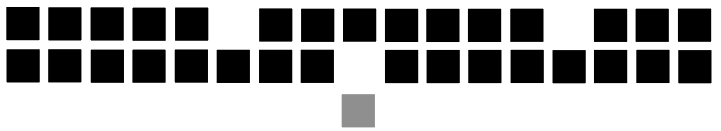
The Civic Journalism Movement.

Adherents of this movement believe journalism can help empower a community or help disable it and therefore has an obligation to the overall health of civic society. To this end, enlightened media organizations have been experimenting with new ways to give ordinary people a voice in how their

communities are covered, helping them to identify problems and deliberate solutions. For example, during the 1999 race for Philadelphia mayor, the Philadelphia Inquirer, in cooperation with the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communication, sponsored Citizen Voices, a yearlong project to enhance civic conversation and enlarge the public's voice as the city chose the new mayor.

Despite special efforts such as these, many Americans still think the news media's presentation of government and politics contains too much emphasis on scandal and too little thoughtful debate, both of which contribute to a decline in public trust of government. One approach to this problem is to aggressively work with media outlets to change the way they cover these subjects, even going so far as devising appealing civic engagement story lines for TV scripts. A second approach is to add media studies or media literacy courses, or both, to curricula at both the K-12 and college levels to instruct young people in how to evaluate media information and separate opinions from reality.

The Public Service Movement.

Those in this movement believe a strong, vital civil service serves as a foundation for a vibrant and prosperous democracy. They point to surveys that show too many young Americans are poorly informed about the role of the civil service, the range of federal employment opportunities available, and the methods for pursuing them. The result, they say, is that the government has been losing out to the private and nonprofit sectors in the competition for talented employees. If the situation is not remedied, the federal government will not have the talented public servants it needs in the 21st Century. However, they do not see government as the only loser: Citizens lose as well when they are unaware of professional opportunities to serve their country through government service. This movement promotes restoring the attractiveness of public service and encouraging young people to consider government as an employer of choice. Its approaches include educating a new generation about the importance of a strong civil service, re-
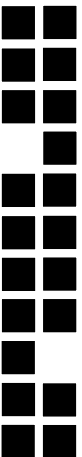
In Focus
Technology and Citizen Engagement:
The Example of AmericaSpeaks

AmericaSpeaks is a nonprofit organization committed to engaging citizen voices in local, regional, and national governance in new ways. Its unique approach integrates communications technologies with large- and small-scale face-to-face deliberative processes to promote citizen governance and collaborative, partnership-based leadership.

At what it calls electronic town meetings (ETMs), AmericaSpeaks can accommodate thousands of citizens in a way that lets everyone know they have been heard individually and collectively. It uses two devices:
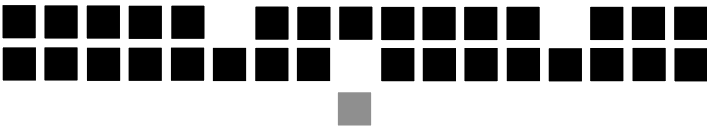
1. Laptop computers. Networked laptop computers at each table serve as "electronic flipcharts" to record ideas generated during the discussions. As data are collected through the computers, AmericaSpeaks staff and volunteers identify the strongest themes of the table discussions and report back to workshop participants on their findings.

2. Polling keypads. Every ETM participant receives and uses a wireless polling keypad to vote on questions posed to them by the session moderator. The results of each vote are instantly displayed on screens at the front of the room, allowing participants to see where they fit within the larger group. Instant feedback of the group's opinions also enables participants to shift from their own individual view toward a view of the collective good.

AmericaSpeaks has applied its approach in a wide range of public policy settings, from national debates over Social Security to helping New York City think through how lower Manhattan should be redeveloped in the wake of September 11. Some specific applications of the AmericaSpeaks model:

- 4-H National Youth Conference. February 27-March 1, 2002, in Washington, DC. AmericaSpeaks facilitated two days of tabletop discussions with 1,200 4-H youth delegates from throughout the country and produced a national report detailing ways to build a positive future for America's youth. The report's recommendations address mentoring, education, diversity, civic engagement, and improved coordination among youth development programs. One of the top findings: Establish youth advocates within each federal department and agency.
- DC Citizen Summit. On October 6, 2001, over 3,500 District of Columbia residents joined D.C. Mayor Anthony A. Williams for Citizen Summit II. Designed and facilitated by AmericaSpeaks, the day-long session gave residents the opportunity to help set the District's strategic priorities, which determine how local tax dollars are allocated. Participants also reviewed the draft citywide strategic plan to clarify their vision for the city, and identify and prioritize issues of specific concern in their own neighborhoods.
- D.C. Youth Summit. On November 20, 2000, 1,400 young people age 14-21 participated in "The City is Mine: Youth Summit 2000," designed and facilitated by AmericaSpeaks. The summit gave young people a voice before the mayor and the community. In discussions, the young people identified three major issues: safety and violence, education, and jobs and training. The summit and subsequent follow-on meetings gave DC youth input on priorities and programs for the 2002 budget and on scorecard items for government agencies. With this process in place, District youths will continue to play a role in government decisionmaking though the creation of youth advisory bodies to the mayor, the police department, the public school system, and the Department of Employment Services.

Website: www.americaspeaks.org
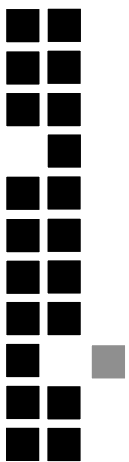
establishing links between federal agencies and campuses, and providing students with information about the unique and dynamic opportunities that federal jobs provide. Recently, the second National Commission on the Public Service issued recommendations for comprehensive reform in the federal public service. Paul Volcker, former head of the Federal Reserve Board, serves as chair of the commission.

Research and evaluation are key to the success of each of these movements. There are many unanswered questions about what motivates citizens to participate or not participate in various ways in our democracy. We must understand more about citizen attitudes and behaviors to identify the reforms that will lead to new levels of engagement. It is also imperative that we periodically assess the various components of our democracy to understand the effectiveness of our reform efforts and the state of our democracy as a whole.

