Not in My Backyard

Exploring Local Government through the Issue of Homelessness

v1.0

About the Buck Institute for Education
Founded in 1987, the Buck Institute for Education works to expand the effective use of Project Based Learning throughout the world. BIE is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization based in Novato, California and is a beneficiary of the Leonard and Beryl Buck Trust. In addition, BIE has received grant support from the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE), the US Congress Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) and the US Department of Education Dwight D. Eisenhower Professional Development State Grant Program. BIE provides PBL professional development services and curriculum materials to school districts, state departments of education, foundations, and other clients in the United States and abroad.

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Foreword

Students learn more when they care about what they are learning. Students understand concepts better if they see how these concepts apply to the world outside of school. Students retain information longer if they are actively engaged in the discussion and demonstration of what they are learning.

Too many American classrooms never utilize these principles. But *Project Based Government (PBG)* is built upon them. It addresses the concepts and content defined by the *National Standards for Civics and Government* from the Center for Civic Education, grades 9–12, and the *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies,* developed by the National Council for the Social Studies for high school, in such a way that the material becomes meaningful and engaging to students. *PBG* reverses the traditional method of "teach the concepts first, then give students the opportunity to apply them." Instead, *PBG* places students in an interesting scenario with an open-ended problem and asks them to arrive at a justifiable solution using civics concepts. The project thus "pulls" students through the content. The teacher's role is to clarify, facilitate, and guide rather than "push" unmotivated students toward the learning objectives.

Research has shown project-based curricula to have positive effects on student learning. *PBL* methodology helps teachers build valuable interdisciplinary "21st-century skills" in students, including collaboration, critical thinking/problem-solving, and presentation making. Studies have shown that there are important cognitive benefits with the PBL methodology. We have found that *PBG* works well for diverse students in a variety of school settings. Skilled teachers in alternative education programs, continuation high schools, and other settings have reported success with these materials.

These units were developed by the Buck Institute for Education and pilot-tested and critiqued by a group of energetic, insightful teachers throughout California. Although too many teachers have been involved to thank each one by name, we are extremely grateful for their time, insight, and contributions to making these units successful. In addition, there have been a number of university professors, nonprofit organization staff, and school district leaders who have contributed to unit development. We have benefited from their observations and suggestions, and we offer a collective "Thank you!"

Please visit the Interact website (www.teachinteract.com) to find out about professional development offerings and conference presentations.

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Introduction

Chapter One

What is Project Based Learning?

Project Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional method in which students:

- Engage in a rigorous, extended process of inquiry focused on complex, authentic questions and problems
- Work as independently from the teacher as possible and have some degree of "voice and choice"
- Demonstrate in-depth understanding of academic knowledge and skills
- Build 21st-century skills such as collaboration, presentation, and critical thinking/problem-solving
- Create high-quality products and performances which are presented to a public audience

PBL is often cited as a valuable method by educators promoting differentiated instruction, multiple intelligences theory, learning-styles theory, 21st-century skills, and the "new 3 Rs" of rigor, relevance, and relationships.

In PBL, the project *drives* the curriculum—it provides the structure for teaching and learning. A project is not just an "applied learning activity" that follows a traditionally taught unit of instruction. Nor is it discovery learning in its most basic form, in which students are provided with tools and activities that allow them to "discover" knowledge and skills with minimal guidance from a teacher. Instead, PBL challenges students to solve a problem through the application of content knowledge and collaborative resource-gathering, investigation, discussion, and decision-making.

Each project in *Project Based Government* (*PBG*) is a complete unit of instruction centered on a scenario that presents students with an engaging, realistic problem with more than one possible reasonable solution. To resolve the problem successfully, students realize they need to understand civics concepts and how government operates. This increases their motivation to learn the curriculum. Coaching students to resolve the problem posed in each unit requires a teacher to weave together a number of instructional components while remaining focused on the civics concepts around which the project is organized.

Phases of a Project Based Government unit: how learning unfolds

Although structured flexibly enough to allow for student discovery and independent learning, all *PBG* projects follow a series of steps or phases. These phases may sometimes overlap, but can generally be defined as follows:

Project launch—the Entry Event

At the start of each *PBG* project, students either receive some type of authentic correspondence or have an authentic experience intended to engage them in the project scenario. The "Entry Event" provokes interest and generates curiosity, leading naturally to the next phase.

Framing the inquiry—Driving Question and Knowledge Inventory

To begin the inquiry and problem-solving process, students as a class analyze their task and write a "Driving Question" that guides the project. The teacher coaches students in the construction of a Driving Question that summarizes the problem to be resolved, which in *PBG* is written according to the model:

How can we, as ______, do ______ so that______?

The teacher also leads the class through a discussion and recording of knowledge that the students already have (know) and information that they still require (need to know) in order to arrive at an answer to the Driving Question. This process is repeated periodically throughout the lesson.

Problem-solving and learning activities

The project scenario unfolds as students receive additional information about the problem to be solved. Students work in teams to conduct independent investigation and complete project tasks while the teacher provides resources and lessons guided by the students' "Need-to-Know List." A Project Log is used to check for student understanding of key civics terms and concepts. The class revises the knowledge inventory periodically and revisits the Driving Question to help stay on track toward a reasonable resolution to the scenario. The teacher monitors students' progress and watches for "teachable moments" when students recognize their need to know more about civics.

Presentation, assessment, and debrief

The project culminates as students finalize their solution to the problem posed in the scenario. Students prepare authentic products and present them to an audience and/or publicly discuss each group's work. The teacher uses a rubric to evaluate the students' work and may also choose to administer a test to assess learning. The last step is to debrief the project with students, discussing both civics content and the process by which it was learned.

Teaching in the PBL environment

Although Project Based Learning is designed to foster active, engaged learning, students do not work completely on their own or exclusively with their peers when addressing the problem presented in a scenario. PBL is most effective when accompanied by *project-based teaching*.

