

THE FLORIDA CIVIC ADVANCE SUMMIT

CREATING A ROAD MAP FOR
ADVANCING CIVIC LIFE
IN FLORIDA



Prepared for the
Florida Civic Advance Summit
by the FCRC Consensus Center at
Florida State University

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CONSENSUS CENTER

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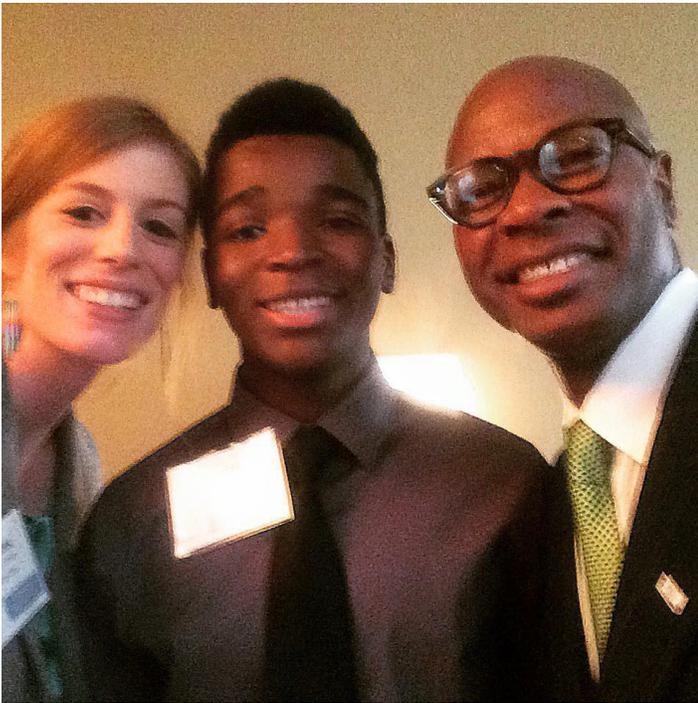
The Florida Civic Advance

consensus.fsu.edu/Civic-Advance/index.html

The Florida Civic Advance is a new multi-sector collaborative initiative launched by the FCRC Consensus Center to support and strengthen civic progress in Florida communities. Its members represent over 30 local, regional, and statewide organizations committed to achieving long-term civic improvements in all of Florida's communities.

Executive Summary

Florida's across-the-board low performance on civic health indicators presents a major barrier to sustaining the highly desired quality of life and the competitive edge of the state's communities. Finding collaborative and practical solutions to that issue was the goal of the February 2015 Florida Civic Advance Summit. The Summit brought together over 100 leaders representing a collaborative network – the Florida Civic Advance – composed of 30 organizations concerned about the civic health of Florida's communities. The Summit was the first initiative of the Florida Civic Advance, a project initiated by the FCRC Florida Consensus Center at Florida State University in collaboration with many other organizations.



Florida's Civic Advance Summit – the first meeting of its kind in Florida and the nation – brought together a diverse range of participants from all ages and backgrounds. Their shared concern was the need to address the poor civic health of Florida's communities by working collaboratively with other organizations and citizens to develop, implement, and champion a shared agenda to strengthen Florida's civic health today and into the future.

