

Roundtable Recap

Roundtable Name: Civic Engagement Roundtable
Date: November 18, 2017
Location: McKinley Club, 800 S 1st Ave, Phoenix, AZ
CRT Contact: Christine Dyster, cdyster@risc.maricopa.gov, (480) 381-4589

Overview

Starting at 2:00pm, seven community members, five County Recorder's staff members, and Recorder Fontes attended this roundtable. We started with an update about the 2017 election. We had 23.5 percent overall turnout, we finished counting ballots within 24 hours of Ballot Centers closing, and less than 2,000 voters chose to vote in person. One particular point of interest was that 10 percent of ballots returned were from voters not on the Permanent Early Voter List. Two issues we found we needed to better educate voters on were who was eligible to vote in the election and the process an early ballot goes through to ensure a vote remains secret. The bottom line was that this election went, as Recorder Fontes put it, "disturbingly well".

The discussion focused on better ways to reach out and better inform the community. With a variety of perspectives present, this office got a clearer picture of what materials and information groups need to advocate for voting. The discussion wrapped up by 3:30pm.

Top Discussion Points

The bulk of the discussion focused on better ways to communicate and educate voters. Some of the top discussion points were:

1. **Voter education about the Ballot:** The instructions in the ballot should include two further steps. Flip over your ballot and a mail it back by date. Some voters were unaware that the backside of the Phoenix Elementary and Phoenix Union ballot were separate issues.
2. **Better voter education about Ballot Centers:** There needs to be a clear and loud message that you can vote anywhere coming from the office. Potentially a visual should be created to clearly mark that issue.
3. **Outreach needs to be through many sources:** Local papers are an excellent way for getting our message out. The social media efforts and videos done by the Recorder's Office were helpful and should continue in the future.
4. **Community Network meetings need to come back:** The Recorder's Office would benefit from restarting this informational, lecture-style meeting where the office can bring together and inform community leaders about upcoming elections. These meetings were especially helpful because of the diversity of people who attended, making them valuable networking opportunities.

Action Items

These items require further action from someone attending the roundtable or the office. Each item is listed with the assign person first- then the action (in parenthesis is the due date):

- All Attendees - Invite three people who would benefit from participating in the next Roundtable. (June 2018)
- All Attendees- Send any information they have about local sources (newspapers, neighborhood newsletters, etc) that may be willing to publish election information before the next election. (February 1, 2018)
- Christine Dyster- Meet with members of the Recorder's office and report back on what bringing back the Community Network meetings will look like going forward. (December 20, 2018)
- Lauren Henschen, Christine Dyster, and Karen Loschiavo- As part of Lauren's work with neighborhoods, she suggested a one page document or infographic to help inform people of everything from registering to vote to casting their ballot. She will work with Christine and Karen from the Recorder's office to put together the best product. (January 12, 2018)
- Maricopa County Recorder's Office- In order to improve outreach, this office will provide print and web friendly materials for upcoming elections. (Prior to each election)
- Christine Dyster and Karen Loschiavo- There were suggestions made on how to improve the instructions that come with the ballot. We will take those under consideration for the next election. . (June 2018)

Proposed Timeline

Next Meeting: This will be a biannual roundtable. However, if any civic engagement groups wish to host a discussion about elections and voter engagement in between, the Maricopa County Recorder's Office would be happy to attend and listen.

When: Late June or Early July, Christine will send a request to schedule at the beginning of May.

Where: Phoenix Center for the Arts