In PBL, the teacher guides students through the process of collaborative problem-solving and the creation of high-quality products and performances. Teachers are an important provider of subject-area knowledge and remain responsible for monitoring and assessing student learning, clarifying content-related concepts and misconceptions, assigning students to work groups, and managing what goes on in the classroom. Although traditional tools such as lectures, homework, and quizzes still have a place in this setting, they are used in the meaningful context of solving a problem. The role of the teacher using PBL is to make learning "inevitable" by carefully managing the learning process and promoting a spirit of inquiry.

Make it a collaborative effort

The timing and extent of a teacher's instructional interventions differ from those used in traditional approaches. Effective teachers in PBL wait for teachable moments, when students are interested and ready to learn, before intervening or providing the necessary content explanations; they present or clarify concepts once students realize they need to understand subject-area content in order to solve the problem. Project Based Learning is most effective when it is a collaborative effort between the teacher and students, with the teacher as the senior partner.

This collaboration begins by engaging students in the problem to be solved. As you launch the unit, it is important not to reveal too much about the problem that students are about to encounter and not to pre-teach the content and take away the motivation to learn that comes after students are "hooked" by the Entry Event. Take the problem seriously. While acknowledging that it is a scenario, point out that the problem is closely modeled on what happens in the real world. Heighten student interest and motivation by emphasizing the important effects their decisions will have (summarized in the "so that" part of the Driving Question written by the class). Model genuine interest and enthusiasm for students to take on the challenge of exploring several possible solutions.

The “teacher-as-coach” metaphor applies as students go about the tasks of conducting research, understanding the problem’s complexities, and preparing to present their solutions. Like a good coach watching athletes practice, the teacher needs to observe, diagnose, and guide without doing students’ work for them. Anticipate some needs before they arise, be prepared to meet them, and watch for new needs as they emerge—but wait until they emerge.

One of the biggest challenges for many teachers is to step back and wait for the “need to know” to arise in students. Instead of answering all questions right away, ask, “How could you find that out?” and offer suggestions and resources for further inquiry. If students get stuck at a certain point, act as a “cognitive coach” by modeling thinking strategies. Offer process-oriented comments such as, “How would I approach that issue/task? Well, I might break it down into steps, or I might want to talk with my group about ____ or make sure I understood ____. Or maybe I’d go back to my Need-to-Know List…”

Build classroom culture

Establishing the classroom culture is also important for successful PBL. Students must know that it is all right to take intellectual risks and offer creative solutions for critiques by their classmates and teacher without fear of ridicule. A healthy spirit of give-and-take needs to be fostered in a PBL classroom, as does the habit of reflection. Both students and teacher need to constantly ask: “What are we learning? How are we learning? And what does it mean?”

Another vital part of classroom culture is collaboration. In PBL students work in small groups, and the key to their success is the ability to work together comfortably and productively. If students are not used to group work, these skills must be taught. If students are not working well together, the teacher needs to know how to intervene and smooth things out. And when students share ideas, ask questions, and present their work, whether it is to their own classmates or a public audience, a serious and respectful tone should be the norm.

Invest in planning

A teacher using PBL should be skilled in planning and organization. Before beginning a unit, make sure to read all instructions and prepare materials carefully, but do not over-plan and feel bound by a predetermined timetable. It is hard to predict exactly how each class will approach a project and what needs will arise. A certain amount of flexibility is required, as is the willingness to let go of some expectations and control. Students may propose solutions that you had not considered, or they may want to explore issues in greater depth and breadth.

> A teacher also needs skill in the use of performance-based assessment. This means knowing how to assess skills such as collaboration, communication, and time and task management. You can enhance student development of these skills by providing exemplars, well-written rubrics, and chances to practice with helpful feedback.

Teaching in a PBL environment differs from many traditional classrooms in two other ways. First, it can be noisy. That means a teacher (and his or her school neighbors and administrators) must be willing to accept occasional apparent disorder as the inquiry process at work. Second, a teacher must be willing to personally engage with students in ways other than standing in front of the room, delivering content knowledge as the “sage on the stage.” A degree of intellectual and sometimes emotional connection with individual students is often needed to meet the challenges of PBL.

Teaching Government With Project Based Learning

Chapter Two

Project Based Learning (PBL) is an ideal methodology for teaching young people about democratic government and citizenship. Every level of government, and every citizen who affects or is affected by government, solves problems in the course of fulfilling their duties. Governments must raise and spend money, set policies, create laws, and perform services, all while balancing the needs of a complex, changing society. Usually there is no single "right answer" upon which everyone can agree. Citizens voting in elections, communicating with their government, or working in government must solve problems that are complex and open-ended. And the duties of government and citizens are often accomplished in collaboration with others. The skills built by PBL provide good training for what students will need in their lives as members of a democracy.

In *Project Based Government*, students learn how the terms, concepts, and processes described in textbooks apply to the real world. By solving problems rooted in real life, students are able to grasp a fundamental truth about how democracy works—it is "messy." They see firsthand that each solution to a governmental or political problem almost always has its drawbacks, its winners and losers; that democracy requires debate, disagreement, and ultimately compromise in order to get things done; and that government and politics adapt to changing times that require leaders and citizens to revisit certain basic principles again and again. These themes circulate throughout all the Buck Institute of Education's *PBG* units. Additionally, the units feature glimpses of ways that students, as future citizens, can take part in the process of governing—including serving on the staff of a political officeholder, working on a campaign team, and joining an organized interest group.