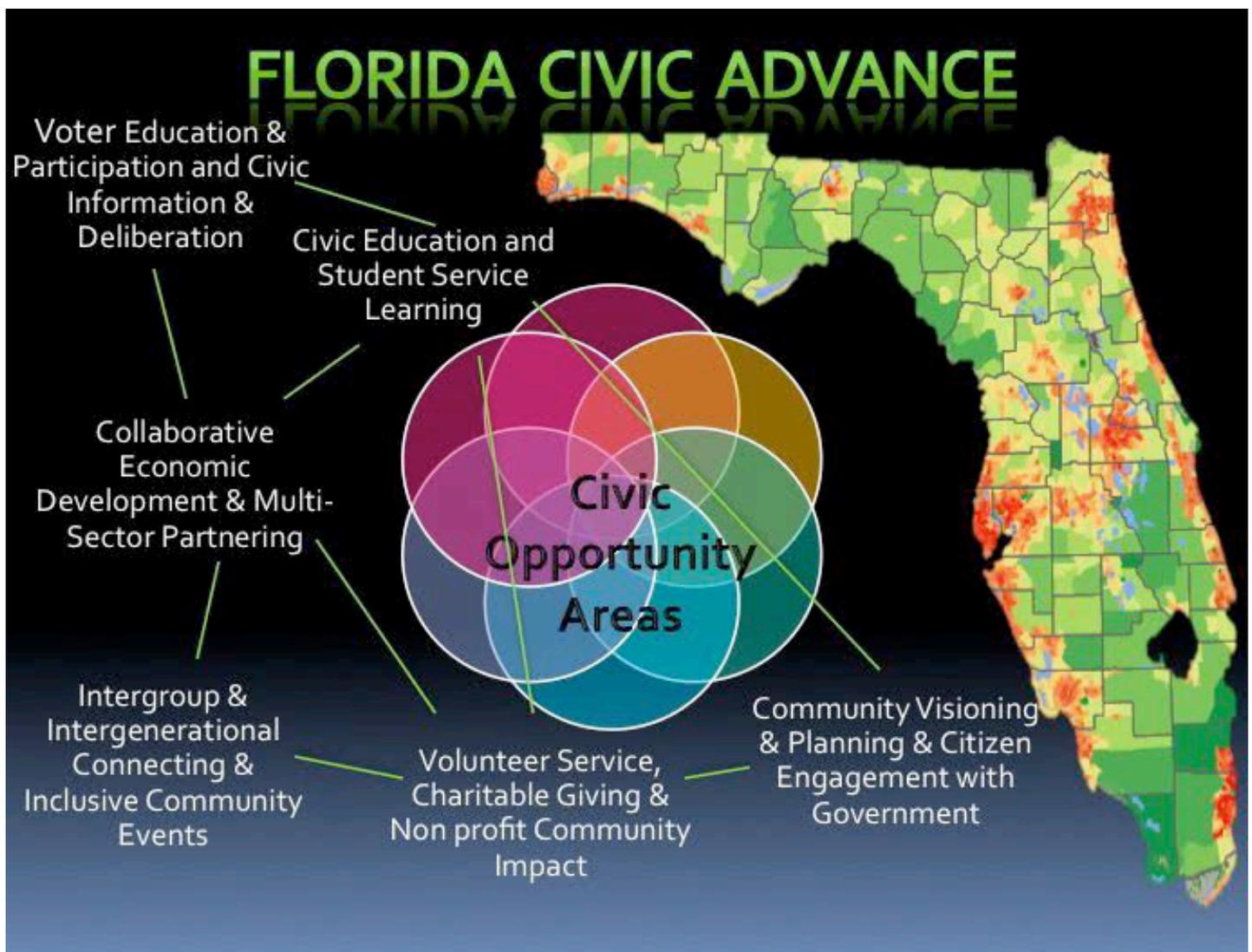
The Critical State Problem Addressed

The statistics from a recent national study of civic engagement highlight the state of Florida's civic health. Among the 50 states, Florida is 50th in working with neighbors to fix community problems, 48th in donating money to charity, 47th in attending a public meeting and belonging to a community group, and 46th in volunteering. Florida is also one of the top 10 states for low voter registration. In addition, the state's high growth rate means that new citizens are arriving each day from other countries and across the country. At present, only 35 percent of Floridians are natives, while 65 percent come from elsewhere. Getting that new two-thirds of the state's population involved and calling their new communities home is a pressing challenge. Finding collaborative community solutions and sustaining an ever-expanding group of organizations and individuals to champion and implement those solutions led to the 2015 Florida Civic Advance Summit and the creation of the FCA.

Shared Goals and Action Agenda

The two-day Summit days achieved its goals to establish a:

- Common knowledge base.
- Shared set of goals and broad agreement on the next steps to achieve them.
- Strong commitment to advance civic engagement in Florida.
- Greater recognition of the importance of the civic health of Florida communities to sustaining the state's highly desirable quality of life and economic prosperity.



The Summit ended with commitments on shared goals and the next steps to achieve those goals. Participants (right) came from all parts of Florida and represented a variety of experiences and backgrounds and included a well-balanced group of interested citizens, organizations, and experts in civic health from Florida and other parts of the country.



Those conclusions resulted from key Summit features that participants reported as highly valuable:

- Multiple opportunities for open dialogue with those from diverse perspectives and areas of knowledge.
- Getting to know and learning from each other and new and proven best practices.
- Forming new connections with others committed to achieving the same end.



Participants agreed on three strategic next steps for addressing Florida's civic health challenges:

- Develop a strategic design for how to best work together as a network and provide tangible assistance to local communities and leaders.
- Complete and implement the FCA's organizational model that focuses on leadership development, best practices research, and community assistance.
- Provide multiple ways for partner organizations to work together formally and informally.



