

ELEMENTS OF CIVIC LEADERSHIP

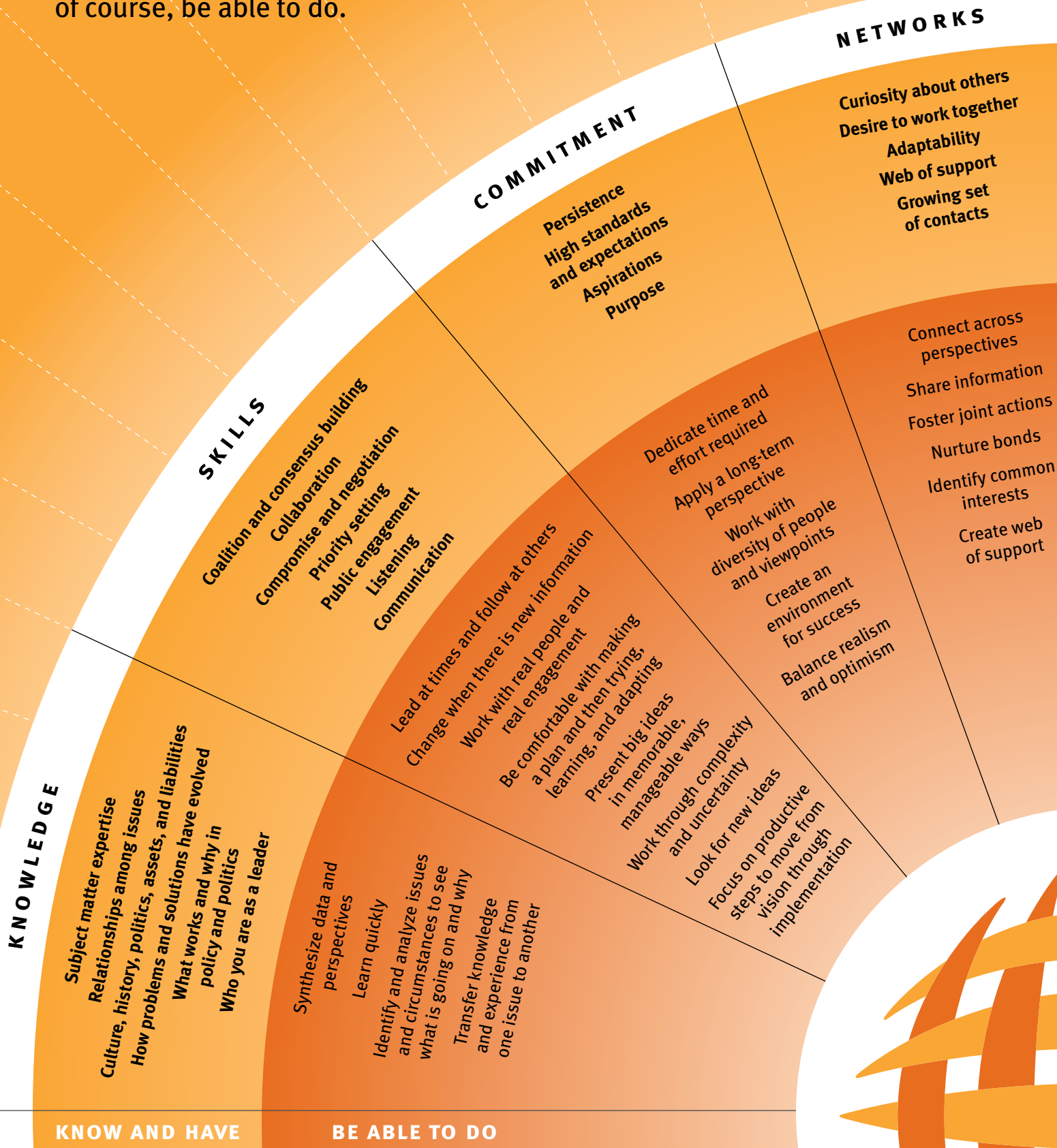
KNOWLEDGE
SKILLS
COMMITMENT
NETWORKS



ARIZONA CENTER FOR
CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Shaping Tomorrow Together.

The words **knowledge, skills, commitment, and networks** can mean many things. In the parlance of civic leadership, they refer to what civic leaders should know and have and, of course, be able to do.





THE ARIZONA CENTER FOR CIVIC LEADERSHIP exists to strengthen civic leadership to benefit future generations of Arizonans. Many Arizonans may see helping to guide decision making in their communities or for the state as a black box or activity unimportant or inaccessible to them. But civic leadership is neither mysterious nor exclusive. Civic leadership is simply the means to addressing the many opportunities and challenges our state and communities have. It is a precious resource to be cultivated and nurtured.

