

Citizenship in the Community

1. Describe your community to your counselor giving
 - a. A short history
 - b. Cultures and ethnic groups
 - c. Major places of employmentWhat is the future of your community?

History of your Community: Where did the settlers come from? What attracted them? (economic opportunity, freedom of worship, inexpensive or free land, etc.) Who founded your community? Which people were important in the development of your community? Which events influenced the growth? What customs if any remain? Are there stories or legends from the frontier days? We are indeed a nation of immigrants. All have brought their distinctive backgrounds to weave into the fabric of American life. Travel and instant communication has made our country seem smaller and smaller. (Note: You may get information from your public library, your telephone directory, your school library, your city hall or administration center, or your local chamber of commerce.

2. Mark or point out on a map of your community the following:
 - a. Chief government buildings such as your city hall, county courthouse, and public works/services facility
 - b. Fire station, police station, and hospital nearest your home
 - c. Schools, churches, and synagogues near your home
 - d. Main highways to neighboring cities and towns
 - e. Nearest railroads and bus stations and airport, if any
 - f. Chief industries or other major places of employment
 - g. Historical and other interesting points.
3. Do the following:
 - a. Chart the organization of your local or state government. Show the top offices and tell which are elected or appointed.
 - b. Name the political parties in your community government and list four persons active in the politics of your community and what positions they hold.

Forms of Local Government:

Municipal Government

Three basic systems

Mayor --- council

Most popular in large cities. Voters elect a mayor to serve as the executive officer and council members to pass laws and enact ordinances.

Council --- manager

Often used in cities with populations between 5,000 and 500,000 residents. Voters elect the members of the council, and the council members appoint a professional manager to execute their policies and supervise the city departments.

Commission

Voters elect commissioners to set legislative policy as a group and to administer city departments individually. Usually in small communities.

County Government

90% of the U.S. population live in counties. The traditional functions of counties are law enforcement, judicial administration, road construction and maintenance, keeping public records, welfare, and, in some areas, the administration of public schools.

Three forms of county government:

Commission System

Voters elect a board of commissioners, which has both legislative and executive powers.

The commissioners share power with other elected officials such as a sheriff, prosecutor, clerk, and coroner.

Council --- Administrator

An elected commission passes laws and appoints an administrator to execute its policy.

Elected Administrator

Least common.

Elected administrator serves as chief executive.

Council determine legislative policy.

Consolidation of city and county governments occurs occasionally.

Township Government:

Decreasing.

In purest form, local voters assemble in a town meeting to decide issues such as taxes, bonds, and budgets.

School Districts:

Provide for the education of young people in their jurisdictions.

Run by an elected board whose policies are carried out by an appointed or elected superintendent.

Financing Local Government:

Increasing dependence on state and federal money.

Increasing local tax rates and fee structures to keep up with higher government costs.

Political Parties:

Democrat

Republican

Others

Parties are active at the county and precinct level.

4. Attend ONE of the following:

a. County or parish board meeting

b. City council meeting

c. School board meeting

d. Municipal, county, or state court session.

5. After visiting the governmental meeting, obtain a copy of that body's published budget. Review the major sources of income and expenses for its operation with your counselor.

Can obtain the budget from the city or county clerk or the school board secretary.

Sources of Income:

Property tax, Income tax, Fines and fees, State and federal aid, Special assessments, Interest.

Expenses:

Police and fire protection, highways and secondary roads, sanitary and health services, parks and recreation, courts, mental health, welfare, general operations (including salaries), capital improvements, interests.

6. List the services your community provides to the citizens in return for the taxes paid by you and your parents.

Services:

Fire and police protection, street improvements, garbage pickup, licensing of food establishments, parks and playgrounds, courts, a jail, mental health facilities, an airport

- terminal, and a local transit system.
7. Select a city, county, or school problem or issue under consideration from the local newspaper or news broadcast and write a letter expressing your views to the mayor, administrator, or school board president. Show this letter and any response to your counselor.
 8. List and describe the work of five volunteer organizations through which people in your community work together for the good of your community.
Service: Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Optimist, Exchange, Junior League, Jaycees, Urban League, Elks, and Moose.
Health: American Cancer Society, American Red Cross, American Heart Association, March of Dimes, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Muscular Dystrophy Association.
Youth: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA, YWCA, Camp Fire, Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brother/Big Sister.
Conservation: 4-H Clubs, Future Farmers of America,
Veterans: American Legion, Disabled America Veterans, AMVETS, and Veterans of Foreign Wars.
Fund-raising: Community Chest, United Way
Others: PTA's, hospital volunteers, Masons, garden clubs, religious institution volunteers.
 9. Tell how to report an accident or an emergency in your community.
 10. List five ways you can demonstrate good citizenship in your community, religious institution, school, or Scouting unit.
Service projects, Ushers at ball games, Tree planting or pruning, Clean up litter, Baby sitting service at meetings,

4. Attend ONE of the following:
 - a. County or parish board meeting
 - b. City council meeting
 - c. School board meeting
 - d. Municipal, county, or state court session.
5. After visiting the governmental meeting, obtain a copy of that body's published budget. Review the major sources of income and expenses for its operation with your counselor.

7. Select a city, county, or school problem or issue under consideration from the local newspaper or news broadcast and write a letter expressing your views to the mayor, administrator, or school board president. Show this letter and any response to your counselor.

8. List and describe the work of five volunteer organizations through which people in your community work together for the good of your community.

9. Tell how to report an accident or an emergency in your community.

10. List five ways you can demonstrate good citizenship in your community, religious institution, school, or Scouting unit.