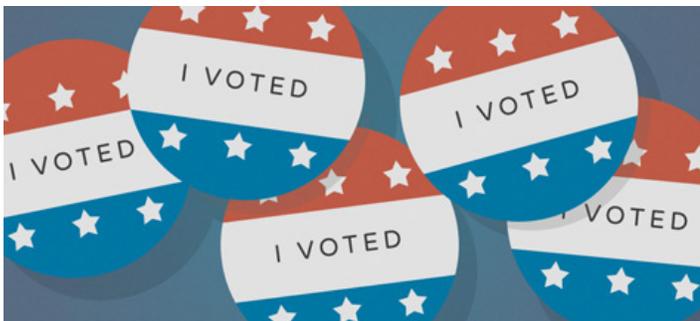
The Summit ended with a broad-based agreement to advance civic engagement in Florida and specific actions by many FCA organizations going forward. The FCRC Florida Consensus Center committed to seek the resources necessary to work collaboratively with others to strengthen civic life throughout the state. "Working together, we can go far," Center Director Bob Jones concluded.





The Florida Civic Advance Summit

The February 2015 Florida Civic Advance Summit was the first meeting of its kind in Florida and the nation. It addressed a critical issue to the state's sustained success and quality of life – its poor quality of civic life.



The 2012 report, *Civic Engagement in Florida and the Nation*, highlights data that underscore the low level of civic engagement in Florida. The data were developed as part of the Florida Civic Health initiative (floridacivichealth.com), a joint project between the Lou Frey Institute at the University of Central Florida (loufreyinstitute.org) and Bob Graham Center for Public Policy at the University of Florida (bobgrahamcenter.ufl.edu). Additional project partners are the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship (floridacitizen.org) and National Conference on Citizenship (ncoc.net/about), a congressionally-chartered organization dedicated to strengthening civic life in America.

A network of 30 organizations concerned about that issue came together to convene the summit as an initial activity of the Florida Civic Advance (FCA), a project initiated by the Florida Consensus Center at Florida State University in collaboration with many other organizations. Over 100 leaders from those organizations came together to share concerns, information, ideas, and commitments related to strengthening civic life in Florida's communities.

The Summit underscored the importance of collaboration, following the advice of the African proverb that states: "To go fast, go alone. To go far, go together."

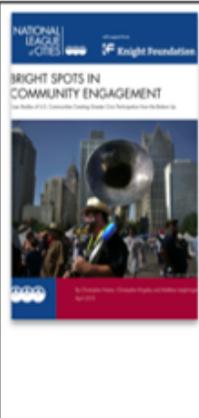
Why is Florida Civic Advance Important?

Civically active and engaged communities are central to sustaining Florida’s desirable quality of life and the economic prosperity of its communities. Only 35 percent of Floridians are natives, and 65 percent come from other nations and other areas of the United States and have relatively weak ties to their Florida communities. Many who live in Florida today have only been in the state for a few years, come from different cultures and traditions, and struggle to find ways to connect and improve the civic life of their new communities. For those reasons, making Florida home is a key theme of the FCA. Research on civic engagement in Florida and the nation (Civic Engagement in Florida and the Nation, 2012, floridacivichealth.com/Snapshot) shows that for key civic health indicators among the 50 states, Florida is:

- 46th in volunteering.
- 45th in visiting or contacting a public official.
- 40th in voter registration.
- 36th in voter turnout.

The same study of civic health also looked at the 50 largest U.S. metropolitan areas and ranked Miami dead last at 50th, Orlando at 48th, and Jacksonville and Tampa both at 47th. A 2011 study found that Florida’s youth aged 18-29 were among “the most civically disengaged in one of the most civically disengaged states.” Florida’s low civic capacity led the FCRC Consensus Center at Florida State University to initiate the Florida Civic Advance (FCA) project with the goal to strengthen civic life in Florida communities. The FCA is a growing network of more than 30 local, regional, and statewide organizations that believe a vibrant civic life matters and are committed to strengthening citizen involvement in making their communities work and prosper. The FCA’s goals are to:

- 50th in working with neighbors to fix a community problem .
- 48th in donating money to a charity.
- 47th in attending a public meeting and in belonging to a community group.