Arizonans can point to civic leadership exemplars in every era, especially at the state level. Their lessons remain powerful but experience is showing that even more is needed for the complexity of the 21st century. Problems change. Competition grows. Generations shift. Morés swing. The tried and true stops working.

Intentionally developing civic leaders with dedication to public service, significant skills, deep knowledge, and strong commitment to their places, helps ensure that the Arizonans who will step up in coming years are well-matched to the needs of the day and are ready, willing, and able to be effective, creative public servants.

The Flinn Foundation Board of Directors approved the development of the Arizona Center for Civic Leadership in 2010 because research from the Battelle Technology Partnership showed the state appeared to lack “a statewide civic leadership vision, direction, and system.” Particularly, state-level civic leadership development had not received the development it deserved, given Arizona’s significant issues and equally notable resources and opportunities. To address increasing complexity, rising expectations, and shifting demographics, among other circumstances, three mutually reinforcing programs—the Flinn-Brown Civic Leadership Academy, the Civic Leadership Collaborative, and Civic Communications—were envisioned to develop individuals to be future state-level civic leaders, build a pipeline for civic leadership, and enhance the state’s civic culture.

The Arizona Center for Civic Leadership strives continually to refresh the pool of realistic visionaries who can analyze issues, craft long-term, common good (and common sense) solutions, and get the work done. The “guideposts,” shown on the previous page, help to direct the center’s efforts.

Most descriptions of the practice of civic leadership today focus on how arduous it is. Much of that description rings true. Civic leadership used to be the domain of a handful of insiders but is now the business of everyone with an interest. And anyone can be a player when news is 24/7. An uncomfortable tension has developed between Arizonans’ general desire for, and belief in the necessity of, civic leadership and the trends and events that discourage many who would take up the mantle. Arguably, in addition, many Arizonans themselves have failed to take their civic responsibilities as seriously as they should.

Alongside these negatives, however, is the reality that Arizonans remain positive about the state’s future. In fact, many Arizonans are anxious for the chance to make a big difference. The value of reflecting on challenges and opportunities, what civic leadership means in our context, what the best civic leaders do and how to develop them is always high because the demand for great civic leadership will never go away. Fortunately, neither does the opportunity to cultivate and nurture the supply.

Guideposts

- **YES YOU** Any Arizonan dedicated to serving others and solving society’s puzzles has the basic makings of a civic leader. Arizonans from all perspectives and walks of life can develop as civic leaders to make fact-driven decisions for long-term benefits.
- **DEVELOP BY LEARNING, DOING, AND BACKING** Civic leaders develop the dedication to public service and the knowledge, skills, and commitment—the basic building blocks of civic leadership—through training, education, and personal experience but also through the trial and error of a variety of roles both out in front and behind the scenes.
- **IT’S A TEAM SPORT** Civic leaders address issues and opportunities through the collaborative efforts of residents, private and public leaders, and private, public, and nonprofit organizations. Leaders can’t do everything themselves. Success comes from people understanding realities and working together.
- **EQUAL DOSES OF PRACTICE, THEORY, AND PERSPECTIVES** Progress in solving 21st century “wicked” problems most often comes from the combination of real-world experience and deep engagement with data and scholarship, plus the synthesis of many perspectives.
- **HIGH STANDARDS** Civic leadership will always have its rough-and-tumble sides. Traditionally, it also has been respected. But the honor associated with civic leadership has been tarnished in recent decades. Many now seem to view the public service civic leadership connotes with skepticism, even contempt. The image of public service, and thus the potential for more readily making desired changes, has to be enhanced through everyday civility, real achievement, and ethical behavior.
- **A SPECIAL BREED** The words knowledge, skills, commitment, and networks can mean many things. In the parlance of civic leadership, as shown on the cover, they refer to what civic leaders should know, have, and be able to do.



The Flinn Foundation was established by Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Flinn in 1965 with the mission of improving the quality of life in Arizona. The Phoenix-based nonprofit philanthropic endowment supports the advancement of Arizona’s bioscience sector, the Flinn Scholars program, arts and culture, and civic leadership.



The Thomas R. Brown Foundations are dedicated to raising the quality of life for present and future generations through expanded understanding and application of economic principles in private and public decision making. The foundations, based in Tucson, are also dedicated to advancing solutions to community problems through strategic grants, research, and policy analysis.

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