FINDING 2. KEY PLAYERS

What is the current landscape of players in the field of civic engagement? There are thousands of entities working to improve the state of civic engagement in America today. To create a list of invitees for the December 5 meeting of intellectual leaders, the Panel identified approximately 20 organizations that serve as a microcosm of the larger universe of citizen engagement and its dominant strands of activity. A brief description of those organizations follows:

AmericaSpeaks. *What is it?* AmericaSpeaks is a nonprofit organization committed to engaging citizen voices in governance in new ways by integrating communications technologies with large-and small-scale face-to-face deliberative processes. *Recent news*: At a Washington, DC conference in Winter 2002, AmericaSpeaks facilitated two days of tabletop discussions with 1,200 4-H youth delegates from throughout the country and produced a national report detailing ways to build a positive future for America's youth.
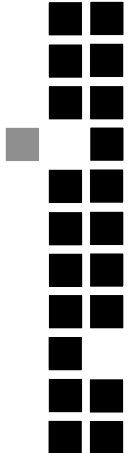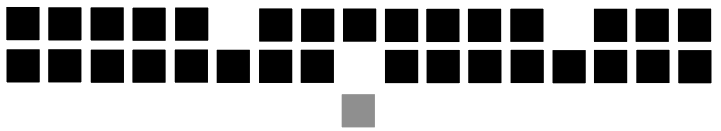*Website: www.AmericaSpeaks.org.*

American Political Science Association (APSA). *What is it?* The major American professional society for people who study politics, government, and public policies, APSA provides resources for civic education teachers at all levels. *Recent news*: APSA developed new resources on civic education's response to the events of September 11, including lesson plans, studies of Americans' attitudes about public service before and after September 11, and other media and policy sources.
Website: www.apsanet.org.

Campus Compact. *What is it?* A national coalition of more than 800 college and university presidents, Campus Compact promotes community service in higher education. *Recent news*: It issued The New Student Politics: The Wingspread Statement on Student Civic Engagement, which examines contemporary conceptions of civic engagement, politics, and service. It also provides specific suggestions on how campuses can improve their commitment to student civic engagement through service learning, increased support for student political activity, and attentiveness to the voice of students.
Website: www.compact.org.

Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Council for Excellence in Government. *What is it?* The Center was established to identify and carry out ways to help the institutions of American democracy work better. *Recent news*: It produced a candidate's guide and tool kit for reaching the 30 million-plus Americans age 18 to 30 who are eligible but do not currently vote in presidential elections (Young Voter Initiative).
Website: www.excelgov.org/demandcit.

Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). *What is it?* This is a new center at the University of Maryland funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and devoted to research on civic engagement and disengagement among Americans age 15 to 25. *Recent news*: The first cycle of research funding supports such projects as "National Service in America: Public Policy, Citizenship, and Democracy;" "A Case Study on Civic Engagement at the University of

Minnesota;" "Alternative Voting Techniques, Mobilization, and Participation in U.S. Elections, 1972 – 1998;" and "Between Registering and Voting: How State Laws Affect the Turnout of Young Registrants." *Website: www.civicyouth.org.* (See <u>*In Focus.*</u>)

Common Cause. *What is it?* Common Cause is a nonpartisan, citizens' lobbying group, whose priorities include reforming the campaign finance system and pressing for civil rights, ethics, and financial and lobby disclosure. *Recent news*: It led the

<u>In Focus</u>
The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)

A $4.57 million grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts enabled the University of Maryland in 2001 to create a research center to explore the causes of civic disengagement among young people age 15 to 25, as well as factors and initiatives that encourage their civic engagement. The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) is intended to be a key source of rigorous, impartial information and research for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers.

CIRCLE addresses these issues by assessing the current state of knowledge of youth civic engagement, funding research to fill the gaps in that knowledge, and disseminating information and research findings to practitioners, policymakers, and scholars in such disciplines as political science, sociology, and education. An advisory board composed of leading national scholars and practitioners helps shape CIRCLE's research agenda and guide its grant-making decisions. CIRCLE is a key building block of The Pew Charitable Trust's Youth Engagement Initiative, which is designed to increase the amount and quality of young Americans' involvement in public life.
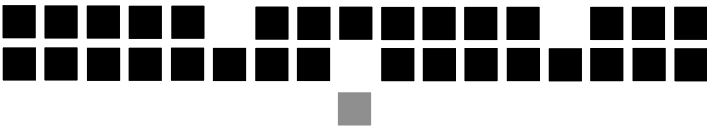
In March 2000, CIRCLE, in collaboration with the Center for Democracy and Citizenship and the Partnership for Trust in Government at the Council for Excellence in Government, released a survey of 1,500 Americans between age 15 and 25. The survey revealed that young adults were feeling better about politics and government after September 11, but their positive attitudes had yet to translate into action. The survey provided a set of information about young people's civic attitudes, plans, and behavior.

Other CIRCLE-sponsored research by Yale professors Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber shows that young people are significantly more likely to vote if they are contacted by other young people as part of a nonpartisan voter mobilization effort. Green and Gerber have found that phone canvassing increases turnout by an average of five percent and face-to-face canvassing increases turnout by 8.5 percent. Canvassing young people also slightly increases turnout among adults living with them.

Research underway covers such topics as: "Youth as E-Citizens: The Internet and Youth Civic Engagement," "Positive Citizenship: Priming Youth for Action," "Are There Civic Returns to Education?," and "Trust in Government-Related Institutions and Civic Engagement among Adolescents."

Website: www.civicyouth.org
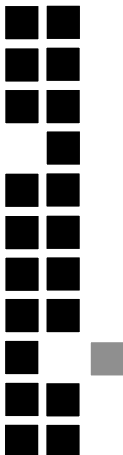
successful charge for passage of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, and it supports state and local campaign reform efforts.
Website: www.commoncause.org.

Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS). *What is it?*
This organization connects Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation through voluntary service. *Recent news*: In May 2002, a bipartisan group of House members introduced the Citizen Service Act of 2002. The legislation reforms and extends CNS and its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America programs, which engage two million Americans each year in service to meet critical community needs. During his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush called upon all Americans to devote the equivalent of two years over the course of their lifetimes to serving their communities. At the same time, he created USA Freedom Corps, a comprehensive initiative to provide more opportunities for Americans to serve at home and abroad.
Website: www.cns.gov.

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan. *What is it?*
One of the premier public policy and public administration schools in the nation, the Ford School prepares graduate students to work effectively in this increasingly complex area, using an interdisciplinary approach to coursework. *Recent news*: The Ford School's Center for State, Local and Urban Policy is sponsoring research on effective land use policy and will bring together researchers with state and local officials to identify best practices in different political environments.
Website: www.fordschool.umich.edu.