	<p>1. To obtain and share information about exemplary and innovative civic practice</p>		<p>2) To encourage, influence, and undertake research in regard to civic practices</p>		<p>3) To assist local leaders, citizens, and governments in strengthening civic life in their communities</p>
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Stu Langton (center, above), a member of the opening panel on setting the table for civic advance, discusses advancing a Florida Civic Advance network with other Summit participants.

To accomplish those goals, the FCA is developing:

- Ideas on how to best communicate and collaborate around civic challenges in Florida's communities.
- Strategies, models, and tools to help local communities improve civic performance and enhance civic capacity and life.
- Ideas for ways to address and find solutions to particular civic challenges.
- A list of priority areas for ongoing civic research and ways to carry out that research.

The FCRC Consensus Center, founded over 25 years ago by the Florida legislature to help develop shared solutions to contentious public policy and community issues, is leading the FCA's initiatives to advance civic leadership, civility and civic health. To clarify the civic challenge, the Center worked in partnership with many other civic organizations to prepare a series of white papers analyzing the state's weak civic culture and offering some suggested actions

to transform that weakness into a strength. Those actions took the form of the Florida Civic Advance network and its focus on working collaboratively in making Florida's civic culture stronger. (More information on the Consensus Center can be found at consensus.fsu.edu.)

“The Florida Civic Advance will work to make Florida a leader, not a laggard, in civic innovation and health. We know that strong civic engagement is a fundamental economic development and quality of life issue and that more can be accomplished for all through a collective action. It is for those reasons that the FCRC Consensus Center initiated the Florida Civic Advance project. Working through collaboration and consensus building is the center's core mission.”

Bob Jones, Director
FCRC Consensus Center

What Summit Participants Learned and Discussed

The agenda for the Summit was:

- Designed to create an interactive process that combined learning from each other and national experts with open dialogue and exchange of ideas, and
- Structured to develop ideas and preferences for the development of the FCA network and its work to strengthen civic life in Florida.

Each keynote address was followed by a discussion panel and participant roundtable discussions that added Florida-specific civic information and ideas for action. Day one created the information foundation for day two's presentations and review of next steps in building a strong Florida Civic Advance network.

“What we are trying to do through the Florida Civic Advance is the first statewide effort of its kind in the country. Given effort, time, and support, it is not impossible to imagine a day when Florida might become known as a national and world-class leader in civic innovation. That is particularly important in Florida where it seems like everyone comes from somewhere else and, as a result, people are often not as civic minded as they need to be to resolve public problems.”

Stu Langton

“Setting the Table” for Civic Advance and the Promise of Civic Renewal

The opening Summit panel and keynote speaker established the goal: strengthening Florida's civic health. As Linda Shelley, observed in her opening comments, the Summit was intended to be the beginning of a collaborative initiative with the capacity to leverage resources and involve a growing number of partners in strengthening the civic capacity of Florida communities. Shelley was joined by Ken Pruitt (St. Lucie County Property Appraiser, former Florida Senate President and member of the FCRC Consensus Center Leadership Council), Dr. Stuart Langton (FCRC Consensus Center

Senior Fellow), and Robert Jones, the Center's director. Their comments were followed by those of keynote speaker Peter Levine, the Lincoln Filene Professor of Citizenship & Public Affairs and Director of CIRCLE at Tufts University.

Ken Pruitt reinforced the importance of civic leadership and engagement in building strong local and regional economies. “Community vitality,” Pruitt observed, “is largely determined by the number of leaders in a community and how both individually and collectively they talk, decide, act, and collaborate with one another

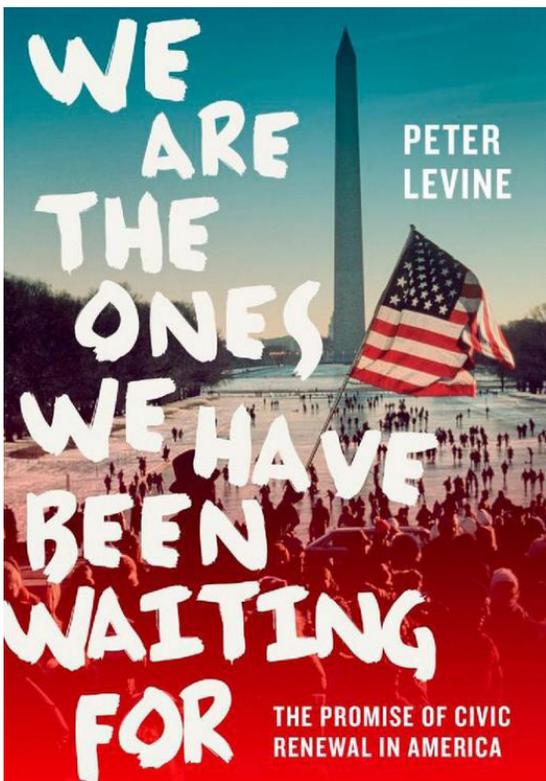
“We have gathered here to build a growing network of support for pursuing civic matters and solutions in our communities. The Summit is designed to draw upon the participants’ insights and suggestions for actions that can strengthen our communities through civic engagement, innovation, and problem-solving.”

