

Name _____

Date _____

Class Period _____

How Can I Assist my Government to Benefit My Community?

Part 1: Read the following articles and answer the questions below:

- (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/>

List some ways Ohioans can participate in local and state government?

In your opinion, what actions may be most effective and least effective? Why?

Have you ever knowingly or unknowingly assisted or influenced your government in legislation affecting your community?

Are there any issues impacting your community that you are passionate about? Explain.

Part 2 (Columbus Area Students): Read over the Columbus City Climate Action Plan (CAP) and ways citizens can participate. List all the ways Columbus residents can engage in the Climate Action Plan and Jot down any notes below.

(1) Columbus Climate Action – Resident Engagement:

<https://www.columbus.gov/sustainable/cap/>

(2) Climate Action Plan Draft:

<https://www.columbus.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147517698>

CAP Notes:

Activity: You are a concerned resident of Columbus and are not happy with the current draft of the Climate Action Plan. You decide to make your voice heard and share your concerns/demands with the Columbus City Council. Choose one of the following options:

Draft feedback on one section of the CAP (transportation, waste, etc.) to submit through the resident engagement website: <https://climateactioncolumbus.consider.it/?tab=Show%20all>

Or

Prepare a testimony for the next city council meeting (resident testimony can only be 3 minutes long). Choose one section of CAP (transportation, waste, etc.) that you are unhappy with. Alternatively, you can discuss something you believe the CAP is missing (ex: watersheds).

Part 2 (Outside of Columbus Area Students): Read over Columbus’s Sustainability Page about the Climate action plan.

(1) Columbus Climate Action Plan – Resident Engagement:

<https://www.columbus.gov/sustainable/cap/>

In what ways can Columbus residents participate in the formalization of the Climate Action Plan?

Is there something similar that your town or city is working on? If not, find a project your city or town is working on where they provide direct ways for residents to engage. What did you find?

In what ways can residents participate in the process?

Was this information easy to find?

Activity: You are a concerned resident and are concerned about _____.
You have decided to take action and make your voice heard.

Prepare a testimony to give at your next city council meeting. (testimonies can typically be between 3 and 5 minutes)

Testimony for City Council Template

1. Introduction

President _____, and members of the _____ City Council, thank you for allowing me to testify this evening.

[Introduce yourself!] My name is _____, I am a student at _____ and a resident of this city.

[Introduce the topic you will be discussing] Today I am here to address _____.

2. Present your topic

Acknowledge. *[Discuss past and present efforts made to address the issue]*

Present your ideas. *[Provide and explain some better goals and actions that could be in place to address the issue]*

Use empirical evidence. *[If possible, provide examples of ways other local/state government entities have successfully addressed the / a similar issue]*

Make it personal. *[Drive home your message by telling a personal story. Say why this issue matters to you! Stories are often more impactful / memorable than hard data]*

Recap. *[Reiterate the importance of addressing or solving the issue and the impact it will have on your community now and in the future]*

3. Closing

[Thank the City Council once again and stress the importance of action]

Columbus Climate Action Plan (CAP) Testimony for City Council Template

1) Introduction

President Hardin, President Pro Tem Brown, and members of the Columbus City Council, thank you for allowing me to testify this evening.

[Introduce yourself!] My name is____, I am a student at _____, and a resident of Columbus.

I commend the City of Columbus for directly addressing the climate crisis with the Columbus Climate Action Plan *[insert anything else you do like about the plan here, if you want]*. However, I believe that the current Climate Action Plan must propose more ambitious goals to address _____ *[your topic here; for example, tree canopy]*

2) Your Topic: Current Goals

[Summarize how the CAP currently proposes to address your proposed topic; for example, the current CAP draft proposes that all neighborhoods have 12% tree canopy by 2030]

3) Your Topic: Better Goals

[Here you say how the current goals are lacking, and what better, more ambitious goals would look like, and why; for example, A better goal would be to achieve a minimum of 25% tree canopy for all neighborhoods. Trees not only add green space, which is sorely lacking in many Columbus neighborhoods, but offer carbon sequestering and are crucial in fostering a healthy environment]

4) Make it personal!

[Drive home your message by telling a personal story. Say why this issue matters to you! Stories are often more impactful / memorable than hard data]

5) Closing

[Thank the City Council once again and stress the importance of strong climate action now]