

# Backgrounder



**Oklahoma Community Institute** is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that has been helping build leaders and their Oklahoma communities since 1995. We are the only organization in the state of Oklahoma dedicated to helping individuals improve their communities. OCI specializes in community-wide strategic planning, the Citizens Academy leadership program and the annual Conversations on Community Renewal Conference.

The Oklahoma Community Institute was recommended in Oklahoma's 5-year Economic Development Plan of 1995 and created to serve as a resource to communities who want to help themselves.

As a result of input from citizen groups all over the state, OCI has focused on three key areas of community development and leadership training: Community-Wide Strategic Planning, Oklahoma Citizens Academy and Conversations on Community Renewal Conference.

Since OCI's creation, community-wide strategic planning has been facilitated in over 50 Oklahoma communities. Over the life of OCI and our planning process we have continued to revise and update the planning process to be more effective in helping communities identify their most significant priorities and putting in place the plans to address these priorities.

The Oklahoma Citizens Academy was created in 2003 and graduated its first class in 2004. The Oklahoma Citizens Academy was formed to give individuals the tools and information needed to have a positive impact on the future development of their communities. The academy runs from November to April each year, and includes one session a month in a different community of Oklahoma.

In January 2000 OCI hosted its first conference titled Conversations on Community Renewal. This conference is one of the most successful events sponsored each year by OCI. Participants receive timely information and make valuable contacts. It also has brought a heightened awareness of our organization in communities across the state. In March 2009, OCI will be hosting its 10th annual conference.

From 1995 to present day, OCI has been committed to building a better Oklahoma by providing these three programs to its communities and citizens. We are proud of the work we have accomplished in tandem with Oklahoma's communities in the last 13 years, and are excited to take on the new challenges facing us in the future.