Independent Sector. *What is it?* A nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of more than 700 national organizations, foundations, and corporate philanthropy programs, the Independent Sector collectively represents tens of thousands of charitable groups in every state. Its mission is to promote, strengthen, and advance the nonprofit and philanthropic community and to foster private initiative for the public good. *Recent news*: The Three Sector Initiative, a project of seven organizations in the nonprofit, business, and government sectors, has released *Working Better Together*, a report on effective methods of collaboration among the sectors. Website: *Indepsec.org.* (See *In Focus.*)

Institute for Government Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. *What is it?* The Institute houses and funds the Innovations in American Government Program and serves as the hub for a global network of individuals dedicated to excellence in government: innovators, students, policy analysts, and journalists. *Recent news*: In 2002, the Institute released *Innovation*, a book by the Pricewaterhouse Coopers Endowment for the Business of Government (now the IBM Endowment for the Business of Government) that presents lessons learned from 15 years of the Innovations Awards program.
Website: www.innovations.harvard.edu.

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. *What is it?* The Joint Center is a nonprofit institution that conducts research on public policy issues of special concern to African Americans and other minorities. *Recent news*: The Joint Center's Divergent Generations Project is documenting differences in political participation and public policy views associated with generational change in the African American population.
*Website: www.jointcenter.org.*

League of Women Voters of the United States (LWV). *What is it?* A nonpartisan political organization, the LWV encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government. *Recent news*: The League established DemocracyNet (www.dnet.org), where Americans can access information about thousands of candidates running for national, state, and local office, including their biographies, positions on issues, and contact information. Information on ballot initiatives and voter registration and timely political news and updates also are available.
Website: lwv.org.

National Academy of Public Administration. *What is it?* The Academy is an independent, nonpartisan organization
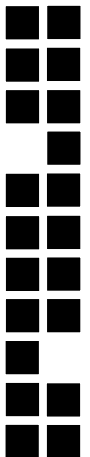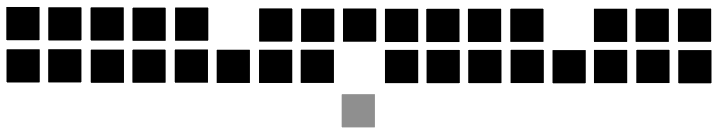
The Independent Sector:
Celebrating the Important Role of the Nonprofit Sector in a Vibrant Democracy

America's "independent sector" is a diverse collection of more than one million charitable, educational, religious, health, and social welfare organizations, which to many represent what creates, nurtures, and sustains the values that frame American life and strengthen democracy.

The Independent Sector is a national forum that brings together foundations, corporate giving programs, and nonprofit organizations to reinforce the nonprofit sector. Its members include many of the nation's leading foundations, prominent nonprofits of all sizes, and Fortune 500 corporations with a strong commitment to community involvement. This network includes thousands of organizations representing millions of volunteers, donors, and people served.

Since its founding in 1980, the Independent Sector coalition boasts an enormous impact on fortifying public policy related to nonprofit organizations and improving the accountability and disclosure of nonprofits. It also has built a body of research about the sector and educated policymakers and the public about the important role of the nonprofit sector in a vibrant democracy.
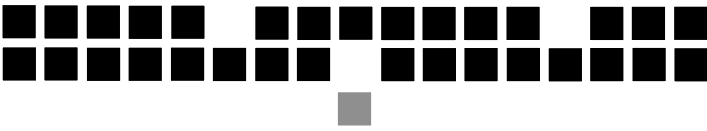
The Independent Sector works to:

- Promote effective policies and a healthy legislative environment to help not-for-profit initiatives thrive.
- Research and analyze the scope of the nonprofit sector and trends in giving and volunteering.
- Strengthen accountability among nonprofit organizations.
- Champion effective collaboration among the business, government, and nonprofit sectors.
- Provide the "meeting ground" for the leadership of the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors to address emerging trends affecting both sectors.
- Communicate the value and successes of the American traditions of giving and volunteering.

An example of Independent Sector research is its recent report, released in conjunction with the National Council of Churches, *Faith and Philanthropy: The Connection Between Charitable Behavior and Giving to Religion.* The Independent Sector found that donors to religious organizations also are the most generous to other causes. Households that give to both religious congregations and secular organizations give over three times ($2,247) more than households that give only to secular organizations ($623).

The Independent Sector is known for the Give Five campaign, begun in 1987 to encourage people to give five hours a week and five percent of their income to the causes and charities of their choice.

Website: www.indepsec.org
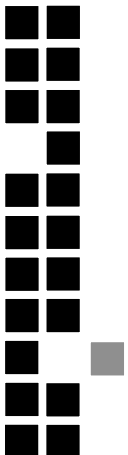
chartered by Congress to assist federal, state, and local governments in improving their effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability. *Recent news*: It released an innovative study entitled *Powering the Future: High-Performance Partnerships*, which outlined strategies for synergistic cross-sector collaboration. *Website: www.napawash.org.*

National Alliance for Civic Engagement (NACE).
What is it? This coalition responds to the need to ensure that youth and young adults acquire the knowledge, skills, and practical experience necessary to become active and informed participants in civic life and public affairs. Leading members include the APSA, the National Council for the Social Studies, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Conference of State Legislators, and Campus Compact. *Website: www.puaf.umd.edu/NACE.*

National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration.
What is it? This institutional membership organization promotes excellence in public service education. *Recent news*: An initiative, Calling Students to Public Service Careers, is working to change college students' negative perceptions of public service jobs. *Website: naspaa.org.*

National Civic League (NCL).
What is it? The League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to strengthening democracy by transforming democratic institutions through technical assistance, training, publishing, research, and the All-America City Awards. *Recent news*: See *In Focus*. *Website: ncl.org.*

Partnership for Trust in Government at the Council for Excellence in Government.
What is it? This alliance of nongovernment organizations in the business, labor, education, civic, nonprofit, religious, and media sectors works to improve and sustain the government's place in the understanding and esteem of the American people. *Recent news*: In March 2002, the partnership released a Hart-Teeter survey of 18-30 year olds showing increased interest in public service careers, compared to a poll five years earlier. *Website: www.trustingov.org.*

The Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.
What is it? The seminar fosters the growth of social capital and civic connectedness in America by bringing together practitioners and academic thinkers. *Recent news*: Early in 2002, the seminar released a survey of post-September 11 civic ties that showed civic attitudes have shifted more than behavior. *Website: www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro.*

University College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University.
What is it? This is a university-wide initiative to make the values and skills of active citizenship a hallmark of a Tufts University education. *Recent news*: Tufts has introduced an American Studies course called "Active Citizenship in Urban Communities: Race, Culture, Power and Politics." It will explore the meanings and issues of interacting in an urban community, using Boston's Chinatown as a case study. *Website: www.uccps.tufts.edu.*

Youth Service America.
What is it? The more than 300 member organizations that make up Youth Service America are committed to making public service the common expectation and experience of all young Americans. *Recent news*: It is working on a "United Day of Service" that could ultimately include millions of school-aged youngsters in a service project on September 11, helping their communities and raising money for police, fire, and rescue teams. *Website: www.ysa.org.*