Preparing Students for PBL

Before launching the first *PBG* unit, we recommend introducing students to the concept of Project Based Learning. This can be accomplished with a 45-minute activity: **Can We Believe This?** (See Chapter Three). In this activity students encounter a civics-related situation. As they set about solving the problem, they learn the process for how PBL works. In one class period, they gain experience analyzing an Entry Document, writing a Driving Question, and conducting a Knowledge Inventory—learning how to think and act in different ways than they might be used to in more traditional forms of learning.

The *PBG* units may be taught in a sequence, forming the backbone of an entire semester-long course surveying U.S. government and civics, or more commonly, they may be interspersed with other lessons and activities.

By reviewing the *Content Standards* within each unit, and your own state standards documents, you will see that most major standards are addressed by the *PBG* units. What is not addressed may be taught by adding extensions or exploring topics of particular interest and local emphasis. As you plan the order in which the units will be taught, and determine the prerequisite knowledge students will need, consider the following points about each unit:

A Government for Xlandia

In this unit students are placed in the role of representatives of various democratic nations on a United Nations Task Force. They are asked to advise the leaders of a new nation, just emerging from a dictatorship, about what form of constitutional democracy they ought to build. This unit would be useful near the beginning of a course to provide an overview of constitutional democracy. Alternatively, it could be used near the end of a course to summarize and more deeply reflect upon key points about constitutional democratic government. The unit builds understanding of the basic functions of a constitution, how government power can be limited, and how the U.S. system compares with other democracies. It also asks students to consider the conditions under which democracy takes root and flourishes, and it connects to the study of economics and world history.

The Better Budget

Students in this unit, acting as a focus group for a congressional representative, are asked to recommend cuts in the federal budget, balancing the views of liberals and conservatives about the proper role of government. Teachers find this unit useful near the beginning of the course since it provides actual examples of the basic services and programs funded by government. It also explores the historical and philosophical roots of liberal and conservative ideology, forming a sound basis for discussion of many issues that typically arise in a high school government course.

LegiQuest

In this unit students take the role of lobbyists for an interest group representing young people, investigating ways in which legislation might be steered through Congress. The issues under consideration include school bullying, death penalty, teen steroid use, and gun control. This unit can be used to teach the legislative branch of the federal government. It also touches on the roles of the executive branch, the courts, and the states in enacting public policy. By framing the traditional “how a bill becomes law” lesson in the context of actual issues, and by starting farther back in the law-making process, this unit gives students a deep understanding of the realities of legislation.

Fighting Chance

In the role of first-year associates at a law firm, students are asked to recommend whether their firm ought to take a case heading to the Supreme Court. The case involves a qualified woman who was barred from joining the U.S. Army Special Forces and is challenging the rule as discriminatory based on the right to equal protection guaranteed by the 5th and 14th Amendments. This unit may be taught in the context of the Bill of Rights, and/or as a vehicle for learning about the judicial branch of U.S. government, and the Supreme Court in particular.

On the Campaign Trail

This unit could fit into a course at various points, and it is especially relevant during election years. Students act as media consultants for a local political campaign and must decide how to best "market" a flawed candidate, given local issues and voter characteristics. Ethical dilemmas arise as students learn about the realities of campaigning for office today, providing the teacher and students with an opportunity to critically examine the U.S. election system.

Not in My Backyard

In this unit on local government, students acting as a city manager's staff must choose the best site for transitional housing for the homeless. They must also defend the city's policymaking process and balance the demands of various interest groups—learning important lessons about how municipal government works. Since the topic of local government is often neglected, or shoehorned into typical high school government courses, this unit offers a way to teach the content effectively while engaging students with its high-interest topic of homelessness.
NIMBY could fit at the beginning, middle, or end of a semester. Some teachers may wish to start a course with the study of local government and/or use this unit to launch an exploration of actual local issues in their community.

What is provided in this unit?

List of Concepts Taught: Each unit provides a list of key concepts students should be learning and provides guidance on how to ensure that they do.

Objectives: Each unit contains a list of objectives outlining what students will learn and experience.

Content Standards: Each unit charts the applied content standards of the *National Standards for Civics and Government* from the Center for Civic Education and *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies,* developed by the National Council for the Social Studies.

Unit Overview: Each unit contains an overview that includes the time required, a summary of the problem to be resolved in a scenario, the civics concepts to be learned, the placement in the curriculum of a typical high school civics course, and the Center for Civics Education standards addressed.

A section on how to teach each unit contains:

- A section of **Student Materials** with all student handout masters.
- A section of **Teacher Materials** with a detailed review of the economic concepts and terminology within the unit, which may be used to guide the preparation of lessons for students, plus a glossary of concept definitions, answer keys for unit assignments, and rubrics for major unit products.
- **Sequence of the Unit**, a quick reference list of each step.
- A **Step-by-Step Teaching Guide**, with detailed instructions about how to manage each step, plus **Resources**, sample **Driving Questions** and **Know/Need-to-Know Lists, Content Notes**, prompts for **Project Log** entries, and **Potential Hurdles.**

At various points within each unit, you will see two types of special **Notes to the Teacher** on effective implementation:

> **Content Notes:** The Content Standards section of each unit identifies key concepts students should be learning and provides guidance on how to ensure that they do.
>
> **Potential Hurdles** indicate certain points during the unit when students might become confused or sidetracked and explain how to help them.

Teaching Strategies for *Project Based Government*

Scaffold learning activities

Students are supported in a variety of ways in the *PBG* units. In addition to "soft scaffolds" such as conversations with a teacher, "hard scaffolds," such as charts, tables, or worksheets, are provided in each unit to help students learn concepts and organize their ideas. Students practice using civics concepts through oral or written exercises that build knowledge and skills necessary for the culminating task in the unit.

Efficient project-based teaching generally involves selecting content resources for students to use before they embark on solving the problems presented and creating products. These can include civics textbooks, specially prepared handouts, newspaper articles, videos, and online resources. Students should be encouraged to grapple on their own or in small groups with civics concepts and find their own answers to content-related questions as much as possible. Consequently, it is generally best not to assign specific resources but rather to tell students what they can easily access to find the information they need to complete project tasks. It is then up to students and their groups to decide what content resources they are going to pursue.