Linda Shelley,
Former Secretary of the Florida
Department of Community Affairs and
Chief of Staff for Governor Lawton
Chiles and a member of the FCRC
Consensus Center Leadership Council

and their fellow citizens.” He also stressed the ability to be non-partisan and neutral and work with all groups in the community is also important.

Stuart Langton stressed the importance of strengthening civic life in Florida, comparing the need to create a strong civic infrastructure with putting in place a community’s physical infrastructure such as roads and bridges. “Floridians need to recognize the important connection between the state’s civic health and having a prosperous economy,” Langton emphasized. With the low civic action ranking of Florida compared to other states there is a lot of catch-up work to do if the state’s civic health is to be commensurate with a population that is projected to increase by 25 percent over the next 25 years. Accelerating that catch-up work and the need to learn about and share best civic practices is urgent if Florida is to effectively deal with the next wave of growth.

In his keynote address, Peter Levine emphasized that the Florida Civic Advance is a unique state initiative that is working to advance civic efforts in Florida’s communities and is an approach that reflects a broader movement for civic renewal in America. He provided a national perspective on what it is to be an active and good citizen by highlighting the importance of connecting deliberation with collaboration and action. In the United States, about a quarter of the adult population reports doing volunteer service in a year. Half of those say that they belong to some sort of volunteer association. That means, Levine stressed, we are pretty busy working together, but our work is often disconnected from our talk. The antidote is building and strengthening the civic relationships that result from working and deliberating with people and connecting networks that are enriched and challenged



Summit opening keynote speaker Peter Levine described how people can change the norms and structures of their own communities through deliberative civic action. It is through civic engagement and organizing that people can solve their own problems and improve communities.

through shared experiences. Although such relationships may be scarce, they represent renewable sources of energy and power for communities and allow people to collaborate more effectively with each other. In conclusion, Levine challenged Summit participants to ask, “What should WE do? Rather than ‘What should be done?’ The action is what matters. The real value comes from being willing to put our ideas into practice.”

“It’s the action that counts and matters. We don’t really think very clearly unless we are also willing to act and learn from experience. That is, we need to be willing to put our ideas into practice. That disciplines us in a way that is valuable.”

Peter Levine

The Link Between Civic Advance and Building Strong Civic Communities in Florida

Following Peter Levine’s presentation, four leaders shared their views on the importance of civic advance in Florida.

Suzanne Richards, Director of the Corporation for National and Community Service in Florida – reported that her agency has spent \$40 million to support 15,000 national service volunteers in the state. She encouraged connecting with and engaging volunteers from programs such as Americorps, the Senior Corps, and particularly VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). She challenged conference participants to think how VISTA’s resources, such as research, social networking, program development, and volunteer recruiting and organizing can best be used to promote civic advance in Florida

Randy Reid, International City and County Managers Association (ICMA) Regional Coordinator and Practitioner in Residence at the University of Florida, Graham Center for Public Service, institutions with a strong commitment to citizen engagement – highlighted his concerns about Florida’s poor civic health, he identified

challenges for local government today, including rising citizen mistrust and alienation and a growing lack of basic civic knowledge among citizens. He offered a five-point prescription to address those concerns: civic education, civic mentoring, civic engagement, civic responsibility, and civic metrics, concluding, “Collaboration for a good civic life is not optional, it is essential.”

Lila Jaber, recent President of Leadership Florida – overviewed the organization’s work over the past 30 years in promoting collaborative leadership development and civic engagement. She also cited the many good examples of positive civic practice that occur despite Florida’s poor civic health ratings. One is the experience of her father, a Palestinian American, who voted in every election after he became a naturalized citizen. Another is the Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce’s work in the five-county Capital Region surrounding Tallahassee to link civic engagement with economic development and opportunities for minority small business owners.

