Box

Citizen Governance

Leading American Communities Into the 21st Century

Governing American communities becomes ever more challenging in the contemporary political and economic environment. People in communities seek to exercise local control of public programs as they confront powerful special interests and public demands for a smaller, more responsive public sector. Furthermore, they contend with an entrenched traditional view of public professionals as experts who control public agencies and provide services. Drawing on fundamental ideas about the relationship of citizens to the public sphere, Richard C. Box presents a model of "citizen governance." Recognizing the challenges in the community governance setting, he advocates rethinking the structure of local government and the roles of citizens, elected officials, and public professionals in the 21st century. His model shifts a large part of the responsibility for local public policy from the professional and the elected official to the citizen. Citizens take part directly in creating and implementing policy, elected officials coordinate the policy process, and public professionals facilitate citizen discourse, offering the knowledge of public practice needed for successful "citizen governance."

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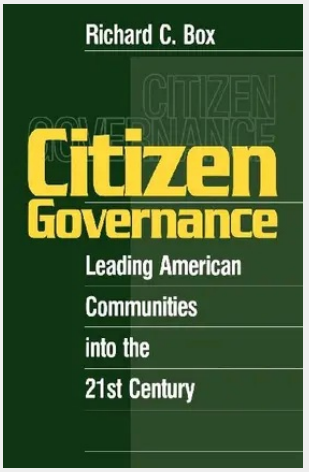

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