Provide clarifying lessons at "teachable moments"

PBL is most effective with continual dialogue between the teacher (as a coach) and students. Effective project-based teachers must actively direct students toward the curriculum goals by asking probing questions in class discussions, circulating and listening to discussions in group work, and taking advantage of teachable moments when students are ready to learn. When these moments arise, the teacher has a key role to play in explaining content-related concepts and clarifying misconceptions. The teacher may offer a quick explanation to individuals or small groups, or recognize when all or most of the class needs to be taught something as a whole via direct instruction.

When lectures are given, they should be short (hence the term used in these materials, "*mini-lecture*") and organized. Limit lectures to the information students need at that point in the problem-solving process. A mini-lecture should be introduced by talking about it as part of the teacher's role as "coach" for the students' problem-solving process. It is a good idea to refer to the "Need-to-Know" list and say something like, "Many of you said yesterday that you had questions about ______, so I have some information that will answer those questions." And, as in all cases when lectures are used, you should use the techniques of good lecturing: engage students by speaking in an interesting style, ask questions, give examples, use visual aids, and pause to have students think, talk, or do some activity.

Use formative assessments

A key part of your job in project-based teaching is to monitor whether students are learning the concepts the project is designed to teach. A variety of formative assessments will help with monitoring, including individual questioning, pop quizzes, checks for understanding with peers, and Project Logs. Here are strategies for using formative assessment tools:

- Listen to student discussions in small groups or as a whole class, and ask questions to provide a window into students' thinking and reveal confusion or misunderstandings.
- Administer a short pop quiz requiring students to demonstrate their understanding of an economic concept.
- Arrange for peers to check each other's understanding by pairing up to explain an economic concept to another student. Follow this by asking students for a show of hands to report how well they thought they explained and how well they (honestly) thought their partner explained the concept. If this check reveals a knowledge gap or misunderstanding, conduct a short whole-class discussion or mini-lecture to consolidate understanding of the idea or concept.

Project Logs provide a structured way of assessing student understanding and are included in *PBG* units at significant points during the project. You may have students record many things in a Project Log or journal, including notes on the process of learning, comments on how well they or their groups are working, or reflections on content-related topics. Project Logs provide for individual accountability for learning the material and allow you to assess the understanding of each student when students work in groups.

Project Log entries *must be checked soon after they are written* if they are to be used effectively as a diagnostic tool. You need to find out what students do and do not know in order to plan the next day's instruction. Apart from skimming them all, one way to do this quickly is to select a small number of representative samples from a range of students in the class. Or, students could be asked to raise their hands according to how well their entries—or their peer's, if they have swapped and read each other's logs—matched the criteria provided.

Once Project Log entries have been reviewed to assess the degree to which individual students understand the conceptual material being addressed, you can plan further instructional actions such as:

- Talking with the class about the concepts in question by giving another mini-lecture

- Talking with certain students or groups to address their misconceptions and misunderstandings
- Giving additional textbook reading assignments, and/or directing students to online resources and explanations
- Arranging peer teaching between students who are confused about the concept and those who have a solid understanding of it

Manage small-group work

Although the problems posed in project scenarios can be resolved entirely by individuals or entirely through whole-class effort, Project Based Learning is most effective when students are required to work in small groups. Consequently, all *PBG* unit scenarios place students in the role of a team with three to six members. This gives students the opportunity to discuss their ideas and questions with peers and develops the skills of stating a position, listening to others' positions, respectfully disagreeing with others, and collaborating and compromising. There is no always-applicable guidance for forming groups, and you will have to think about your students and decide who works well together. Generally, we encourage teachers to include students with different interests and abilities in the group so that a range of talents and skills can be applied to the project. It is generally *not* a good idea for students to choose their own groups based on friendship alone.

Coaching and monitoring groups is important. Most groups will need some assistance maintaining a task focus. Groups may also need help maintaining a positive attitude or dealing with group members who are not carrying their weight. Although PBL is predicated on students taking charge of their own learning, teachers need to monitor this process continually and pull groups into impromptu conferences when their process bogs down.

Communicate standards of excellence

Rubrics that specify the characteristics of quality work and exemplars of finished products are included in each *PBG* unit. Students should be given the rubric midway through the project, to guide them as they prepare the required major products and performances. Students should not be given the rubric at the same time they receive the Entry Document at the beginning of the project, as part of a "complete packet of materials" for the whole unit. They need some time to define for themselves what they have to learn to resolve the problems posed by the scenario, and receiving the rubric or other materials too soon short-circuits that process.

Manage presentation and critique of answers to the Driving Question

All *PBG* units include the preparation of some sort of tangible product and/or performance to communicate an answer to the Driving Question. Students will need guidance in the preparation of these products, as well as the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their work as much as possible from their peers and teacher. After students' solutions have been presented, the class should compare and discuss them as explained in the debrief phase of each unit.

Oral presentations to the class or a panel are a valuable component of many *PBG* units. As teachers know well, you're often not really sure if you understand something until you explain it to others. However, managing oral presentations well presents several challenges. Student groups need time to prepare and practice. The expectations for a good oral presentation should be made very clear, including presentation techniques and proper attire, posture, attitude, and group member participation. The rubrics accompanying each unit provide guidance to students on the use of content knowledge as well as oral presentation skills.

To help ensure proper participation by all group members, experienced teachers use several strategies. One is to explain that everyone will be held responsible for understanding all parts of an oral presentation and the visual aids that accompany it—and the rubric and grading criteria will reflect this goal. In addition, groups could be informed that even if they have decided in advance who will say what during the formal part of a presentation, *anyone* may be asked a question about *any part* of the presentation. Or, a teacher could tell students they will be picked at random just before the presentation to deliver various parts of it, thereby putting group members on notice that they each need to be prepared to fully participate.

