



## Project on Civic Reflection

### WHAT IS CIVIC REFLECTION?

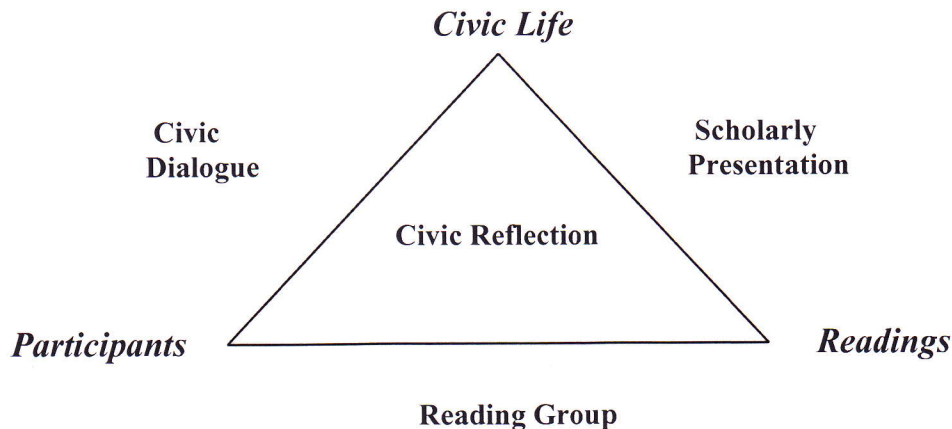
Imagine stepping back from the pressures of daily life and thinking about why you do what you do. Imagine getting together with other civically engaged people and talking about your values and the choices you make in serving your community. Now imagine beginning this conversation by discussing short readings that help you gather and focus your thoughts. This, in a nutshell, is civic reflection.

In civic reflection, a group of people with common civic interests step back and think about their life in community. Meeting in a hospitable place, they engage in facilitated conversation. The conversation focuses first on a short, thought-provoking reading and gradually opens up onto larger questions about civic engagement. *What obligations do we have to others in our community? Why join one group and not another? To whom should we give? What do we really expect of those whom we serve?* By reading and talking together about these underlying questions, participants gain a richer connection to one another—and to the complex work of civic life.

To quote one participant, “The more we share our deep reflections with each other, the more we learn how to work together easily and effectively for the common good.”

### THE CIVIC REFLECTION TRIANGLE

The activity of civic reflection might be thought of as a triangle, with the points of the triangle representing the participants, readings, and civic life.



If you neglect any one of the points in the triangle, the activity becomes something else that can be perfectly worthwhile (a civic dialogue, a reading group, a lecture), but it is not what we mean by civic reflection.