

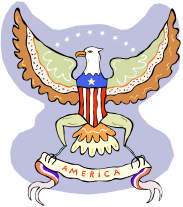


4-H CITIZENSHIP ACTIVITY PAGE

Developed by **Darrell Hale**, Extension Agent, Lincoln County

Beginning

Your 4-H CITIZENSHIP Project



Did you know that being a responsible citizen includes learning about government? United States citizens can participate in their government. This process ensures that power will always remain where it belongs—with the people. To use this power wisely, you need to know how government works.

This 4-H project can help you explore citizenship and government. Some of the skills you can learn and activities you can do in this project are listed below. Check your favorites.

Then, work with your 4-H leaders and parents to make a 4-H project plan of what you want to do and learn this year.

- Learn about county government.
- Attend a county commission meeting.
- Attend a city council meeting in your town or another town in your county.
- Attend a meeting of the county school board or the school parent-teacher association (such as the PTO).
- Learn about three branches of government in the United States.
- Identify the people who represent your family in the county, state and federal government.
- Complete a service project using project skills learned.
- Give a citizenship demonstration in your 4-H club meeting.
- Other _____



Life Skill
Responsible
Citizenship



Local Government

Every town and county has a system of government. Your community may be governed by a mayor, commissioners, aldermen or other elected officials. Other officials may include the sheriff or members of the school board.

Research to find out who serves your community. What do they do? How are they elected? Record what you learn on a separate piece of paper and keep it in your 4-H project folder.

Capital Facts

The capital city is where the government makes important decisions, such as the laws that we follow. The first capital of the United States was New York City. It then moved to Philadelphia for 10 years. In 1800, Washington, D.C., became our nation's capital. It is on the Potomac River and is surrounded by Maryland and Virginia. The city was named "Washington" after President George Washington and "District of Columbia" after Christopher Columbus.

Look in books or on the Internet to learn more about the U.S. Capitol (the building where the House of Representatives and the Senate meet). Give a speech about what you learn in a 4-H meeting.

Try This—Design a Government Banner

When the founding fathers wrote the U.S. Constitution, they didn't want one group of people to have all the power in the government. So, they designed a system of **checks and balances**. The federal government is made up of three branches: **legislative** (Congress), **executive** (President) and **judicial** (Supreme Court). Each branch can use its powers to check the power of the other two branches, so that the power is balanced.



This checks and balances system of government is also used at the local and state levels of government. For example, Tennessee has a governor, state legislators and a state supreme court.

Using a piece of white fabric or thick paper, design a banner about the three branches of state or U.S. government. Use pictures and words to describe the three branches and how they work. What powers does each branch



have? Who serves in these roles? Be sure to list some of the people who represent *you* and your community in the local, state and federal government.

After you have completed your banner, share it with others. Give a speech or demonstration in a 4-H meeting, for friends or for a community group. Then, hang your banner. You may want to make changes or create a new banner after new officials are elected.

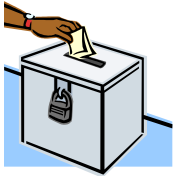


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Mock Election

Elections are an important part of a **democracy**. In an election, citizens voice their opinion on who should serve in the government. They also make decisions about important issues such as changing a law.

To be a good citizen, you should understand and take part in the election process. This means researching the candidates and issues to decide how you want to vote. When you turn 18, you can register to vote. But don't wait until then to get involved!



One way to be involved in the election process at any age is to campaign for your favorite candidate. Or you could encourage your friends and family to register to vote and to go to the polls on election day.

Another way to be involved is to hold a mock election in your 4-H club. Find out who the candidates are for a particular election, such as the race for president, mayor or school board representative. Research to learn where the candidates stand on important issues and then make campaign posters or hold debates. Let members of your club vote for their favorite candidate. Record the election results and keep in your 4-H folder.

Service Ideas

- Choose a favorite candidate in the next election and ask if you can help hand out campaign materials.
- Recruit a few other 4-H members and serve refreshments before the next county commission meeting.
- Ask your county mayor if you can lead the Pledge of Allegiance at the next commission meeting.
- Job shadow an elected official in his/her office. Share what you learn in a 4-H meeting.

Additional Resources

Being a responsible citizen is important. Learning about your government is a skill that will be very valuable to you in the future. Learning about campaign issues, participating in the election process and understanding the branches of government will help you be a good citizen. But this is just the beginning! Use the resources listed below to continue learning about your government.

- School & public libraries
- People who work as government officials, such as sheriff, principal, teacher, Extension agent, county commissioner or mayor
- 4-H project groups
- The 4-H citizenship Web page:

www.utextension.utk.edu/4h/projects/citizenship.htm

*Reviewed by Lori Jean Mantooth, Extension Assistant, and members of the state 4-H Youth Development staff
Edited by Wanda Russell, Publications Editor*

Career Scavenger Hunt

By asking others, researching on the Internet, or reading a book or magazine—learn more about the people who serve in local, state or federal government. Here's what you are looking for.

1. Job Title _____
2. Job Description _____

3. Education Required _____

Government Word Search

Listed below are several words about government. Look in books or on the Internet to find out more about each word. Share what you learn with your friends. Then, search for the words in the puzzle.

Words to Use

CAMPAIGN
CAPITOL
COURTHOUSE
DEMOCRAT
ELECTION
EXECUTIVE
GOVERNOR
JUDICIAL
LEGISLATIVE
MAYOR
PRESIDENT
REPRESENTATIVE
REPUBLICAN
SENATOR
VOTE

O Z I L A Z Q V V O E A O E F
R Z C G R A M F Q V X Y T X F
N E A O A Q Q K I H O Y J E V
O S P C O U R T H O U S E C J
I X I U B W A T S L P I O U U
T P T F B L I N F E I K D T Y
C G O W S L E Q G E N I C I K
E G L I R C I P O I C A J V L
L K G E T O V C X I A G T E E
E E D E M O C R A T H P F O M
L T S O X M F L K N O X M A R
X Q J R O N R E V O G P Y A A
A A J U P Y B Q O Q F O T A C
P R E S I D E N T K R J G E U
E V I T A T N E S E R P E R Y

Don't forget to
submit your
project report to
your 4-H leader.



Other 4-H Citizenship Activities

- Conduct a service project.
- Tour county and city government offices.
- Run for a 4-H office.

For more ideas,
contact your
4-H office.