On the day of presentations, if the number of groups is not too large, there may be time for each group to make a presentation. However, a potential problem with this approach is that groups tend to repeat themselves, and by the time the fourth or fifth group has made its presentation there is very little new left to say, and there are very few new questions to ask the group. Also, students in groups presenting nearer the end may have an advantage by hearing previous presentations. This can be avoided if it is possible to send the rest of the class to the library or another room, or have presenting groups go to another location, so each group can present only to the teacher or panel. If all students need to remain together, give student audience members a task. Have them listen to other presentations and make notes of good points made and good answers to questions, as well as how they might have done it differently. Some classes may be ready to assess their peers' performance, using a rubric or other set of criteria while they observe and listen.

Practice 21st-century skills

To meet the challenges of the changing economy in the United States and across the world, and become participating citizens in a democracy, students need to learn more than basic skills and acquire subject-area knowledge. Accordingly, all *PBG* units provide opportunities for students to learn and practice 21st-century skills, such as collaboration (e.g., working well with others, sharing resources, arriving at consensus), critical thinking (e.g., gathering relevant information, generating and evaluating solutions to problems), and communication (e.g., discussing ideas, writing, making an oral presentation, using technology). You can discuss, teach, and even assess these skills before, during, and at the end of every project.

Establish group and individually based grading procedures

As students usually work together to create the products and/or performance that culminate a project, you may need to assign a single grade for that product, given to all students working in the group. Of course some students—like some adults—will freeload and allow others to do their work for them. Self-reports, combined with group self-evaluation and group leader reports, can provide some information on how much each student may have worked but not how much each has learned. Students will take more responsibility for their learning, and learn more, if they know their content understanding will be assessed individually; so let them know the group product is not the only component of their grade. Instead of relying on one speaker to make a presentation, they should be asked to divide up the task—and be ready for questions about *any* part of it, not just the part they did. But since time is usually short, questioning students during oral presentations can only be a partial assessment strategy. Consequently, teachers may want to create multiple-choice or short-answer tests that can be used to assess individual student understanding at the conclusion of each *PBG* unit. Additionally, or alternatively, you could require students to turn in individual written assignments along with their group-developed product. You will have to work out what is most appropriate for your own grading system, but the fundamental idea holds: Make sure to assess students on their content knowledge individually in addition to any group assessment you conduct.

Allow for several possible “right answers”

Part of what engages students in Project Based Learning is knowing that they can make choices and are not simply “doing what the teacher wants.” All *PBG* unit scenarios are built around problems for which there can be multiple reasonable solutions. There are also solutions that are clearly wrong; not *every* solution will work. Guidance on evaluating reasonable and unreasonable solutions for each unit is offered in the **Step-by-Step Teaching Guide**.

Stay within the project scenario

Since the scenarios are hypothetical, students often want to add details, modify what is known, or otherwise *change* the scenario so that it is easier to resolve the problem presented. Such creativity will sabotage the core purpose of the project—it has been carefully developed as a vehicle to teach specific content. All *PBG* units have been developed in close consultation with U.S. high school teachers. It has been tested in their classrooms and revised based on their feedback to ensure that the project, although enjoyed by most students, does not become merely a "fun activity." The project has been created to achieve a serious instructional purpose, and deviating from the project scenario's storyline tends to focus students' attention on irrelevant or less important learning objectives.

Consider needs of English language learners

Students who are learning to speak, read, and write English can benefit greatly from Project Based Learning, but special scaffolding may be necessary. They may need more time to complete tasks, more vocabulary-building, and more peer-to-peer support. Some of the authentic-sounding documents presented in *PBG* scenarios may contain jargon, slang, or cultural references that will need to be explained. When forming small groups, care should be taken to assign students learning English to teams with supportive and skilled members. Finally, oral presentations may present special challenges—ELL students may be allowed to participate to a lesser extent than other group members and/or be given questions to answer later in writing, rather than "on the spot."

Can We Believe This?

Chapter Three

An Activity to Introduce Students to the Project Based Learning Methodology

Overview

In this activity, students are presented with a problem-solving task focused on a potentially misleading public opinion poll that worries a fictitious congressional representative. In the role of a team of summer interns working for the representative, students investigate the facts surrounding the poll, learn about proper polling methods, and recommend a reasonable solution.

Although this activity teaches something about the political system in the United States today, it is primarily designed for another purpose—to demonstrate the instructional methodology of Project Based Learning. It may be used with two groups of participants: high school students in the classroom and their teachers in professional development workshops. The Buck Institute for Education (BIE) has field-tested this activity successfully with both groups. With students, we recommend using it prior to beginning the first unit a teacher has chosen from BIE's *Project Based Government* materials. The instructions below are written with this use in mind. If the activity is to be used with an audience of teachers, they should experience it in a similar manner to the students, in order to best learn how to implement it.

Project Based Learning may be an unfamiliar process for many students and teachers. In this activity, which requires less than a typical class period to complete, students will become familiar with many of the key elements of the methodology as designed by BIE for its government units. Like the *PBG* units, the **Can We Believe This?** Activity begins with a problem-solving scenario (not all projects in PBL begin this way, but it is an effective option). Since Project Based Learning is an inquiry-based process that springs from what students identify they need to know in order to solve the problem, it is important not to "frontload" any information before starting the activity. Do not conduct a discussion, assign reading, or give a lecture about public opinion polling in advance, nor tell students about problem-based learning. It is sufficient to simply explain, "Now we're going to do an activity that will introduce you to one of the ways we're going to learn about government in this course." Then let the first thing students see be the Entry Document, the memorandum that launches the scenario. After the scenario has run its course, the debriefing time is when to discuss the principles and features of Project Based Learning, along with any content-related issues or further work on the topic that the teacher would like.

