



Greater Phoenix Leadership, Inc.

Overview

Greater Phoenix Leadership (GPL) was established in 1975 as the Phoenix 40 by business and civic leaders to improve the Phoenix region, and the state of Arizona, by bringing civic and business leadership to bear on critical priority issues. During the past five years, a new generation of business leaders decided to become more “personally engaged” in GPL’s priority issues. This meant meeting with key state decision-makers — the Governor and legislators — to help design new initiatives, then play lead roles in their implementation. To this end, GPL was instrumental in establishing a common agenda among the business organizations in the region, which became the Business Coalition.

GPL’s regional and state priorities include education (P-20, early childhood through graduate school) and workforce development, transportation, military facilities, crime prevention, community enhancement/quality of life and state finance. Its major role is as a convener and driver for business leadership to engage around specific issues.

Regional Priorities

During the past decade, GPL has undergone a transformation. GPL members realized that they had to do more than just talk about their priority issues. They met with key regional and state decision-makers to design, inform, and implement GPL’s key priorities. They now serve on and chair several boards and task forces relative to their issues of concern — for example, the Governor’s Workforce Board and the Commission Analyzing State Fiscal and Tax Policy and the Arizona Business and Education Coalition.

Perhaps the most successful initiative in which GPL has been involved is its P-20: An Approach to Integrated Learning, an overall architecture of education, pre-school through graduate school and employment. P-20 seeks to develop the talent and intellectual capacity of Arizona’s residents in order to have a more skilled citizenry, competitive economy and high quality of life. During 2004, GPL focused its educational agenda on school readiness, K-12, higher education and workforce development. GPL led the initiative for voluntary all-day kindergarten, sup-

ORGANIZATIONAL SNAPSHOT

Type of Organization

Business and civic leaders

Unit of Membership

Exclusively companies/legal/accounting firms/foundations

Number of Members

89 active

Unit of Membership

Individual per organization

Dues Determined by

Company size and/or revenues

Annual Dues

\$5,000 to \$20,000

Annual Operating Budget

\$500,000 to less than \$1 million

Staff Members (FTE)

6

Board Members

16 voting; 3 non-voting

Regional Priorities

Education, Transportation, Crime Prevention, Military Facilities, Community Enhancement/Quality of Life, State Finance

ported by Governor Napolitano, which resulted in \$25 million in state funds for a five-year phase-in for public schools; it also advocated the establishment of standards for school readiness through graduation, with key benchmarks along the way. GPL advocated improving teacher recruitment and retention through a bill for performance-based compensation for classroom teachers; it collaborated with the Valley Leadership in conducting training sessions for potential school board members; and provided best practices training for school administrators in leadership and creating school environments for higher achievement among students.

In transportation issues, GPL was a significant player in moving the region's transportation plan through the legislature and on to the November 2004 ballot. Maricopa County voters approved an extension of the existing sales tax to fund the region's transportation needs that will generate approximately \$15.8 billion over the next 20 years for new and improved roadways, expansion of the region's bus system, and additional miles to already approved light rail routes. GPL as an organization — and through its members — is actively engaged in achieving substantial regional cooperation that is focused on transportation issues. A critical aspect of GPL's involvement was to broaden the regional coalition to include local governments.

In 2003, GPL's President co-chaired the Governor's Military Facilities Task Force which developed 27 recommendations ensuring the long-term preservation of the state's military installations. Key recommendations implemented in 2004 included the creation of a permanent Military Affairs Commission to advise Arizona's elected leadership on the actions required to sustain and grow the state's network of military installations, and the establishment of a Military Installation Fund for local base preservation state revenue stream of \$5 million a year for 20 years to acquire property rights and assist in joint infrastructure projects.

Structure and Operations

A staff of six supports the GPL Board of Directors and membership. Membership is approximately 90 corporate chief executive officers (CEOs) plus 20 additional non-voting emeritus and special members, 16 of who serve on the Board. The Board of Directors is composed of 16 active members plus 3 non-voting advisors, legal, emeritus representatives and a President.

The GPL membership has steadily grown within the last five years from 75 in 2000 to about 90 currently. The active engagement of members has also grown; three-quarters of the members play active roles in organizational activities. In the last decade, new leadership has made the organization more open, inclusive and actively engaging the members, with a focus on measurable results. The consensus among staff is that this has resulted in a more effective organization on the issues it undertakes. GPL has developed a more strategic and sustainable agenda, which has helped the organization define and move forward on its priority issues. This has provided a continuous strategic construct for its agenda, which has yielded greater influence on regional and state decision-makers.

The GPL's annual operating budget is between \$500,000 and \$1 million. This budget has increased over the past seven years so that GPL could more adequately address critical issues without having to request supplemental funds from the members. The current level is expected to hold for the near future. While dues haven't increased, the level of funding has due to an increase in the number of members, allowing GPL to build a reserve and pursue its priorities. All revenues for GPL are completely derived from members' dues.