Most of these efforts could not exist without the generous support of foundations. Some of the most well-known ones to the Panel include the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Carnegie Corporation, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Education, the Ford Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
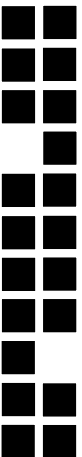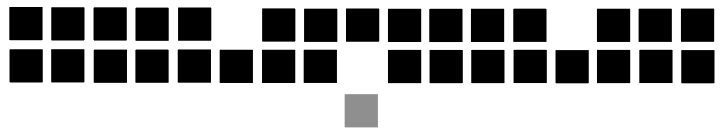
In Focus
The National Civic League:
## Over 100 Years of Strengthening Citizen Democracy by Transforming Democratic Institutions

Headquartered in Denver, the National Civic League (NCL) is a 108-year-old organization that seeks to strengthen citizen democracy by transforming democratic institutions.
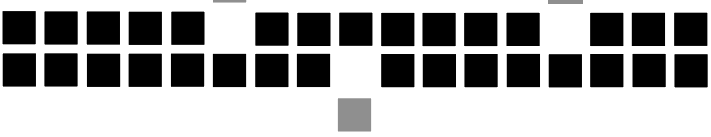
One NCL initiative, the New Politics Program, brings the organization full circle to its original purpose of government reform on the local level. The program's mission is to recognize and promote innovative political reform efforts at the state and local levels. Its first was to study local campaign finance reform legislation. From this study, the program staff developed a menu of model campaign finance reform measures and began working directly in communities to catalyze a discussion of political reform by providing facilitation and education. Since then, the New Politics Program has expanded the scope of its work and begun to focus on other approaches to increasing citizen engagement in the political process. Recent projects include work on "candidate" codes of conduct, revision of the NCL's Model City Charter, use of technology by local governments, and local government regulation of elected officials through ethics and lobbying legislation.

Two significant reports from the New Politics Program are *Local Campaign Finance Reform: Case Studies, Innovative and Model Legislation*, which identifies 75 local governments that have enacted limits on contributions, campaign spending, or both, and *Bridging the Gap between Citizens and Local Government with Information Technology: Concepts and Case Studies*, which examines the roles of civic engagement and public deliberation in government, democracy, and politics. It also provides detailed case studies of how information technology is currently used to develop new practices that enhance communication and understanding between citizens and their local government.

Also helpful to communities in reaching new levels of civic health is NCL's Civic Index. Designed to help communities gauge their civic capacities and strengths, the Civic Index assesses what NCL calls a community's civic infrastructure, those characteristics that communities possess to effectively solve problems. Whether the primary issues are economic development, low-income housing, transportation planning, or any combination of challenges, the healthy functioning of the 12 components of the Civic Index is necessary for success.

Website: www.ncl.org
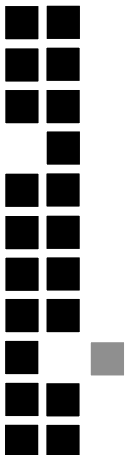
FINDING 3.
MEASUREMENTS OF
CIVIC HEALTH

Having measures of our nation's civic health is important. Without them it is impossible to gauge whether we are moving toward or away from higher levels of civic health. But, developing generally acceptable measures is another matter altogether, as the Panel discovered at the December 5 meeting, requiring the attention of some of our most talented political and social scientists.
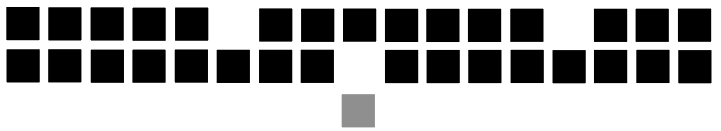
Three well-known measurement studies that have been conducted or are underway are:

1. The Index of National Civic Health (INCH). The National Commission on Civic Renewal (NCCR) was created in 1996 to propose and assess specific actions to improve the nation's civic health. Led by former Education Secretary William J. Bennett and former Senator Sam Nunn, the 20-member commission spent a year and a half studying civic life in America and released its findings and recommendations in June 1998. As part of their work, they developed the INCH, designed to be a comprehensive index to gauge the country's civic condition each year. The INCH included 22 quantitative measures in five categories: political participation (voter turnout and other political activities, such as signing a petition or writing a letter to Congress), trust (how much Americans trust in others and their confidence in the federal government), family strength (rates of divorce and nonmarital births), group membership (memberships in groups, church attendance, charitable contributions, attendance at local meetings, and service in local committees), and personal security (youth murderers per youth population, fear of crime, and survey-reported crime per capita). For more, go to www.puaf.umd.edu/affiliates/civicrenewal.

2. The Youth Engagement Index. The Pew Charitable Trusts have a six-year effort underway to increase the civic engagement of Americans between the ages 15 and 22. Their strategy involves four interconnected projects: a national deliberative process by which young Americans develop a national youth platform, a national youth action network (made up of representatives of organizations that serve youth), a national youth action campaign, and a research center for the study of youth and democracy (CIRCLE). A key part of the effort is tracking changes in engagement. Increases in civic engagement are measured through aggregate statistics (e.g., voter registration and turnout figures, active membership in civic organizations, and number of young adults who volunteer) and an annual, survey-based "youth engagement index" measuring changes in attitudes, knowledge, and self-reported behavior. As part of this index, Pew proposes developing a new summary metric: number of hours devoted to civic engagement. This survey-based metric would be broken down by types of activities (e.g., volunteering, contacting public officials, and working on an election) as well as serving as an overall measure of engagement. Pew says the index will allow them to assess and publicize change over time in a simple and easily understood way. More information is located at www.pewtrusts.org.

3. The Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey. Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone: Collapse and Revival of the American Community,* is the principal investigator for this project housed at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. The purpose of the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey is to help regions around the country identify their relative strengths and areas for improvement in civic behavior, so that they can set a course for future progress in cooperation with their community foundations and other funders. The survey itself focuses on 11 dimensions of social capital: social trust, inter-racial trust, conventional politics participation, protest politics participation, giving and volunteering, faith-based engagement, informal socializing, involvement in associations, civic leadership, diversity of friendships, and equality of civic engagement. So far, Putnam has conducted two nationwide surveys of civic attitudes and behaviors—one in Fall 2000 and a second in Fall 2001 after the attack on the World Trade Center. In the first survey, there were

3,000 individual and community respondents in 40 communities (across 29 states). The Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey was designed by the Saguaro Seminar and drew upon the lessons learned from a social capital measurement workshop held at Harvard in October 1999. The workshop involved a nine-person scientific advisory committee of leading scholars in the field. For more, go to www.bettertogether.org.