Jeff Johnson, AARP Florida State Director – noted that his organization was strongly committed to citizen engagement and that too many people are guided by a philosophy reflected on a car license plate he had seen en route to the Summit that read “Just Me.” A major thrust of AARP is to help 50+ citizens re-imagine their lives and become more engaged in and strengthen the civic life in their communities, including through increased intergenerational interactions. “Unless we have a rich civic culture, we will never be able to achieve breakthroughs on the community problems Florida faces.”

The Civic “Idea Fest” Summit table discussions that followed reinforced the importance of addressing Florida’s poor civic health. The prevailing view was captured by the comments was that, for the most part, Florida fails when it comes to active civic life and community engagement. That failure to engage citizens in civic life, participants observed, leads to a distrust of governmental initiatives and anxiety over rapid social changes that challenge civic life in Florida’s communities. There was agreement that civic engagement should be actively supported, linked to economic

“The work to improve Florida’s civic health needs to include tapping into the civic assets of the state’s 50-plus population. That means putting in place intergenerational civic strategies”

Jeff Johnson, State Director
AARP Florida

development, taught in schools, inclusive, and built on shared values and trust. To accomplish that, communication is needed among leaders, personally and through social media. Being able to view issues through different lenses while pulling together toward shared goals and accounting for results is also key to civic success. Successful examples to strengthen civic engagement were recorded at each table on post-it pads (below). Those examples were organized around 12 civic opportunity areas identified by the FCA network (see page 16). The Florida Civic Advance website (consensus.fsu.edu/CA-COA/index) enables users to comment on the current showcase examples and add additional ones using on-line comment forms.



Civic Opportunity Areas

Florida	Civic	Advance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voter Education and Participation• Collaborative Economic Development• Community Information and Deliberation• Community Visioning and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer Service and Charitable Giving• Civic Education and Student Service Learning• Intergroup and Inter-generational Connecting• Multi-Sector Partnering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Citizen Engagement with Government• Civility, Neighborliness, and Community Caring• Nonprofit Community Impact• Inclusive Community Events

Recognizing that Americans have long appreciated the importance of civic values and practices, Summit planners identified 12 areas of activity and practice that help define important elements of civic life in Florida communities.

After reviewing those elements, Summit participants identified exemplary programs in each of the 12 areas. The examples were listed on post-it charts (background in photo on page 15) organized into 12 opportunity areas (above).

Building Strong Civic Communities in Florida

The closing address of the first day was by Dr. Susan Morse Moomah, author of the book *Smart Communities*, a member of the University of Virginia's School of Architecture faculty, and past Chair of the Kettering Foundation. Moomah spoke about the importance of leadership in achieving community change. "New models without lift are static," she observed. "True change is about champions, not leaders. Champions are those who see their job as setting the agenda to systematically change current civic conditions and encourage others to do their best. They have a vision and are persistent, never giving up." Each Summit participant, Moomah challenged, should decide if he or she is going to be one of the players or a champion. The best champion might be someone who is not immediately obvious, and it might require some deeper reflection and experience to find the best person for each situation and community. Moomah offered a number of valuable lessons from other communities where durable change has occurred.



Lessons for Building Stronger Communities in Florida Through Champions

- Structure initiatives like the Florida Civic Advance that enable every sector to collaboratively think through and decide on the best path for change and what needs to be done to achieve that change.
- Select an issue that galvanizes people – a topic they care about and that can bring people together to celebrate their own interests.
- Develop a clear expectation and path for civic involvement and sense of commonality.

Florida Civic Showcase Vignettes

Day two of the Summit began with presentations on five showcase civic improvement examples in Florida that reflect the kind of innovative civic work the FCA intends

to identify, analyze, and describe in the future. The examples (highlighted below) included both long-term success stories and those in early stages of development.

- **Village Square** (Liz Joyner) – a non-partisan public educational forum that promotes a civil, fact-based dialogue on divisive issues. Three of the current five Village Square initiatives are in Florida: Tallahassee, St. Petersburg, and Fort Lauderdale/Broward County.
- **Common Good Initiative** (Upenda Shabizz Phillips) – sponsored by the Allegany Franciscan Ministries, the Fort Pierce Lincoln Neighborhood Project is a place-based and community-oriented multi-year collaborative initiative, in early development, to create a healthier civic community.
- **Miami Gardens Science and Engineering Fair** (Councilman David Williams, Jr.) – developed by several community partners to improve educational and social outcomes for youth and expose them to the STEM fields through civic partnerships throughout the city.
- **Sebring Walk of Life Hotel** (Kay Lee Tuck) – initiated to solve poor living standards for migrant workers in an agriculturally-dependent area by converting a vacant hotel near the agricultural area into quality housing.
- **Sarasota Star Leadership Youth Training** (Yolanda Mancha) – focused on empowering youth to become leaders in service to their community by serving on nonprofit boards and receiving leadership training.