Project Based Learning has proven effective in teaching content knowledge as well as or better than a traditional lecture/textbook approach. It improves retention of knowledge and contributes to the acquisition of skills such as collaboration, presentation, and problem-solving. Moreover, it increases student engagement and interest in the subject of civics and government, which is an important building block of democratic citizenship.

Content Standards Addressed

National Standards for Civics and Government:

III.E.2. Public opinion and the behavior of the electorate.

Explain how public opinion is measured, used in public debate, and can sometimes be manipulated

Materials Needed

- One copy for each student or pair of students of the Entry Document, the memo from Congressional Representative Gina Amadeo
- One copy for each student or pair of students of the handout, "What Makes a Poll Believable?"
- Chart paper, overhead transparency, or whiteboard/chalkboard

Procedure

40–50 minutes

Whole class

1. **Read the Entry Document aloud as a whole class** (memo from Gina Amadeo)
2. **Write an initial "Driving Question"** as a whole class (recorded on an overhead, chart paper, or board)

   Sample:

   How can we, as summer interns for Representative Gina Amadeo, find out if we can believe the results of this poll so that we can decide how to respond and help the reelection campaign?

3. **Write a list of "What We Know" as a whole class** (recorded on an overhead, chart paper, or board)

   Sample:

   - We are summer interns for congressional representative Gina Amadeo
   - There was an item in a newspaper column about a poll saying that 80% of the people in the district believe the voting age should be raised to 20

- The columnist is Chris Blair
- The poll results have Ms. Amadeo worried about reelection
- The last election was close, and 18–19-year-old voters gave Ms. Amadeo strong support
- We need to tell her if these numbers are believable
- We need to tell her what we think she should do about it

4. **Write a list of "What We Need to Know" as a whole class** (recorded on an overhead, chart paper, or board)

   Sample:

   - What is a Congressional Representative?
   - What is a poll?
   - Does Blair think the voting age should be raised?
   - Who did the reporter talk to, exactly?
   - How many people did s/he talk to, when and where?
   - What makes poll results believable? **
   - What political party does Amadeo belong to?
   - What party does Blair belong to?
   - How soon is the election?
   - Where is this district and what is it like?
   - How many 18–19 year olds voted for Amadeo in the last election?

Important!
** Elicit this or something like it from students.

   - Discuss what resources could provide answers to our "Need to Know" questions. For example, some answers could be found in textbooks or be given by a teacher, some could be researched elsewhere, and some might need to come from actually talking to people.
   - Answer briefly any questions about terminology that students might need to know before moving on, such as what a congressional representative is.
   - Distribute the "What Makes a Poll Believable?" handout for students to read, explaining that it will answer some of their "Need to Know" questions. Discuss the handout if necessary for clarification.

5. **Revisit "Know/Need to Know" Lists as a whole class** Point out that we now have more information that can help us solve the problem; you may add items from the "What Makes a Poll Believable?" handout to the "Know" list if it helps students stay focused

6. Ask the class: How else can we find out what we need to know? Answer: Talk to Blair ("Well, we can! You're going to be able to have a phone conference call…")

7. Students take 2–3 minutes to plan questions to ask Blair, working in pairs or small groups

Pairs

or

Small group

8. Students have a "live conference call" with Chris Blair and ask questions. Blair is reluctant to talk, but eventually reveals details about the poll (for suggested responses to questions see, "Guidelines for Conducting the 'Live Phone Interview' and Playing Chris Blair" in these materials)

9. Revise Driving Question as a whole class

Whole class

Sample:

> **How can we, as summer interns for Representative Gina Amadeo, respond to the fact that the results of this poll should not be believed so that we can help the reelection campaign?**

10. Wrap-up: whole-class discussion; students suggest solutions to the problem

Sample of possible solutions:

- Issue a press release or write a letter to the editor to explain why Blair was wrong
- Ask the editor to write a retraction or at least reprimand Blair
- Ignore it—don't give it more publicity
- Conduct our own poll and publicize the results

11. Debrief: discuss what this activity demonstrates about Project Based Learning (PBL):

- There is no single ***right*** answer to this problem—it is "open-ended"—but there are ***wrong*** answers. For example, agreeing with Blair about the poll would not be supportable by evidence.
- ***It is important to be persistent.*** During the "phone call," encourage students to find different ways to ask Blair the same question. During the debriefing, point out that persistence is an important "habit of mind" for Project Based Learning.

- ***Frustration is OK—it is an important part of PBL.*** Ask students if they were frustrated at any time during the process. This often leads to a discussion of how students become frustrated during research assignments when they cannot find the answers easily. Just as BIE trainers do during this exercise, teachers in the classroom should allow for some frustration but should also offer coaching if students are getting too far off track. Focus students back on the "Need to Know" list when they are having difficulty thinking of questions to ask Blair.

- ***The "Driving Question" and the "Know/Need to Know" lists are important tools*** for keeping on task and focused on the problem as it evolves.

- ***Good PBL gets students to ask questions about content.*** It often helps to write down questions as they come up and have students investigate, rather than give students the answers too quickly. Having students ask questions demonstrates that they are open to learning, and it can lead to "teachable moments." In this activity, the information on scientific polling methods was handed out, but it could have easily been researched by students if there was more time. Additional assignments about the role of public opinion polling in American politics may be given after this activity has sparked students' interest.

- ***New information leads to shifts in perspective—and new questions.*** For example, learning that Blair has used unscientific polling methods creates a major shift in the way students think about the problem, and new "Need to Knows" could be identified.