Two observations are worth making about these three studies. First, the variations in the choice of indicators from one study to another demonstrate that there is subjectivity in how civic health is defined. Second, factors critical to the world views of several of the movements—such as civic journalism, diversity and inclusion, and public service—are overlooked altogether in current studies.

The Panel asked the December 5 meeting participants what they thought an engaged citizenry would look like. This is the picture they painted:

- More people would vote.
- There would not be large disparities among groups in any aspect of the political process, from voting to holding office.
- Our educational system would produce young adults who are curious about citizenship.
- We would have a better-informed citizenry with an understanding of what the greater good is—beyond "me and my situation."
- Most Americans would feel their government is working for the common welfare and that they have a say in deciding what the common welfare is.
- Most Americans would believe that civic participation matters and that public service represents one of life's highest callings.
- We would see an increase in civic literacy among graduating students, with test scores to prove it.
- We would see civic and political leaders at all levels who are proud of their roles.
- There would be many opportunities for citizens to come together and discuss what matters in their community and country, with a shared vocabulary.
- Every community would find and value volunteers ready to address its toughest social problems with multiple civic skills.

- The media would present news and analysis in ways that help educate citizens about the complexities of public issues.
- There would be greater use of the Internet as a platform for effective citizenship.

FINDING 4.
COLLABORATION
ACROSS MOVEMENTS

Given this activity, an obvious question is: Are there ways the various movements can collaborate to increase their overall impact? At the December 5 gathering, the participants discussed this question at length, identified examples of where effective collaboration is happening, and brainstormed about the conditions under which collaboration appears to work best.

Notable examples of collaboration across movements do, in fact, exist. A useful way to categorize them is in terms of whether they are sustained efforts, structured conversations among organizations, or new efforts inspired by the tragedies connected with September 11.

Sustained Efforts. The Alliance for National Renewal (ANR), an example of a coalition that crosses movements and has demonstrated staying power over time, was launched at the National Civic League's centennial celebration in 1994 to infuse national organizations with the messages of civic renewal and collaborative community building. The coalition includes over 200 organizations, many of which have networks and chapters of their own that reach deep into local communities. The diverse group of partners ranges from the Study Circles Resource Center in Pomfret, Connecticut—where a small staff has facilitated issue-based discussions in more than 70 communities—to the National 4-H Council and the 33-million member AARP. ANR activities include:

- Spotlighting grassroots problem-solving activities and accomplishments.
- Illuminating the processes of community building.
- Supporting and sustaining mutual learning.
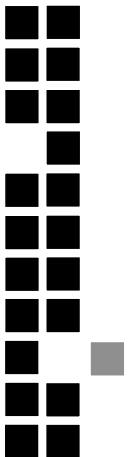
•Sharing information, lessons learned, tools, resources, and promising practices through face-to-face meetings, a website, newsletters, and other regular communications.
•Undertaking projects that assist in the emergence of grassroots leadership and encourage active citizen involvement in community life.
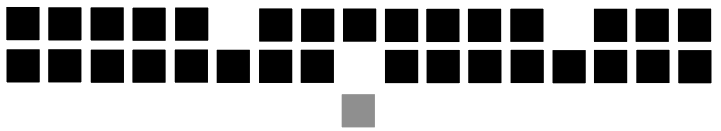
In Focus provides a detailed profile of another sustained cross-movement effort: The Youth Vote Coalition.

Structured Conversations. A lot of collaboration across movements takes the form of structured conversations. One such example is "Uniting America: Collaborating to Make Democracy Work," the fifth in The American Assembly series of conversations, held in November 2001. More than 50 individuals from government, business, and nonprofit organizations came together for three days in Los Angeles to prepare a report on ways to encourage and enhance collaboration among the three sectors in American public life. The assembly analyzed a series of profiles of collaboration to develop lessons for social entrepreneurs who are involved in or are considering ways to collaborate in solving community and national problems. These previous collaborations had dealt with the high priority issues that were the basis for the previous assembly projects in this series: sustaining economic growth with greater opportunity, the place of religion in public life, policies for strengthening American families, and racial equality.

A recent example of a cross-movement collaboration involving the National Academy of Public Administration is *Working Better Together*. Its goal was to find more effective ways that various sectors can achieve public purposes. The Academy's partners in this endeavor were the Conference Board, the Council on Foundations, the Independent Sector, the National Alliance of Business, the National Civic League, and the National Governors Association. Drawing on regional dialogues held around the country, a joint report released in April 2002 provides examples of how leaders in state government, industry, and nonprofits can use collaboration to form partnerships to address complex problems that no one sector can handle on its own.

Post-September 11-Inspired Efforts. The events of September 11 have inspired cross-movement efforts aimed at encouraging more Americans to become actively involved in the democratic process. National Civic Participation Week is an excellent example. In late 2001, Congress passed a resolution designating September 15-21, 2002 as National Civic Participation Week. In January 2003, Senator Pat Roberts introduced a resolution to make September 11-17, 2003 the second National Civic Participation Week. This annual event is designed to celebrate civic participation throughout the United States, honor the courageous spirit of the American people, and pay tribute to those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. Participate America, a not-for-profit foundation, serves as the national organizing committee for the celebration, coordinating participation from within the corporate, nonprofit, government, and education communities. The idea is to involve and showcase millions of people in the political process through the use of traditional grassroots activities and new technologies that bring people together in civic forums. ParticipateAmerica.org provides citizens and organizations with the tools to organize local events around registering to vote, volunteering in communities, and getting directly involved in local government. A partial list of founding sponsors demonstrates the success of this effort in attracting support from many civic engagement movements: the AARP, the American Society of Association Executives, the AOL Time Warner Foundation, the George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the League of Women Voters, the National Civic League, the National Youth Leadership Council, the Points of Light Foundation, the United Way of America, and Youth Service America.

Is it possible to talk about the conditions where collaboration appears to work best, in order to provide the framework for thinking about untapped opportunities? At the December 5 meeting, the Panel posed this question to the participants. Here is what the participants came up with:

In Focus
The Youth Vote Coalition:
An Example of Sustained, Cross-Movement Collaboration

Started in 1994, Youth Vote is the nation's largest nonpartisan coalition working to increase the political involvement of approximately 50 million Americans age 18 to 30. The coalition consists of over 90 diverse national organizations drawn from multiple civic engagement movements—voter participation, inclusion and diversity, sustainable communities, and others—representing hundreds of state and local groups and millions of young people.