Enabling Local Civic Capacity: Roles for Local Government

Clarence Anthony, Executive Director of the National League of Cities, kicked off the discussion of what local governments need to do: be inclusive, engage citizens, and serve as a bridge-builder and a gate-opener among different sectors and their organizations. That role will make it easy for people to interact and get to know each other so that they can act on the common hopes and concerns they share. Drawing on his experiences at the National League of Cities and as a former mayor in South Florida, Anthony called attention to the many good transferable examples – what he called “bright spots” – of cities keeping citizens informed and involved despite declining public trust in government. In Florida, Anthony concluded, leaders need to increase a sense of

“Strengthening Florida’s civic health will require a commitment to engaging every sector from the beginning when developing new ideas. An early step for Florida Civic Advance could be to work with other partners to identify a set of four or five shared issues to focus on now that the economy is coming back. As the third largest state and one with a high level of wealth, there is no excuse for the state’s failing grade when it comes to engaging its citizens.”

Clarence Anthony

“When first elected as a local public official, there is no ‘how to’ manual, as Clarence observed. It is for that reason and seeing newly elected officials try to find their way that I created the Good Government Initiative. It provides basic information that a local official needs on core issues such as budgeting, ethics, finance, land use, and working with media. The importance of being inclusive of all views and backgrounds and mindful listening is also a part of the course.”

Katy Sorenson

Civic Research in Florida: Panel Members

- Fran Berry, Professor, Askew School of Policy, Florida State University
- Thomas Bryer, Associate Professor, Public Administration, University of Central Florida, and Director of the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management
- Douglas Dobson, Director, Frey Institute for Politics, University of Central Florida
- Peter Levine, Lincoln Filene Professor of Citizenship & Public Affairs, Director of CIRCLE at Tufts University
- DeeDee Rasmussen, Director, Florida Campus Compact

community by encouraging working together as one state across all sectors (public, private, and nonprofit). “No one stands alone.” A panel of three local elected officials reinforced Anthony’s points:

- Deland Mayor Bob Apgar stressed the importance of elected officials finding effective ways to engage citizens.
- Altamonte Springs Mayor Patricia Bates described innovations in her city to inform and engage citizens and partner with businesses.
- Miami Gardens Councilman David Williams described how he and his colleagues helped to build a strong connection between citizens and schools as a way to increase the sense of community and stronger bonds between citizens.

Building a Florida Civic Learning Agenda

To help set an agenda for the FCA’s goal to promote research about civic life and practices in Florida, a panel of researchers moderated by Stu Langton discussed related past, present, and future civic research in Florida. The context for their discussion was FCA’s draft list of the 12 Civic Opportunities which the panelists noted was a good place to start, including a focus on how the 12 areas interrelate and connect. Panelists also stressed the importance of working together to get the word out about research and preparing and sharing case studies on civic engagement. Florida civic research, the panel noted, should concentrate on identifying both the factors that led to the state’s civic rut and what can be learned from successful

civic initiatives in order to start correcting the problem by building a stronger civic life for all residents, including the state's diverse migrant populations and those with lower incomes who too often do not participate in civic life. As the FCA moves forward with its research agenda,

the panelists concluded, partnerships between higher education and communities will be important along with attention to research to support the implementation of policies that encourage civic engagement.

Leadership through Civic Engagement: Common Ground for Civic Leaders and Elected Officials

“We are in a new era in establishing relations between citizens and government,” Pete Peterson, Director of Pepperdine University’s Davenport Institute, observed, drawing on his experience in encouraging citizen engagement in California’s local governments and in his recent campaign for Secretary of State running on a citizen participation platform. “Although citizens today have evolved from wanting to be told about matters of importance to wanting to be engaged in influencing decisions, they are often not prepared to do more than attend

a public hearing. Local officials and citizens need to invent, test, and adopt better ways to deliberate, plan, decide, and work together. Seeking out and promoting innovations in civic involvement that bring conservative, moderate, liberal, and independent perspectives to the job of renewing and advancing civic life are good roles for the FCA, Peterson concluded. “Citizens will need to decide more and more how to allocate limited government resources and to increase collaboration in addressing community challenges.”

