

Equity for All Arizonans

CITY OF PHOENIX FUTURE LEADERS TOWN HALL

November 3, 2023 – Phoenix, AZ

DEFINING EQUITY AND ITS IMPACT

Equity is different from equality. Equality treats everyone the same. Equity understands and acknowledges everyone's different starting points and provides them with what they need. Equality gives everyone the same resources. Equity helps to level the playing field so that everyone has an opportunity to succeed.

Equity is demonstrated when parents and school counselors provide each child with the individual support and tools he or she needs. For immigrants or those who speak a different language, it means providing extra support so they can succeed. For those who struggle with math or other subjects, it may be providing a tutor. For those with disabilities, it is providing the extra support needed to succeed or removing barriers to success. For those from families with limited funds, it means giving students the money to go to college and to reach their dreams. For those from rural or other areas with limited resources, it is providing those extra resources so that everyone has an opportunity to be their best. For those who come from groups that have been historically discriminated against (including women in traditional male dominated fields), it is taking the historical perspective into account and providing opportunities for them to succeed.

Equity takes into account that everyone deserves to be great. Equity is giving everyone the tools they need so we can all succeed together.

OPTIMIZING EVERYONE'S POTENTIAL AND IMPROVING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EQUITABLE APPROACHES

An equitable approach gives everyone equal opportunities even when they come from different places. It allows people and communities to succeed that have not historically had many resources or that have not been treated equally.

To best serve those who have experienced discrimination or inequitable treatment, it is important to ask questions and to be open to the responses from those individuals and communities so we can best provide the equitable resources they need to prosper.

Equity is critical to our future. It is important to ensure we are providing the best resources and opportunities to our youth—especially those who need it most. If youth who need additional resources, whether funding for education, housing, or other resources, are not provided with these equitable opportunities to succeed, it will impact the future for everyone. We need to be the change. We need to come together to support and advocate for an equitable approach that bridges divides, brings people together, opens conversation and provides a space for people to feel comfortable in expressing themselves. We need to lead by example. It starts with us.

Many of the greatest opportunities for using equity as an approach for improving our communities involve our youth and our schools. Targeting younger kids is especially beneficial because they are our future generation and are more open minded. Our educational system in general, including for the current generation, involves several opportunities because it is more diverse with mixed cultures, races, and religions.

Clubs, events, and job fairs are just some of the methods that create opportunities for those who will benefit from equitable support. For example, events that highlight scholarships to college or workforce

opportunities can create a ripple effect that extends benefits far beyond the individual student being helped. It is also important for schools to create opportunities for people to share their stories because it helps students to better prepare for adulthood.

Schools can be a place for students to learn how to research and explore opportunities on their own—a method for empowering students to be their own best resource in the future. Schools can provide opportunities that consider different learning styles and provide access to recruiters from colleges and other career pathways. Schools also can provide clubs such as HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and MEChA (the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan or Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan) that allow students to learn about opportunities for scholarships, as well as additional support or resources. Clubs also allow students to learn about diverse cultures, to get out of their comfort zones and to become leaders in supporting their communities.

Giving students equitable and proper resources will increase their participation in school and in their community. In the end, an equitable approach makes the world a better and happier place.

NEXT STEPS AND ACTIONS

Education and Opportunities Within Schools

- Provide education and information about Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to all students.
- Principals, district leaders, and others should promote and support more schoolwide events.
For example, Expos with diverse colleges, trade schools and job fairs. Support schoolwide events such as what the National Honor Society (NHS) does to raise awareness about opportunities for colleges and other opportunities that promote inclusivity.
- Teachers, students, and parents can help with educational needs, providing educational programs and tutors that allow kids to start learning workforce skills. We can use current successful programs as a model and expand them.

Advocacy and Political Action

- Reach out to the masses directly. Give equity to those who need it and connect people to resources, including providing them with opportunities for political empowerment.
- Contact Arizona Boards and elected officials like the governor to advocate for people of low income.
- Elected and community leaders should promote diversity and provide opportunities to marginalized groups and those in need.

Other Actions

- Utilize events that elevate different community voices. Hold more events like this to spread awareness and include those in power.
- Provide additional support and resources to organizations such as food banks.
- Create fiscal policies that distribute resources to lower economic groups who are in need.
- Arizona government, club sponsors, and other leaders should take charge of these actions. They need to take the best interests of students to heart by giving them the resources they need to be successful. They need to create spaces for diverse students to use their voices and to have the opportunities they need to be successful because they are our future leaders.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with each individual, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions during the City of Phoenix Future Leaders Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Not let other people stop me from being successful and becoming everything I want to be.
- Keep all the information to motivate me and help me keep going because I know I might have a point in my life where I am low or told to stop.
- Remember today as a lesson for life and how I choose to live my life after having this conversation with everyone.
- Strive for what I want. For example, I will not be afraid to ask questions and to ask for help. This program really helped me understand to go for what you want and that there is much more out there.
- Lend a helping hand if I can.
- Share my resources and support if needed.
- Bring up this conversation with my student government (STUGO) group so that we can find more opportunities to provide equity.
- Go to more town hall events and share my ideas with the community on how we can improve our city.
- Take what I have learned today and use it to help other people so that everyone will always feel united.
- Learn how to connect and learn other people's stories.
- Use this opportunity to learn how to connect with our elected officials to promote equity.
- Start thinking about other people's struggles and lend my resources to help.
- Talk to my friends about coming together in our community for youth events and learning new things.
- Explore more into my civil virtue and engage more in town hall meetings.
- Take this opportunity to help inform others that your voice matters and people will help you achieve what you want to do.
- Advocate and lend a helping hand to provide resources for those who need it to show equity in this community.
- Treat everyone equitably. I did not know what equity was or what it meant. I thought equity was equality. Now that I know this, I will try harder to understand someone's story.
- Treat everyone equally and respect everyone.
- Support people who need my support and learn my native language more so I can help people who are from my country. For example, interpreting for elders or parents who do not speak English.
- Consider the fact there will be times where I will need to try harder than others to find what will help me succeed.
- Always be sure to take into consideration where everyone comes from and find common ground with those I do not have anything in common with.

- Share all the information I learned today with others on how to treat others regardless of where they come from or start from.
- Treat everybody the same no matter the differences they have from me. At the end of the day, we are all humans.
- Start being more open-minded and acknowledging that the differences in our lives are to make us better.
- Start to understand that equity and equality are two different things.
- Treat people better and speak up for our community.
- Personally use equity in my life by using resources from school to grow and find more opportunities.
- Use my knowledge on the difference between equity and equality and share it with my community.
- Speak up and raise awareness.
- Go to more town hall events to share the perspectives and thoughts of young people.
- Volunteer to help those in need.
- Attend more town hall programs and make my voice heard by contributing to the conversation.
- Try to be more involved.
- Understand different points of views.
- Come together with others to help each other.
- Make sure to always ask questions to make a difference.
- Go to college and further my education.
- Never let anyone “downplay” my efforts.
- Help those who need guidance.
- Make sure my process helps my community.
- Try my best to be the best version of myself.
- Be more engaged in my community.