



## Raj Vinnakota

A pioneering social entrepreneur, Rajiv Vinnakota serves as President of C&S, leading its mission to strengthen civic life in America by sparking young people to create bold, fresh solutions to civic problems. He works with leaders across higher education, communities, and workplaces to build coalitions that help young people become effective citizens.

Raj has dedicated his life to initiatives that help American citizens from all walks of life to become productive and engaged members of society. Early in his career, Raj co-founded the [SEED Foundation](#), the nation's first network of public, college-preparatory boarding schools for underserved children. The SEED schools were featured in both television and film, and Raj won multiple awards for his work with SEED, including Harvard University's Innovation in American Government Award, Fast Company/Monitor Group's Social Capitalist Award, and Oprah Winfrey's Use Your Life Award.

Before joining the Institute for Citizens and Scholars, Raj served as Executive Vice-President of the [Aspen Institute](#). In this role, he launched and led the new Youth & Engagement Programs division devoted to youth leadership development, civic engagement, and opportunity.

Raj has been at the forefront of innovative scholarship and research that has played a pivotal role in shaping the civic field. His publication credits include *From Civic Education to a Civic Learning Ecosystem*, *Mapping Civic Measurement*, *The Civic Outlook of Young Adults in America* and *Gen Z Civic Vibe Check*. He appears regularly on media outlets such as Associated Press, NPR, Forbes, The Hill, Chronicle of Higher Education, Philanthropy News Digest, and Nonprofit Quarterly. As an expert on civic learning and Gen Z, he has spoken at The Fordham Institute, Results for America, Civic Learning Week, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, and as a commencement speaker for the University of Chicago Charter School and the University of Pittsburgh.

Raj served as a trustee, executive committee member, and national chair of the annual giving committee at Princeton University. He has also been on the boards of the Meyer Foundation and the Constructive Dialogue Institute. Today, he serves on the board of SEED and two public companies, Enovis Corporation and ESAB, where he chairs the nominating and governance committees.

Raj grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the child of Indian immigrants who instilled in him the faith that a good education could open doors to great things. He graduated from Princeton University and is a

recipient of Princeton's Woodrow Wilson Award, the university's highest honor for undergraduate alumni. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from Rutgers University in 2025. He lives in Maine with his wife and cat and has recently become an empty-nester.