

# Creating Effective Citizen Leadership Academies

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ICMA Conference Presenter



# Presenter

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**CivicPraxis**

— Moving from Talk to Action —

**ICMA CMS**  
Center for Management Strategies

# Citizen Leadership Academies

- Civic education programs provided by local government
- Emerging local government practice since 1990's
- Growing focus on citizen training and education
- Focus on building *skills* and *knowledge*

# Similar Local Leadership Programs

- **Citizen Police Academies**
  - 45% of all police departments
  - Focus on police operations and civic knowledge
  - Create positive citizen/police interactions
  - Build trust/cooperation
  - Minimal participant cost
  - Open to all residents
- **Community Leadership**
  - Thousands of local communities
  - Chamber/United Way
  - Broad range of topics and leadership skills
  - Build trust, collaboration, involvement
  - Higher participant cost
  - Highly selective

# Citizen Leaders Academy Snapshot

- 2012 survey of 74 municipal programs
- Provided in-house by single government
- Annual program
- Average of 8 sessions for 2 ½-3 hours
- 20-25 participants
- Minimal participant cost
- \$2000 +/- annual cost (not incl. staff costs)
- Hands on learning and field trips

# Typical Program Agenda

- **Week 1:** Introduction
- **Week 2:** Community Planning
- **Week 3:** Development Process
- **Week 4:** Budget and Finance
- **Week 5:** Public Works
- **Week 6:** Utilities
- **Week 7:** Public Safety
- **Week 8:** Graduation

# Three Broad Goals

Theme	Basic	Advanced
<b>Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equip citizens with basic information</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help staff learn citizen perspectives</li><li>• Help citizens learn key issues</li></ul>
<b>Involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage more involvement</li><li>• Show citizens how to get involved</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explicitly prepare participants for boards</li><li>• Cultivate community leadership</li></ul>
<b>Community Relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build communication lines with officials</li><li>• Act as informal ambassadors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage in dialogue</li><li>• Community building w/others and staff</li></ul>

# Montgomery Citizens' Academy

- Example of enhanced capacity building academy
- Started in 2008
- “Coolest civics class you will ever take!”
- 10 sessions, Saturday morning, Jan-Mar
- 25 participants, \$99 fee for materials
- Focus on two way dialogue
- Actively recruit beyond “usual suspects”



# Academy Session Topics

- Zen and the Art of Citizenships
- Sycamore Community Schools and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner
- Dreams, Aspirations and Taxes...Is the Price Right?
- Homeland Safety and Security in Your Own Backyard
- Service and Volunteerism: A New Call to Action

# Next Wave of Citizen Training?

- Relational public problem solving
- Public Achievement: youth civic education model
- Congregational based community organizing
- Clear Vision Eau Claire civic capacity building

# Relational Public Problem Solving

- Diverse, small group focus
- Addressing 'wicked problems' through engagement and collaboration
- Identify mutual self-interests
- Build connections to achieve outcomes

# Core Skills

- Values house meetings
- One on one relational meetings
- Power mapping community stakeholders
- Action planning
- Public evaluation

# Examples

- Dayton Northland Nonprofit Mall Project
- UW-Eau Claire Foundation facilities planning
- Clear Vision Eau Claire
  - P3 downtown performing arts center
  - Homeless shelter
  - Community gardens
  - Summer backpack meals for LMI youth
  - Eau Claire County fairgrounds facility planning

# Citizen Academies 2.0

- 21<sup>st</sup> century citizen engagement is not government centric
- Building knowledge and skills
- Empowering citizens for independent community building
- Integrating relational problem solving skills into citizen academy curriculum

# Resources

- Montgomery Citizens' Leadership Academy  
<http://www.montgomeryohio.org/citizens-leadership-academy/>
- Ricardo S. Morse. "Citizens Academies: Local Governments Building Capacity for Citizen Engagement." *Public Performance & Management Review*, Vol. 36. September 2012, pp. 79-101
- Clear Vision Eau Claire  
<http://clearvisioneauclaire.org/>

# Questions/Comments?

Additional Information...





The logo features the text 'ICMA 100th ANNUAL CONFERENCE' centered against a light blue background with two large, stylized white fireworks. The '100' is in a large, blue, serif font, with 'th' in a smaller, orange, script font. 'ICMA' is in a blue, sans-serif font above the '100'. 'ANNUAL CONFERENCE' is in a blue, sans-serif font below the '100'.

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A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of a large green curved shape with a fine grid pattern, topped by a thin orange line and a light blue curved line.