

# Civic Business Policy Agenda

*In the process of being developed and advanced*

**Civic Business Identity Statement:** Civic Business builds the capacity of business institutions to develop active citizen leaders within their organizations. Civic Business does this in partnership with other demonstrations of the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative to renew and sustain democracy and to create a world that is abundant and just.

Civic Business is a demonstration of the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative.

**Civic:** The work of citizens. “Civic” is a qualifier that indicates that our work is framed in the tension between democratic principles and develops the capacity of the *populous* to govern for the good of the whole within that tension.

**Govern:** To rule over by right of authority; to exercise a directing or restraining influence over; to guide; to define problems, contribute to solutions and act as a policy maker.

**Policy:** Principled course of action. Policies provide a compass for governance; they are the result of taking bearing and setting direction. They provide the basis for rewards and sanctions. Policies require continual evaluation and feedback. Individuals and institutions have policies.

**Agenda:** Plan for action. “We believe in this principled course of action (policy) and therefore we will do x, y and z (agenda).”

*We believe*

## All Citizens Can Develop the Civic Capacity to Govern for the Common Good

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*Every individual has the capacity to know what is good, to grow in that knowledge, to govern for the common good and to be a co-producer of justice in the world. In a democracy, citizenship is the role individuals have to carry out this capacity.*

### **Glossary**

#### ***Common Good-***

Found in the tension between what is good for the parts and what is good for the whole. The common good is found by organizing people with diverse interests to the common obligation of active citizenship and negotiating to find mutually acceptable agreements that advance the common good.

#### ***Justice-***

The right relationship among us, in alignment with transcendent principles and values and respectful of human capacity and human dignity.

#### ***Self-interest-***

Literally means “self among others.” Derived from the social connections and influences that form identity. All human beings have self-interest. It is understood to be the basis for action or non-action. Civic Organizing grows *enlightened* self-interest by linking self to transcendent civic principles.

### ***Because***

- Current business is structured in a service delivery model grounded in the principles of meeting defined needs that can be supported by a market. Principles include, development of expertise, creativity, quality, excellence, timeliness, customer service, and consumption.
- Business is compatible with democratic principles but the current model does not make that clear and service principles get separated from the principles of democracy which include the need for justice, and the obligation to govern for the common good.
- Like all service systems, business systems structure power hierarchically leaving the majority without any governing obligation. Expertise is focused on immediate problem-solving vs. organizing governing capacity for democratic purpose. Leadership development focusses on technical skills.
- The result is though business principles are compatible with democracy, business systems foster narrow self-interest, immediate gratification, and the capacity to consume. These outcomes do not produce sustainable businesses or contribute to a sustainable democracy.
- Business has a scale of impact that makes it especially important to develop and institute a sustainable inter-generational way for companies to develop the civic identity, language and practice needed to sustain their company while contributing to the common good.

### ***Therefore, we propose these policies:***

- Business leaders need to develop a system of governance grounded in the compatibility between business and civic principles with the capacity to work across lines of difference to achieve goals that benefit the common good.