

Community Building--Ten Lessons Learned

Community building creates healthier communities, more involved citizens, more inspired staff, and a strong commitment to a better quality of life. During an audio conference sponsored by ICMA University, Ed Everett, former city manager of Redwood City, California, and Raymond Patchett, former city manager of Carlsbad, California, shared lessons learned in civic engagement and community building.

1. Community building is a process, not a project. It is ongoing and takes time, thought, and persistence.
2. The role of the local government in community building is to act as a catalyst for change, promote leadership, convene partnerships, build relationships and foster social networks, and focus on priorities and needs to achieve community goals.
3. A community is an "Association of Associations." One objective of the city is to weave/web together the existing small communities in our city: (church groups, service clubs, sports groups, mother's clubs, PTA, etc.)
4. Community building must become a way of doing the city's business, an everyday part of your culture and philosophy.
5. There is value in bringing all viewpoints to the table. The more diversity you have in the room, the more creativity you will have in community problem-solving.
6. Healthy communities and positive relationships go hand-in-hand. Civic vitality is built on the capacity of all people involved to trust one another and work together.
7. Citizens will engage in things they are passionate about and things that further their dreams and hopes for their neighborhood/city.
8. Citizens must understand and accept that they are responsible and accountable for the quality of life of their community as much as, if not more than, their city government.
9. Quality of life is different for every community. Set priorities and goals. Choose quality of life indicators that measure progress toward the chosen goals.
10. Measuring results is not as important as knowing that you've done the work of bringing people together, and helping them to make community connections.

To hear the complete audio conference, "The Power of Community Building: Unleash the Potential," and download the presentation materials, order through the [ICMA online bookstore](#).

For related news, information, and resources, visit ICMA's site on [community building](#).