

How Can I Assist my Government to Benefit My Community?

Objective: Identify ways Ohioans can play a role in helping state and local government address problems facing their communities. This lesson will provide a way for students to determine issues in their communities that they are passionate about and determine ways they can make their voices heard and influence policy changes.

Procedure

1. Read: Have Students read Improving Local Government: Community engagement & equitable participation create change and two blog posts from Local Office 101 (all resources are below).
 - a. Optional: *Citizen Lobbyists: Local Efforts to Influence Public Policy* by Brian E. Adams is a 200-page book that covers all the way citizens can participate in local and state government and influence public policy. This is a great summer reading assignment or can be used throughout the course. Alternatively, have students read *Citizen Efforts to Influence Local Policy: A Review of the Literature* (pp. 21-42) & *Participatory Strategies and Tactics* (pp. 133-157). **This book is available for free for students and educators through JSTOR (requires a school login).**
2. Study: Have students look over the 4th resource, Columbus Climate Action – Resident Engagement. This is a Climate Action Plan (CAP) the city of Columbus is drafting serving as a roadmap to meet the 2050 carbon neutrality goal and realize community-wide benefits. The 1st link provides a place where community members can leave feedback on the plan. The 2nd link shares all the ways community members can be involved in this process. Both links provide a PDF copy of the plan. We recommend the following:
 - a. Columbus area: Have students read over the CAP and determine what they like and don't like about the plan. Have students fill out the provided worksheet.
 - b. Outside the Columbus Area: have students skim over the CAP and research issues (climate based or other) in their communities that provide multiple opportunities for community engagement. City websites are a great place to start. Have students fill out the provided worksheet.

Resources

- (1) Improving Local Government: Community engagement & equitable participation create change
<https://www.changelabsolutions.org/blog/improving-local-government>
- (2) Blog: Local Office 101
<https://www.sheshouldrun.org/blog/category/local-office-101/>
- (3) Book: *Citizen Lobbyists: Local Efforts to Influence Public Policy* by Brian E. Adams
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bt304>
- (4) Columbus Climate Action – Resident Engagement
<https://climateactioncolumbus.consider.it/?tab=Show%20all>
<https://www.columbus.gov/sustainable/cap/>