- ***Decisions are often made under conditions of uncertainty.*** Just like people in the real world, students do not always have complete information on which to base decisions. Some of the items on the "Need to Know" list in the "Can We Believe This?" activity may not be answered, but that doesn't mean solutions to the problem can't be proposed.

Guidelines for Conducting the "Live" Phone Interview and Playing Chris Blair

- The role of Chris Blair may be played by a male or female—the teacher, another adult, or a competent student who has been rehearsed.
- Since this should be a mock phone interview, block the students' view of Chris Blair if possible (by standing behind a partition, turning his/her back, etc.), so facial expressions cannot be seen. If the teacher plays the role and is not facing the class, it may be necessary to appoint a student facilitator who calls on other students to ask questions.
- The first student to speak on the "conference call" should introduce the group and state why they are calling, using proper phone manners.
- Blair should be reluctant to provide information at first. He should avoid admitting details of his polling process by saying things like:
    - "I write a weekly column of anecdotes, opinions, and local news items for the 'City Gazette,' which is the biggest daily paper in the district"
    - "I'd rather not discuss details of how I write my column—journalists have the right to privacy, you know"
    - "How about you write me a letter or send me an email—I'm pretty busy right now"
    - "I see where your questions are heading, and please understand I have nothing against young people"
    - "What do you want me to do, hire an expensive polling organization?"
    - "Before I answer that, let *me* ask *you*—why are you so concerned about this anyway? Is Representative Amadeo that worried about reelection?"
    - "I have no particular opinions on this issue—just heard some talk, you know, and thought it might be interesting to take a poll..."
    - "What, do you think I'm out to get Ms. Amadeo? Why would you think that?"
    - "I asked a lot of people"
    - "They were from all walks of life—a real cross-section"
    - "I just asked them what they thought about raising the voting age"
- After 4–5 minutes of questioning and mounting frustration among students, Blair should eventually provide information about how the poll was conducted, but remain defensive until ending the call.

Details about the poll to eventually reveal:

- I talked to about 40 people
- I asked them at a mall in a new suburban area, from 3:30–5:00 on a Monday afternoon
- I didn't ask them any other questions, including where they lived or voted
- I asked people of all ages, down to about age 14, but didn't note how many of each
- I didn't keep track of the people's education level, whether they have voted in the past, their race, sex, employment, or anything else ("But it was a variety of people, I could tell!")
- I told them I was with the newspaper and did not try to hide my opinion by my tone of voice or facial expressions ("Oh, I'm sure they could tell how I felt about this!")
- My exact question was, *"If you knew that 18- and 19-year-olds want to lower the driving age to 14 and do away with laws requiring attendance in high school, would you want the voting age to be raised to 20?"*

Memo From Representative Gina Amadeo

HONORABLE GINA AMADEO

To: My summer interns
From: Congressional Representative Gina Amadeo
Subject: Troublesome poll results

Did you see Chris Blair's column in yesterday's paper? It said, "According to a poll I took, over 80% of the people in our district believe the voting age should be raised to 20."

If this is true, it's going to have a serious effect on my reelection campaign. In the last election, which was a close race, I got strong support from 18–19-year-old voters, so this has me worried! How am I going to support their right to vote without angering the "80%" who believe the voting age should be raised to 20? I can't afford to anger either of these groups.

I want to know—can we believe Blair's poll? Then tell me what you think we should do!

What Makes a Poll Believable?

A "public opinion poll" is a way to collect information about public opinion by asking people questions. The most accurate, or "valid," polls are based on the following scientific polling methods:

1. The sample of people polled is representative of the total population of voters in the city, district, state, or other group that is of interest.

- For example, imagine a high school principal wanted to know how many parents in a school of over 1000 students supported a schedule change. The principal would have to report the results from a percentage of parents of students from each grade level, each ethnic group, each academic achievement level, and so on, *in proportion to* the percentage of these students in the whole school.
- The principal should also be sure to only ask parents and *not* other members of the community.

2. The sample of people polled is **random**—they have not been selected because they are a certain type or have certain opinions.

- For example, the high school principal should not ask *only* those parents who come to football games.

3. The number of people polled must be **large enough**.

- For example, the high school principal would need to ask *more* than 10 parents out of 1000.

4. The questions must be **worded carefully** so people aren't influenced one way or another.

- For example, the high school principal should not word the question, "If you knew it would totally disrupt sports and extracurricular activities, and possibly lower test scores, would you support the small group of people who want to change the school schedule?"

5. The **way** in which the question is asked must be **controlled** or "neutral".

- For example, if the high school principal asked people their opinion when meeting them at Back-to-School Night, she would need to be sure her tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language did *not* influence people.

Not in My Backyard

Chapter Four

Purpose and Overview

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this unit is to help high school students understand more about the level of government with which they likely will have the most contact as adult citizens: local government. In solving the problem presented in this unit, students will encounter many of the issues that arise as municipal governments attempt to balance competing demands from interest groups, city agencies, other levels of government, and the community as a whole. Students, like many citizens, often misunderstand the responsibilities of local governments, as well as the constraints and complexities involved in developing and implementing policies to address needs in the community. Moreover, students need to understand that democracy can be "messy"—that is, decisions cannot always be made or implemented quickly. This occurs often for good reasons, such as the need to include many points of view and ensure an open process. Finally, this unit gives students and the teacher an opportunity to explore facts and beliefs about—and possible responses to—the troublesome issue of homelessness in the United States today. This issue presents rich possibilities for discussing ethical questions, such as: "How much should we be concerned for others?," "Who should be responsible for helping other people, and how should help be given?," and "Is there a 'common good,' and when should it override private concerns?"