The national coalition board members include the ACORN Institute, Black Youth Vote (sponsored by the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation), the Center for Environmental Citizenship, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund, the League of Women Voters Education Fund, the National Council of La Raza, the Organization of Chinese Americans, Rock the Vote, The Leadership Institute: Campus Leadership Program, the Third Millennium, Student Public Interest Research Groups, the U.S. Student Association, and Youth Service America.

With support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Open Society Institute, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the coalition has been able to expand the size and diversity of the youth civic engagement community, increase that community's efficiency and capacity, and directly engage youth, political figures, and media in its campaign strategy and message.

The coalition pursues its objectives through a youth presidential debate campaign, the development of a volunteer network, distribution of civic engagement materials, and 22 local coalitions. In the 2000 election, these strategies directly engaged hundreds of thousands of young adults in the nation's political process. They also helped researchers get a better understanding of the causes of and solutions to declining youth political participation.

Part of the effectiveness of the Youth Vote Coalition is its partnerships with things youth know and follow. For example:

- MTV. In the last presidential election, the Youth Vote Coalition worked in conjunction with MTV's "Choose or Lose" 2000 campaign, which held 55 voter registration events, including a "Campus Invasion Tour."
- The World Wrestling Federation (WWF). The Youth Vote Coalition supports the WWF's "Smackdown Your Vote!" campaign, which helped to register 150,000 new voters in two months in Fall 2000. This program provided voting and election information to millions of young people and to WWF fans through information on television and online. Registrations were conducted at WWF events, at WWF New York (the WWF's site-based entertainment complex in New York City's Times Square), and at the websites of other "Smackdown Your Vote!" partners.
- SpeakOut.com. The Youth Vote Coalition promotes this website, which lets young people learn about issues, participate in online polls, send messages to elected officials, and sign petitions on various causes.

Website: www.youthvote.org
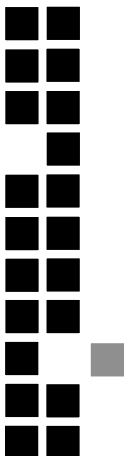
Qualities of successful collaborations:

• partners with different capacities that bring different "value-added"
• a common goal clear and in view
• a willingness to downplay organizational identities; no competition for resources
• organizations willing to share the credit
• urgency and passion associated with this moment in time
• an element of trust
• a governing structure that does not subsume any of the participating organizations
• a system of accountability that encourages everyone to take responsibility for their share of the work
• an approach to developing the collaboration that starts small and builds up to something much larger
• a process to mentor the next group of leaders
• processes or secretariat services that provide the glue that keeps the effort together and affords forward momentum

Barriers to collaboration:

• turf battles
• policy conflicts
• different reward structures
• status is brought to the fore
• high costs and lack of financial resources or unwillingness to spend them
• personality or role conflicts
• lack of a shared language, different takes on "what the problem is," or unbreachable cultural differences
• groups with widely varying capacities
• too many organizations recruited members too quickly, or membership is not representative of the appropriate population group
• people affected by the problem do not invest enough time to deal with it
• lack of effective leadership

The following *In Focus* boxes provide a more detailed look at the entire issue of encouraging and enhancing cross-sector collaboration. These summaries are taken from the final report of the American Assembly's November 2001 meeting, "Uniting America: Collaborating to Make Democracy Work," where three days were devoted to this topic.

It is worth noting a number of points made in a November 2000 report prepared by Cynthia Gibson, program officer at the Carnegie Corporation, entitled *Youth Civic Engagement: Issues, Approaches, and Program Recommendations.* Gibson and her colleagues made several observations about collaboration and youth civic engagement. It is easy to see how the following ideas might apply to the entire field of civic engagement in upcoming years:

• The myriad of players and programs suggest there is an opportunity to craft a new, hybrid approach that would include elements of the best approaches.
• A hybrid or melded approach would transcend institutional and ideological "silos" by situating program or institutional goals within a broader context of needs, contribution, and values and include a wider range of indicators.
• A melded approach requires understanding that there is no single institution, organization, or program that can or should be responsible for civic engagement. Nor is a focus on one strategy to the exclusion of others likely to produce long-term results.
• Despite general agreement about the importance of collaboration and melded strategies, most players generally promote only one approach, and advocates for various approaches tend to speak past each other.
• A lack of understanding about the distinctions and tensions among various strategies, and of their strengths and weaknesses, has been a major impediment toward the development of an approach comprising a range of strategies that complement, rather than compete, with one another in pursuit of larger shared goals.
• The different fields will not and should not merge because each has its own goals, perspectives, and approaches. But they can collaborate to create an opportunity to secure increased public awareness and public support.
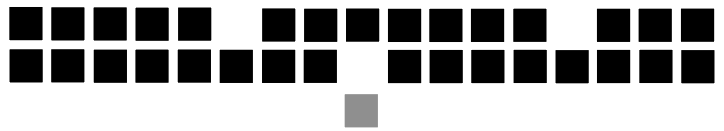
CHARACTERISTICS AND LIMITS OF COLLABORATIONS

Even though the importance of collaboration may be clear, the means of accomplishing it are not always evident. Successful collaboration requires hard work, resources, and commitment from all participants. A growing body of experience offers important lessons about the factors leading to the success or failure of collaborative enterprises. Successful collaborations exhibit a number of common characteristics:

- They exhibit clear visions and tangible goals.
- The role played by each organization is well-defined.
- Partners share values related to the problems, agree on approaches to solve them, and have mutual respect and trust.
- They benefit from strong leadership by champions who stay the course and partners who have a long-time horizon.
- All partners have the potential to derive clear benefits.
- They have core funding committed from donors willing to take risks.
- The partners are close to the problem.
- The partners genuinely involve community members.
- The partners act strategically to identify the full range of essential stakeholders.

