

# Civic Governance Policy Agenda

**Identity Statement:** Civic Governance is a new approach to policymaking that produces a civic infrastructure needed to govern for the common good and sustain democracy as a just system of governance.

**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 of Clean Water

*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**

**Individuals** must recognize how their decisions impact the welfare of others (the ability of others to have clean water) and see a need to develop their capacity to govern for the common good.

**Societal institutions** (family, faith, community, work, learning and governance) are all policy centers that should develop the identity and capacity of active citizenship to be the basis for governance in water policy making.

Therefore, we propose these policies:

1. **Link water quality restoration and protection work to active citizenship and a higher purpose** (i.e., all citizens in communities and institutions have a central role and obligation in a democracy to solve the challenge of water pollution and to work toward the common goal of clean water).
2. **Develop a cross-sector base of civic leaders in watershed communities across Minnesota and Wisconsin.** Focus on those interested in and willing to engage in all aspects of the civic policy making process (including strategic planning, civic engagement, and transparent, accountable decision-making).
3. **Establish internal policies in all institutions that support the identity of active citizenship, develop civic capacity and create governing processes that can sustain a meaningful governing role for all citizens in watershed projects across Minnesota and Wisconsin.** This requires a dedication of resources to civic leadership development across time, sectors, and generations.
4. Advance recommendations 1-3 as a Civic Policy Agenda.