



CENTER FOR NONPROFIT MANAGEMENTSM

strong nonprofits build strong communities

Town Hall Meeting – A Call to Action
Conversation with Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert
January 16, 2008

Executive Summary

Introduction:

The Center for Nonprofit Management, Dallas convened nonprofits throughout North Texas to come together at the *Nonprofit Town Hall: A Call to Action* for a discussion with Mayor Leppert and to address the three top national priorities for the U.S. nonprofit sector established at the Nonprofit Congress.

Mayor Tom Leppert was the special guest and the Center for Nonprofit Management led a 45 minute conversation about nonprofits, the critical community issues they address and their role in the city of Dallas. The Town Hall meeting was held on Wednesday, January 16, 2008 and attended by 150 representatives from nonprofits, foundations, corporations and the general public.

In preparation for the second *Nonprofit Congress* to be held in Washington, DC in June 2008, Center leaders outlined the top national priorities for the sector: organizational effectiveness, public awareness, and advocacy. Participants identified what we are currently doing to address the Top Priorities, learned what others are doing that can further support the common vision we have developed and discuss how we can support each other in our efforts.

Nonprofit and community leaders discussed the priorities and focused on developing ideas for raising the profile of the sector. The participants developed a list of 60 ideas in the broad areas of social impact, economic impact, collaborations, events, media and messages.

The Center for Nonprofit Management will lead two initiatives as a result of the Town Hall. The Center is leading an effort in collaboration with the mayor's office to create a *Nonprofit Advisory Council* to have a voice and increase the opportunities for nonprofit involvement in Dallas. Also, the Center is convening a *Nonprofit Public Awareness Task Force* of nonprofit leaders to develop a public awareness campaign.

Specific Town Hall Results

Key Issues Addressed:

1. Find innovative ways to address key social service issues.
2. Increase entrepreneurial skill and spirit to strengthen the sector.
3. Work with the City to improve visibility and communication about nonprofits.
4. Promote nonprofits doing business with the City of Dallas.
5. Engage more nonprofit and community partnerships.
6. Develop key messages about the economic and social impact of the nonprofit sector.

Action Items:

1. **CNM** will work with the City of Dallas to create a **Nonprofit Advisory Council** to improve visibility and communication about nonprofits.
2. **Mayor Leppert** to work through the Center for Nonprofit Management to **provide more information on vendor opportunities for nonprofits.**
3. **CNM** will work with Mayor Leppert to create a **Mayor's Vendor Fair** to promote nonprofits doing business with the City of Dallas.
4. **CMN** will launch a **Public Awareness & Support Task Force** to develop a public awareness campaign to enhance the perception and value of the nonprofit sector.

National Top Values for the Nonprofit Sector

- Dedication to the Betterment of the Communities We Serve
- Commitment to Serve Others
- Catalyst for Change and Innovation
- Ethics and Integrity



National Top Priorities of the Nonprofit Congress

To achieve the mission of the *Nonprofit Congress* -- to strengthen the nonprofit sector -- it is critical that the strategies used to address the Top Priorities also establish lasting knowledge, networks, and infrastructure within the nonprofit sector. The Priorities of the nonprofit sector as voted on during the 2006 National Meeting are:

- **Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness:** Ensure that the sector has the resources it needs to serve communities and is effectively and efficiently managed. This priority emphasizes Accountability/Best Practices and Leadership.
- **Advocacy and Grassroots Community Activities:** Advocate for the sector at large and engage our constituents to solve problems at the grassroots level.
- **Public Awareness and Support of the Sector:** Increase public understanding and support so that nonprofits can continue to do their best work.

Overarching Goals

The crosscutting goals of the *Nonprofit Congress* include the following:

- **Increasing Capacity:** Develop skills and knowledge at all levels of nonprofit organizations, including staff, board, and volunteers; actively develop local leadership.
- **Growing Networks:** Facilitate communication and relationships between diverse nonprofits at the local, state, and national level; create lasting nonprofit coalitions; build cross-sector relationships with government, business, media, and other stakeholders.
- **Inspiring Engagement:** Encourage nonprofits to accept a leadership role in their local communities; ensure that nonprofits prioritize collective and proactive engagement.

These goals will not only help to achieve impact on the Top Priorities, but will benefit the nonprofit sector for years to come.