Challenges and Barriers

Collaborations, while a powerful problem-solving tool, often face substantial challenges to their work and the process of developing cooperation. These challenges reflect a variety of built-in differences among the government, business, and nonprofit sectors—in access to resources, measures of accountability, definitions of success, and institutional cultures. These differences make the process of developing collaborations among the three sectors deeply complex. Some of the challenges include:

- turf protection and mistrust
- organizations that overwhelm partners because of the extent of their resources or their level of passion about the issue
- an excess of advocacy and a lack of true dialogue that undermine the collaborative process
- finding ways for business to participate that are consistent with their focus on profits and competitiveness
- leaders leery of being lectured about their moral responsibility
- blurred roles that lead to unclear lines of accountability
- organizations that believe collaboration dilutes their own efforts and resources
- government officials reluctant to expose failed efforts to the voters
- fear by nonprofits of actions that might alienate donors
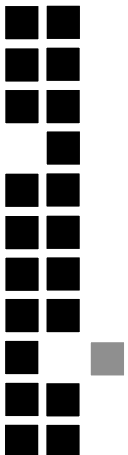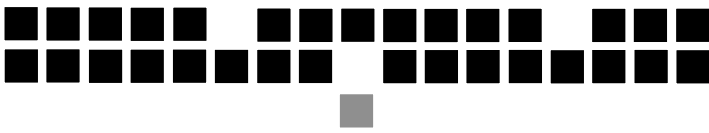
Limits to Collaboration

Collaborations can be extremely productive in many circumstances, but they are not always appropriate or likely to succeed. Some issues may best be addressed by organizations from a particular sector. Other issues may be tackled by individuals long before they are recognized by organizations. Factors that limit collaboration include:

- a critical lack of continuity due to high turnover among business executives and political leaders
- unresponsive, inflexible, and bureaucratic government that can make it an ineffective partner
- constraints on small nonprofits, businesses, and municipal governments due to a lack of time, personnel, and funds
- disagreements based on fundamental values that are only temporarily masked by collaborative approaches
- difficulty in starting or sustaining a collaboration because of fragmentation and lack of credible leadership
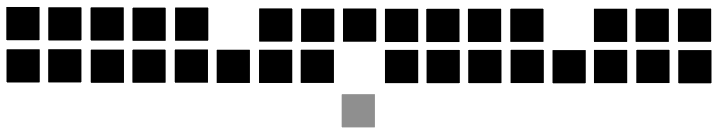
Lessons Learned: How to Make Collaborations Work

Innovation is brought into the mainstream by identifying cutting-edge practices, disseminating information about those practices, and encouraging others to adapt them to their own situations. It is critical to identify key lessons learned by those engaged in this difficult work. By learning from the successes and failures of the communities and organizations that have come before them, others will be able to employ collaboration effectively. Among the lessons learned:

- Collaborations can begin as either top-down or bottom-up efforts, but must engage the entire spectrum of stakeholders.
- Local and national collaborations require different strategies and approaches.
- Horizontal collaborations, where participants share power, often have a better chance for success.
- It is essential to reach out to a new generation of corporate leaders and engage them more effectively in community life.
- Collaborations benefit by beginning with at least one committed funder.
- Tangible goals, even when only incremental, help move collaborations forward.
- Effective collaborative efforts should involve individuals from the community in the development and core work of the project.
- Participants should enter into collaboration prepared for a long time horizon.

Source: Adapted from "Collaborating to Make Democracy Work," the Fifth Assembly in the Uniting America Series, The American Assembly, Columbia University, November 29-December 2, 2001
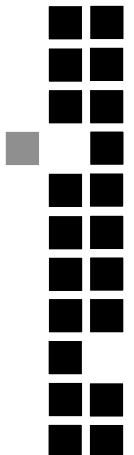
PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION STEPS

Two views of democracy appear to be emerging in America. One camp puts most of its emphasis on helping one's neighbor, serving in voluntary organizations, and donating to charities. The other camp emphasizes understanding how government works, voting, and being politically active. What is missing is an appreciation that both are critical for a healthy and vibrant democracy. Working to bring the two into greater contact will produce the greatest long-term benefits for our nation.

The Panel believes that the Academy, whose elected Fellows include senior leaders in public management, must step forward to help bridge this divide and support a broader concept of citizen engagement—one that takes into account both the "small p" politics of volunteerism and service and the " large P" Politics of campaigns and government.

The goal should be to develop cross-movement collaborations whose wholes are greater than the sum of their parts.

The Panel's key recommendations for the National Academy of Public Administration are:

"BRIDGING THE DIVIDE"

The Academy should convene a joint meeting with the National Civic League (NCL) to foster greater understanding between the world of public management represented by the Academy and the world of grassroots political reform represented by NCL. The meting would engender greater understanding of different approaches to civic engagement to facilitate more useful dialogue and ultimately more effective strategies for engaging Americans in democracy.

YOUTH

The Academy, the American Society for Public Administration, the Council for

Excellence in Government, and the Partnership for Public Service, acting as a consortium, should convene five to seven youth-serving groups to ensure that youth are actively engaged in their organizations. The youth-serving groups would appoint a collection of young persons to operate as a youth advisory board to the consortium. The purpose of the youth advisory board would be to make recommendations about internship programs, methods for incorporating young people into conferences and approaches for deploying current and former government officials as role models to help young people better understand the exciting careers they can have in government.
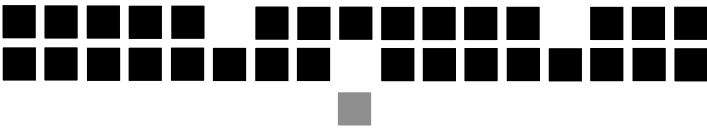
GROUPS

The Academy's Panel on Social Equity in Governance should consult with organizations such as the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials to ensure that the Panel's work on fairness, justice, and equity is informed by the latest efforts of these organizations to promote inclusion and diversity in American society and to determine ways the Academy might translate these efforts into governance issues.

CITIZEN-CENTERED GOVERNANCE

As a leader in performance-based governance, the Academy should assist public agencies at all levels to accelerate the process of attaining a citizen-centered government through new advances in technology. The development of electronic communication technologies holds the promise of making it easier for government to enter into genuine deliberative and interactive engagement with citizens, thus beginning the process of restoring trust in government by giving citizens a sense of ownership and involvement.
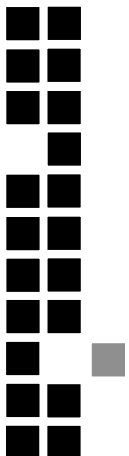
INDEPENDENT SECTOR

The Academy should consult with organizations such as the Independent Sector to ensure that the Academy's work adequately recognizes the important roles that foundations, neighborhood groups, voluntary associations, and community- and faith-based organizations play in America's civic health.

## SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

The Academy should work with the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration and with the American Society for Public Administration to enlarge the role that schools of public administration play in preparing future public administrators for dealing with citizens and groups outside of government. Most of society's difficult problems cannot be fixed by government unless citizens are more engaged in helping to solve them. In many situations, the answer is for the public administrator to adopt the role of a facilitator or supporter, not the person with all the answers. Schools of public administration can help by doing a better job of providing their students with a broad understanding of the important role citizens play in keeping government effective and responsive.

ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM ON CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

The Academy should establish a Program on Citizen Engagement to pursue the important recommendations noted above and to continue liaison with the growing number of key players important to the overall achievement of cross-movement collaboration. The program should be staffed by a senior-level person who is able to relate both to the Academy Fellows and the various organizations in the field of citizen engagement. One of the program's key functions would be to keep the issues of citizen engagement and recruitment of young talent into government squarely on the agendas of Academy meetings and Panel work. One product could be a quarterly newsletter to keep Academy Fellows and others informed about developments in the field of citizen engagement.
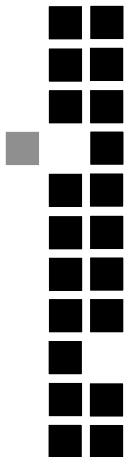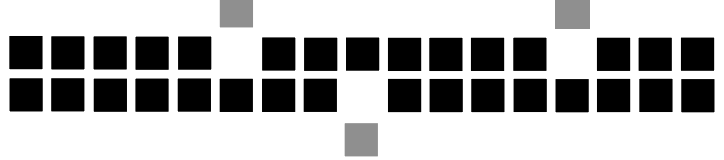
CONCLUSION

The world of public administration and management has changed radically since the Academy Panel, chaired by Paul Volcker, issued its initial report on this subject in 1999. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the roles and responsibilities of American government have forever changed. So too have the roles and responsibilities of its citizens. The Panel predicts that the need for effective governance and meaningful citizen engagement will intensify over the next 25 years as America faces some of the most serious challenges in its history.

Insights and recommendations within this report illustrate the breadth and scope of citizen engagement in America as well as the urgency to experiment with nontraditional collaborative arrangements to solve some of our society's most troublesome problems. Increasingly, "going it alone" is seen as a losing strategy.

From civic organizations to academia to youth-serving programs, to all levels of government, efforts are on the rise to educate, inform, and engage citizens in core activities of democratic participation and government. But, to what end if we do not find generally accepted ways to hold the key institutions of our democracy accountable? This aspect of citizen engagement still is very much in its embryonic stages, but it is essential if we are to reverse the mistrust and cynicism in our system, especially among young people.

That said, there is much to celebrate—from outstanding examples of local governments that involve their citizenry in developing community indicators, to exciting campaigns to increase youth minority voting, to innovative applications of technology to increase transparency in campaign financing. Yet, as the Panel's findings demonstrate, there is much more to test, research, and document. The Panel views this report as a second step by the Academy to draw the attention of public administrators to the centrality of citizen engagement and to identify unique ways in which the Academy can contribute to strengthening democracy and improving public management.
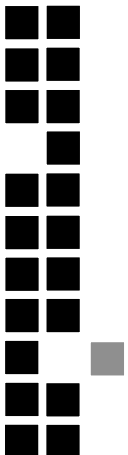
APPENDIX

PANEL AND THOUGHT LEADER GATHERING PARTICIPANTS

PANEL

Gail Christopher (Chair)
Brookings Institution. Former Executive Director, Institute of Government Innovation, JFK School of Government, Harvard University. Former Co-Chair, Advisory Board, Alliance for Redesigning Government, National Academy of Public Administration; National Director and Creator, Americans All K-12 National Multicultural Educators Training Program; Associate for Development and Program Design, School of Divinity, Information and Services Clearinghouse, Howard University; National Director and Principal Architect of the National Reclaim Our Youth Violence Prevention Program; Executive Director, Family Resource Coalition of America. Member of Vice-President Al Gore's Advisory Commission on Customer Service.

Chris Gates
President, National Civic League. Former positions with National Civic League: Vice President; Strategic Planning Consultant. Former Lecturer, Graduate School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado at Denver; Consultant, Theodore Barry and Associates; Project Manager, Center for Public/Private Sector Cooperation, University of Colorado at Denver; Communications Director, The Piton Foundation; Staff to Colorado Governor Richard Lamm.

Edie Goldenberg
Professor of Political Science and Public Policy, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan. Former Dean, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and Director, Institute of Public Policy Studies, University of Michigan. Former Chief, Civil Service Reform Evaluation Management Division, U.S. Office of Personnel Management; Lecturer, Political Science, Stanford University.

Elizabeth Hollander
Executive Director, Campus Compact. Former President, Government Assistance Program, and Executive Director, The Egan Urban Center, DePaul University; Executive Director, Government Assistance Project, The Chicago Community Trust; Executive Director, Illinois Commission on the Future of Public Service, The Chicago Community Trust; Commissioner of Planning, City of Chicago, Illinois; Executive Director, Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council; Associate Director, Task Force on the Future of Illinois.

Brian O'Connell
Professor of Public Service, Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs, Tufts University. Former President, Independent Sector; President, National Council on Philanthropy; Executive Director, Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations.
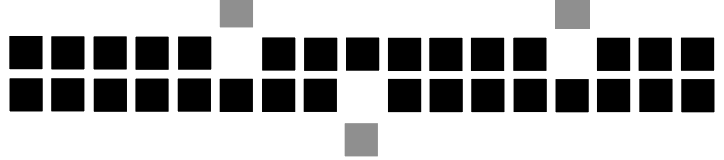
THOUGHT LEADER GATHERING PARTICIPANTS

David Bositis, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Michael Brintnall, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration

Steve Culbertson, Youth Service America

William Galston, National Alliance for Civic Engagement, University of Maryland

Robert Hollister, College of Citizenship and Policy, Tufts University

Carolyn Lukensmeyer, AmericaSpeaks

Sheilah Mann, American Political Science Association

John "Skip" McCoy, DC Agenda

Neal Peirce, Syndicated Columnist

Peter Shiras, Independent Sector

David Skaggs, Council for Excellence in Government, Center for Democracy & Citizenship
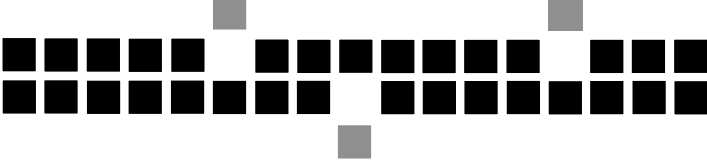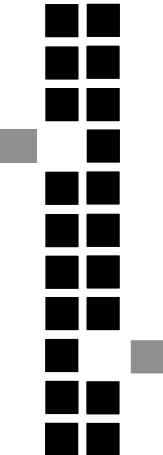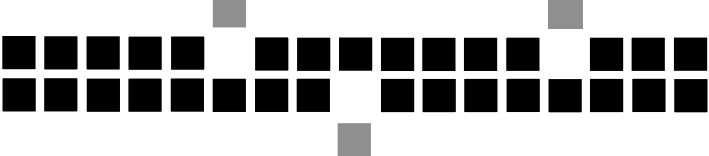
Eric Swanson, Common Cause

Nancy Tate, League of Women Voters of the U.S.

Tobi Walker, Pew Charitable Trusts

Pam Warwick, Points of Light Foundation