The Promise of Civic Collaboration in Economic Development

The connection between economic development and civic advance was the focus of a closing panel on community collaboration and leadership and their connection to economic success. Richard Walker noted that a good example Florida communities could learn from is the Boston Fed’s Working Cities Challenge that is supported by national foundations and the Massachusetts legislature and is designed to support and test a number of collaborative economic development projects within

struggling cities in Massachusetts. Walker’s comments were reinforced by Todd Greene, who emphasized that having a job was the basis for economic success for individuals and a precursor for meaningful citizen participation. That connection, Greene stressed, emphasizes the importance of connecting sometimes disparate workforce development programs and breaking down the silos that prevent strong collaborative relationships and inclusiveness.

Civic Collaboration in Economic Development Speakers and Panel Members

- Richard Walker, Senior Vice President, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
- Todd Greene, Vice President for Community Affairs, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
- Lila Jaber, Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce
- Tony Carvahal, Vice President, Florida Chamber Foundation
- Bert De Armas, Vice President, Sabadell United Bank
- Lynda Weatherman, President & CEO, Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast
- Karl Blischkel, Director, Strategic Business Development, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

In their discussion of the links between civic and economic networks, respondent panel members stressed the co-dependence of business and its community, with businesses serving as an integral part of community structure and as a partner in all community solutions. To achieve that active involvement, Tony Carvahal commented, civic questions should be framed in terms relevant to the core interests of business and businesses should be invited to participate in helping their communities improve their civic health.

In Florida, advancing business interests and community collaboration needs to also provide greater opportunities for lower income residents. “The economic game changer,” a panelist observed, is that “today the workforce and the businesses that employ them are increasingly demanding communities that can offer robust, quality, cross-sector civic collaborative opportunities.” To do that, communities will need to map their assets, clarify their sense of place, develop a shared community vision for economic development and civic life, and create an action plan to achieve the vision. That will require, moderator Lila Jaber concluded, a continued and deeper dialogue in Florida about how civic and economic issues are connected and can be leveraged to add value for both a community and local economy.

FCA Summit Participants' Commitments

- Bring researchers together to develop a Florida Civic Research agenda (UCF/FSU)
- Convene and host a 2nd statewide summit at later in 2016 (St. Petersburg College)
- Convene a regional Florida Civic Advance Summit in South Florida in early 2016 (Allegany Franciscan Ministries)
- Develop a front door for accessing college and university resources that address civic needs. (Florida Campus Compact)
- Provide training for local government leaders and managers to improve civic engagement. (IOGs)
- Work with Tufts University CIRCLE to help deepen the Florida Civic Advance model.
- Explore how the FCA network might involve volunteers from Americorp and VISTA to add to civic capacity in communities and organizations.
- Continue to do assessments of civic health and work with others to further refine civic metrics for Florida communities. (UCF/UF/ICMA)
- Connect philanthropies and local government to work together in Florida to enhance civic capacity. (Florida Philanthropic Network)
- Develop a website to help identify and access civic advance issues, information, and showcase examples. (FSU Consensus Center)

Next Steps: Building the FCA Network

The Summit's closing session focused on the future of the FCA and three initial planning challenges for the next year including:

- Develop a strategic design for how to best work together as a network and provide tangible assistance to local communities and leaders.
- Complete and implement the FCA's organizational model of a Coordinating Leadership Council and work groups for goal areas including Best Practices, Research, Civic Indicators, and Community Assistance.
- Provide multiple ways and create opportunities for partner organizations to work together, including those for loose or tight connections based on their interests and resources.

Following a set of commitments to action by a range of FCA network organizations, Stu Langton observed, "Our challenge is to determine the gaps that need better connecting, and priorities. That will require understanding the interests, resources and commitments of all the FCA network partners." In closing, Robert Jones re-emphasized the historic nature of the Summit and its focus on collaboration and conversation at the community, regional, and statewide levels: "We are committed to finding the resources needed to succeed as we work together to strengthen civic life throughout Florida. Working together, we can go far."



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consensus.fsu.edu/about_n14.shtml

The FCRC Consensus Center, based at Florida State University, serves as an independent public resource facilitating consensus solutions and supporting collaborative action. It assists public and private interests in preventing and resolving disputes and building consensus on public policy issues. The Center was created by the Florida legislature in 1987 and placed in its neutral home, Florida State University. For more information on the Center, go to consensus.fsu.edu.