

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNMENT CURRICULA

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Title: Service with a Smile ☺

Theme: Real-world examples of how local government plays a role in the everyday lives of its citizens.

GLCE:

- 2- C3.0.2** Use examples to describe how local government affects the lives of its citizens.
- 2- C3.0.3** Identify services commonly provided by local governments (e.g., police, fire departments, schools, libraries, parks).

Materials:

- 12x18 construction paper (any color) – 1 for each student
- 40 3x5 cards
- large poster board – 1 for each student
- newspapers
- scissors, glue, markers, any materials available for poster-making
- access to the internet

Methodological Procedures:

Day 1: As an introductory activity, students should write a list of common activities they do in one day on the left side of their paper. (Routine events such as brushing teeth, eating, going to the store, riding to school, showering, and playing in the yard are some examples that students may list.) When students are finished, use the list of 36 services offered by local governments (see Handout #1 under Available Downloads below) as a reference for students to place an “x” by each of their listed activities that might be connected to a local government service. (See Handout #2 under Available Downloads for a sample list and connections to government.)

Sorting Services into 3 Groups – Use the 3 terms Health, Safety, and Common Good as column headings on the board. Using the list of 36 services write one service on each 3x5 card, and distribute the cards to students, making sure each student has at least 1 card. As the various services are called, the student with the service named puts it on the board under the heading in which he or she thinks it belongs. Some services could belong under several headings, so it will be interesting to ask students why they placed the service under the heading that they did. The idea here is to involve all the students in thinking about the 3 different types of services that local government can provide.

Role Playing – Have each student choose the name of a service that they could act out for the class. Leave the 36 cards on the board and allow students to guess which service the actor is portraying. This will help the students become even more familiar with the services offered by local government.

Day 2:

Poster Making - Each student will choose a Michigan city or township to create a poster as an advertisement to promote that location. Local city halls or township halls are terrific places for information or visit websites such as <http://mml.org> for cities or towns, and <http://www.michigantownships.org/> for townships. Each poster should include:

- Lettering, labels, text, illustrations, or pictures
- The name of the city or township clearly visible
- At least 3 services offered by local government in that location

See Available Downloads for a rubric assessment for the posters.

Day 3:

Newspaper Sleuths – Distribute a newspaper and construction paper to each student. Students should browse the newspaper and clip the following items, to be glued onto construction paper:

- ✓ A photo or article about someone in local government. Students should write the person's name by the photo or article and of what their main job responsibility consists.
- ✓ An article about a local government service. Students should write the name of the service by the article and how that service helps promote the common good.
- ✓ An article about a person or group of people who had a positive effect in their community. Write their deed by the article along with an explanation as to how this type of community service benefits those in the community.

Use the remainder of the class period to finish local government posters from Day 2. Completed posters can be used to compare services offered by different communities. This comparison will also happen naturally if posters are displayed on available wall space for student viewing.

Day 4:

Use the following questions to lead a class discussion about local government, and follow up the discussion by having students complete response sheet #1 (see Available Downloads). The class discussion will prepare students to complete the response sheet.

- What do you think are the most important services that local government provides?
- What examples of services are most visible in your community?
- What do you think are the most-used and least-used services in your area?
- What new services could your local government start providing?
- Which services do you think are the most and least expensive to fund?

- Which services do you think your parents are the most willing and least willing to pay for with their taxes?

Author Notes:

There are no requirements for local government to provide services, but authority is granted to local units to provide services if they wish. Therefore, all services provided are at the will of the public. One particular local government may or may not provide the same services as another.

The best sources of information are usually generated from local governmental units. Many have web sites, and those can be found at <http://mml.org> for cities or towns, and <http://www.michigantownships.org/> for townships. A visit to your city or township hall will likely produce many pamphlets and brochures regarding services offered.

Assessment Strategies:

The Newspaper Sleuth collection and Response Sheet #1 should be checked for accuracy and completion. The weight of the handouts is left up to the teacher's discretion. A rubric for scoring the posters is provided under Available Downloads. Students can also be given credit for participation in the sorting and role-playing activities on Day 1, as well as the group discussion on Day 4.

Enrichment Suggestions:

Classroom visits by leaders in local government would enrich this unit for all students. Arranging a visit from someone in local government would be an invaluable 'real world' connection. Consider inviting one of the following to speak in your classroom:

- Police Officers
- Fire Fighters
- Paramedic
- Lifeguard
- Drain Commissioner
- Zookeeper

Gifted and talented students may enjoy the opportunity to interview a leader from local government and present to the class what they learned from it.

Students may discover that certain services are lacking in their community and will compose letters to local leaders, requesting those services.

Available Downloads:

Handout #1

List of 36 services provided by local government

Handout #2

Sample list of daily events linked to services provided by local government

Rubric
Assessment for poster activity

Response Sheet #1
Follow-up to classroom discussion on Day 4

Suggested Websites:

<http://mml.org>

The Michigan Municipal League web site has information about Michigan's cities and villages.

<http://www.michigantownships.org/>

This is the web site for the Michigan Townships Association.

www.freep.com

The Detroit Free Press makes its newspaper available online.