

# *Equity for All Arizonans*

## **EQUITY IN SOUTHERN ARIZONA COMMUNITY TOWN HALL**

**October 19, 2023 – Nogales, AZ**

### **DEFINING EQUITY AND ITS IMPACT**

Equity is realizing that because we all come from different backgrounds, we need different resources to succeed. Our identity and the way in which we were raised have a direct influence on the way we think. Equity refers to being given the appropriate tools to achieve their goals because everyone has a different starting point and cannot access the same resources. Equality, on the other hand, is being fair and treating everyone equally, regardless of their background. Realizing this might create a deeper sense of justice.

Inequity has caused different challenges in our community. Examples can be found both in education and immigration. For instance, children living in similar areas might receive a different quality of education because of the background and the conditions of their families. Not all young people are given the same opportunities, and some families have had to fight to be given equal access to the education that their children receive. Another example of inequity relates to the treatment of immigrants. Oftentimes, speaking a different language becomes a reason for treating people unequally. Beyond linguistic limitations, it's important to listen to each other as well as work with respect and understanding other people's positions.

### **OPTIMIZING EVERYONE'S POTENTIAL THROUGH EQUITABLE APPROACHES**

It's extremely important to have an equitable approach. To really overcome the problems in our community, it is important to understand where we come from. An equitable approach is also important here in Nogales because it's a unique community. Many do not appreciate the fact that this is a bilingual community, and many people end up having to move somewhere else to get a job.

An equitable approach is also relevant when it comes to funding priorities. We are spending lots of money on war right now, while there are people here who would benefit from increased funding in education, healthcare, and mental health. An equitable approach is realizing that bureaucracy is an additional challenge to the well-being of a community. It's important to make sure that everyone has the same opportunity, for instance, with education and jobs. Making sure that we are promoting opportunities to everyone in the community, making it easy for people to know of resources that might apply to them. It's important to take everyone into consideration when making decisions. For instance, students need to have the same opportunities, especially when it comes to students with disabilities.

Having an equitable approach could have a great impact on building not only a better state but also a better nation.

### **IMPROVING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EQUITY**

There are different opportunities to use equity as an approach to improve our community including employment, education, and housing. One of these is employment opportunities. For instance, people with a felony or substance use history face significant challenges in finding a job. Those in recovery might start feeling motivated to start from scratch and get a job, but once they start to look for one it's like they crash into a wall. It's difficult to find good employment opportunities that are willing to take them.

Another group that might benefit from an equity approach in employment opportunities is women. There are few opportunities for mothers who don't have childcare—this is different from what men go through. A woman needs to work harder because she must work but also needs to take care of her

children. Salaries for women are not high enough, and many of them are overqualified for their positions, but they end up accepting it because they need to take care of their children.

Education is another opportunity to use an equity approach. It's important to give good opportunities to students, from kindergarten to college. Oftentimes students struggle because they don't have the support or resources needed to plan the next steps to go to college. We need to have better access to resources such as scholarships.

We could also use an equity approach in the way we treat older generations. We oftentimes overlook the knowledge and abilities that older generations might have and how they could contribute to our society.

The government has a big role to play in addressing equity. There are too many policies that have been created and enacted without understanding how they affect people on the ground. Reaching equity means understanding that people own all the knowledge. Politicians need to see from the point of view of each person when they create policies. Government and grantmaking agencies need to be consistent with their help and show true support. They should not disappear after a grant period ends, they should provide follow-ups and be persistent in the support they can give. Collaboration is important to achieve equity. We need to work together with the county and the state to solve issues together.

### **NEXT STEPS AND ACTIONS**

There are different opportunities to apply equity. First, collaborate and talk to each other. Agencies and organizations should work together as a team. It's important to share all the available resources and spread the knowledge because you never know when a family member or a friend will need it. Social media can make this easier.

Each of us can play a role in addressing equity. Let's have an open mind, understanding that things can change at any point and that things could be improved if we want to. Equity starts from our family and our communities. For instance, let's have more patience with older community members. They might need more help understanding how technology works. There's always a way to help people in need, and in case you don't know how to help, just listen to those in need and see what role you can play. Once we start addressing equity individually, it can have a domino effect, where everyone will be able to contribute to a better future.

### **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 Equity in Southern Arizona Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

#### ***I WILL...***

- Continue to seek more opportunities in our community.
- Promote a culture of equity—being aware and creating awareness of how to improve our environment.
- Utilizar la informacion lacual tengo e implento para informar a la comunidad donde pertenece.
- Continue to show empathy and resources to my community. I have hope for this community that it can get better.
- Teach the comments with my family and friends.
- Continue to advocate and support.
- Learn about our communities' inequities to give the next generation an opportunity to be the next Martin Luther King Jr.!

- Share the new information and new ideas to improve equity in my program. Change begins with me!
- Change my thinking about different people (race, behavior, etc.).
- Never criticize people for how they act.
- Cambiar para ser mas empatica con mis semejantes y empezar a cambiar mi pensar para mejorar nuestra comunidad.
- Respect everybody no matter what race or what thoughts they have.
- Cambiar mi pensamiento conductual, para poder aceptar a las personas sin importar sus preferencias cualquiera que fueran.
- Ser equitativa.
- Otorgando informacion de los programas que esten en mi conocimiento.
- A cambiar mi entendimiento y empaticar con las personas a mi alrededor, asi como las personas ajenas a mi o nuevas en mi vida.
- Hay muchas acciones como colaborar, ayudar, tener empatia, comunicar con nosotros y la comunidad, dar tu opinion, y promover los valores. Todo inicia con uno mismo.
- Hold listening circles to better understand problems and solutions for our community's access to mental health services.
- Help the community as a young person in school.
- Try to seek and find the answer to making equity with all my school mates.
- Ayudar a la comunidad en todo lo que pueda aportar.
- Hacer grupos de ayuda para las personas de la tercera edad.
- Ayudar a madres que son amas de casa.
- Share my knowledge on the standards for culturally linguistically appropriate services (CLAS) to other agencies and friends to allow everyone to understand with icons not just words.
- Utilizer la informacion que recabe sobre mis comunidades para disenar planes de accion.
- Spread the word to people I know and the youth.
- Encourage youth to speak up on thoughts they have about the community and how it is equitable for all.
- Educate my family and friends over the differences between equality and equity.
- Sharing information about disparities in the community over social media.
- Empezar por nuestra sociedad y redes sociales, asi llegar a mas gente para participar en todos los programas.
- Start at a basic level, make an impact at my school.
- Be the voice of many students so that the problems most people talk about may subside when students get to adult life.
- Run for county supervisor.
- Participate in different spaces where I can help our community.

- Empezare siendo mas empatica con las neccesidades de las personas en nuestra comunidad, instruyendome y educandome y de esta forma contribuir a una sociedad mas estable en todas las areas y niveles de la sociedad.
- Ayudar poniendo mi granito de arena en lo posible. Hay mucha necesida en muchas o todos los aspectos economio, educacion, y en la salud.
- Be more involved in community events and volunteer.