

PLANNING GUIDE**9****Students Take Action****Working to Change Government Policies and Practices**

Some Project Citizen student groups described in your book identified problems in their community that required new approaches by government officials. To change how government carried out and enforced policies, students carefully researched and worked with local government officials.



Which issues of concern in your community may require changes in local policies or practices? Follow the steps below to identify a problem, research it, and formulate a public policy solution.

1. Brainstorm with your classmates and teacher possible problems in your community that may be solved with changes in government policies and practices. Investigate ideas by researching local issues and laws online and interviewing family members on their opinions. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Which issues do the most people seem concerned about?
 - Why are current policies not addressing this problem?
 - What policies and practices could we most likely get changed?
 - What support could we get (for example, testimony from city workers that current policies are not working)?
2. In small groups, compare your preliminary research findings and weigh the issues. Then, as a class, come to a consensus on the policy you think your class will be best able to get changed.
3. As a class, decide on a plan of action. Identify the goals you hope to achieve, most importantly getting a local policy or practice changed.
4. Under your teacher's guidance, work with group members to meet, discuss the issue, and cooperate with city officials. Also meet with members of the local media and provide them with solid facts about why you are supporting this new policy and what you hope it will accomplish.
5. Participate in a class discussion on what information needs to be put into the hands of local government leaders, and how. Then work in small groups to organize all of the information you have gathered in a complete report. Also, create a display that visually explains why the issue is a concern to the community and your class's public policy solution. Show how your proposed policy compares with the existing policy.
6. Ask to present at an upcoming meeting of the village, town, or city council. Along with your report and display, present statements from citizens, as well as statistics. Explain to the group how this issue affects the community.