



Facilitator's Guide:

Use the following activity as a way to get students thinking about the ways that government, and specifically local government, is a part of their daily lives and communities. It should get them thinking about the things they care about in their community and the services provided by government related to these. Ask students to spend some time thinking about their community and the things they feel should be improved or addressed and to answer the survey accordingly.

Once students have completed the survey, debrief by having them share out their answers. Use the reflection questions on the handout to help guide a brief, all class discussion.

Framing: Use this time to demonstrate to students the following

1. The prevalence of local government in their lives – all the many services they benefit from or interact with on a day to day basis.
2. The ways in which they are benefitting from their local government running well. Do this by highlighting the issues not circled – most of these are likely done well in your community.
3. The services related to the issues they care about so they can better address these concerns.

Use the final reflection question to establish the necessity of this class during which we will be learning about how our government works and ways we can get involved. These are all programs that we can target for improvement through our civic engagement.

****Note:** This survey can be updated or changed to better reflect you and your students' community. Update the far right column for related examples and/or the far left column with programs more relevant to you and your students.



GOVERNMENT IN MY COMMUNITY SURVEY

You may not realize it but every day you interact with many government services: when you brush your teeth, or ride to school, or spend time in public parks, you're experiencing government in action. Government also impacts many of the issues you care about and can be integral in solving a lot of the problems you might see in your community.

Activity: Read and answer the questions about your community. Circle the number where the answer to "Does your community have" is yes. Next to each issue, the related government service is given, as well as examples of other ways that this service is used. When you are done with the survey, answer the reflection questions that follow.

Does your community have... (Circle where the answer is yes)	Related government service	Other examples of this service in action
1. Broken or not enough street lamps?	Electricity	Heat and air, traffic lights, street lamps, computer, television
2. Dirty water in the taps?	Clean Water	Drinking water, toilets, cleaning clothes and dishes, fire hydrants
3. A problem with drug usage?	Health Services	affordable healthcare, mental healthcare
4. An inaccessible public transportation system?	Infrastructure and Transportation	drivers' licenses/permits, speed limits, roads, traffic regulation
5. Students who can't afford to attend college?	Public Education	Community colleges, public universities, athletic programs, scholarships and grants, guidance and career counselors, college affordability, school budgeting, standardized testing, extracurricular activities
6. High rates of unemployment, particularly among youth?	Labor Laws	Maximum hours, compensation/over time, worker's paid compensation - workers' rights, age restrictions, job training
7. Unsafe parks?	Parks and Recreation	Sports fields and teams, skate parks, public swimming pools, hiking trails
8. Negative relationships between citizens and the police force?	Law Enforcement	Public safety, drug enforcement, juvenile detention centers, prisons, parole procedures, community policing, gang violence prevention, gun regulation
9. Schools that offer discount lunches to select students?	Public Assistance	Food stamps, public housing, homeless shelters, affordable healthcare, social security,
10. Litter on roads and streets?	Environmental Regulation	Recycling services, trash services, pollution laws, public conservation, endangered species



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How many of the issues did you circle?

Are these issues that are important to you? Why or why not?

*What is going well in your community? (Take a look at the issues you did **not** circle)*

Do you think that the things that are going well in your community could exist without the government?

Do you feel that you have the power to change or improve any of the issues that you circled? Would you like to?

