

# Town Hall Process

The process followed by the Tucson Regional Town Hall is a uniquely effective process created by the Arizona Town Hall. For those unfamiliar with it, following is a description.

Participants attended a dinner Sunday evening, May 6, to get to know the other participants and to learn about the process they would be going through.

A key element of the process was that each participant was assigned to a panel consisting of about 30 other participants. Each panel had a moderator and a recorder, who kept track of what the panel members decide.

On Monday and Tuesday, the five panels met separately to respond to questions prepared by the Arizona Town Hall in each of the 12 content areas. On Monday, each panel met to discuss the issues for four hours in the morning, and then again for four hours in the afternoon. In between sessions Monday, Gov. Janet Napolitano spoke to the participants. On Tuesday, the participants had two more four-hour long sessions.

Wednesday, all 160 participants met in a joint session to read through, edit and approve the report generated in the two days of discussions. The result was their report and recommendations.

To lead participants through this process, the Southern Arizona Leadership Council contracted with the Arizona Town Hall. The Arizona Town Hall wrote the discussion questions, chose the panel chairs and recorders, and oversaw the writing of the report.

The Arizona Town Hall is a non-profit organization with its headquarters in Phoenix. The Arizona Town Hall has been conducting town halls twice yearly for 45 years, with leaders from around the state being invited to discuss pressing state issues. Several Arizona Town Halls have been on education, and others have been on water, transportation, healthcare, immigration and virtually every other issue that affects Arizona's future.

In its years of operation, the Arizona Town Hall has acquired a national reputation as an organization that fosters understanding among diverse groups of people, reaches consensus and recommends important improvements to state officials and lawmakers. A number of its recommendations have been enacted into law.