Unit Overview

Students, placed in the role of the city manager's staff, receive a memo sent from the city manager of Franklinburg, a fictitious mid-sized U.S. city of just over 300,000 residents. The memo explains that the mayor and city council fear they will be accused of not having followed the proper process in developing the city's policy on homelessness—a fear the attached newspaper editorial confirms. The manager asks his staff to explain the city's policymaking process, choose from among three proposed sites and make a recommendation about where to locate a transitional housing center for the homeless. Students, working in teams, learn that several interest groups have appeared at public hearings to voice their conflicting views about the three sites. A twist in the problem arises when two new interest groups enter the debate—one representing the homeless, and the other speaking for the low-income residents near one site. These groups raise concerns about the practicality of one of the sites, and about who has a voice in governmental decision-making. The unit concludes with each team submitting a written recommendation for locating the homeless housing and an explanation of the policymaking process to the city manager. An option for teachers who wish to extend the unit is to have students make an oral digital slide presentation and answer questions about their recommendations to the class or at a public forum.

5–6 class periods

Time Required

5–6 days (45- to 60-minute periods)

Placement in the Curriculum

This unit is designed to teach students about the various aspects of local government: its organization, policy formulation process, and relationship to other levels of government. Many high school government courses, if they teach local government, do so after studying the national and perhaps state levels of government. If that is the case, this unit would be useful for comparing how the three levels of government create and implement policies. There are no prerequisites for this unit. However, BIE's "Project Based Government" unit, *The Better Budget*, gives students insight into some of the issues around expenditures for government services and who might take responsibility for services not performed at the federal level. *LegiQuest* creates awareness about the role of interest groups in American politics, which is not central to this unit but could be expanded if the teacher or students are interested. Also, the BIE "Project Based Economics" unit, *Matildaville*, teaches how a city must weigh various economic and political factors when deciding on policies regarding land use.

Concepts to be Learned

Not in My Backyard is designed to teach the following:

- Structure of local government
- Sources of revenue for local government
- Public policy processes at the local level
- Role of interest groups in policymaking
- Housing and social welfare policy issues for the homeless

Teachers can also use this unit to cover the following:

- Intergovernmental relations
- Proper role of government in providing services to promote social welfare
- Free will and individual rights versus community rights and well-being

Objectives

By participating in this unit, students will:

- Understand how local government is organized
- Learn how the policy process operates at the local level, from issue identification through policy implementation
- Understand that local governments must contend with a complex web of procedural requirements, other levels of government, and their own bureaucracies when forming and implementing policy—and that this process has value in a democracy
- Recognize that homelessness is a complex issue, in terms of both its causes and solutions
- Develop reading, writing, listening, and oral presentation skills

Content Standards

People interact with government mostly at the local level, when they apply for licenses and permits; receive services such as water, road maintenance, and public safety (police); and use public transportation. By understanding how local government works and how individuals can influence it, citizens gain a sense of their power and responsibility. *Not in My Backyard* addresses the following *National Standards for Civics and Government*, Center for Civic Education, 1994, for grades 9 through 12.

Standard	Concept	
I.A.	Definition and Purpose of Government	*
II.C.	American Political Culture	*
II.D.	American Constitutional Values and Principles	*
III.C.	Organization of State and Local Governments	X
III.E.	Choice and Opportunity for Participation	*
V. B.	Rights of Citizens	*
V. C.	Responsibilities of Citizens	*
V. E.	Civic Participation	X

X = a standard that is addressed in this curriculum

* = a standard that could be addressed in this curriculum

Not in My Backyard addresses the following Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, developed by the National Council for the Social Studies, 1994, for high school.

Standard	Concept	
VI.	**Power, Authority and Governance**	
	Individual Rights, Roles and Status	*
	The Purpose of Government	*
	Mechanisms Used to Balance Competing Needs and Wants	*
	Applying Political Science Theories to Issues and Problems	*
	Evaluating Government Achievement	*
X	**Civic Ideals and Practices**	
	Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities	*
	Evaluating Selected Public Issues	*
	Forms of Civic Participation	X
	Influence of Forms of Participation on Public Policy	X
	Public Policy Analysis and Political Actors	X
	Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy and Decision-Making	*
	Relationship of Policy and Behavior to Democratic Ideals	*

X = a standard that is addressed in this curriculum

* = a standard that could be addressed in this curriculum

Not in My Backyard addresses the following 21st Century Learning Skills, developed by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

Standard	Concept	
2	**Learning and Innovation Skills**	
2A	Creativity and Innovation	
	Think Creatively	X

	Work Creatively with Others	X
	Implement Innovations	X
2B	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	
	Reason Effectively	X
	Use Systems Thinking	*
	Make Judgments and Decisions	X
	Solve Problems	X
2C	Communication and Collaboration	
	Communicate Clearly	X
	Collaborate with Others	X
3	**Information, Media, and Technology Skills**	
3A	Information Literacy	
	Access and Evaluate Information	X
	Use and Manage Information	X
3B	ITC Literacy	
	Apply technology	X
4	**Life and Career Skills**	
4A	Flexibility and Adaptability	
	Adapt to Change	X
	Be Flexible	X
4B	Initiative and Self-Direction	
	Manage Goals and Time	X
	Work Independently	X
	Be Self-Directed Learners	X

4C	Social and Cross-Cultural Skills	
	Interact Effectively with Others	X
	Work Effectively in Diverse Teams	X
4D	Productivity and Accountability	
	Manage Projects	X
	Produce Results	X
4E	Leadership and Responsibility	
	Guide and Lead Others	X
	Be Responsibility to Others	X

X = a standard that is addressed in this curriculum

* = a standard that could be addressed in this curriculum

Resources

Resources are distributed to the students at different points in the project. (See The Sequence of the Unit for one example.)

*All handouts are located in **Student Materials.***

A rubric for assessing student performance on the written recommendation and explanation of the policymaking process can be found in Teacher Materials.

A rubric for assessing an oral presentation—not specific to this unit—may be found in the Teacher's Material.

Lesson Materials

Because Project Based Learning is grounded in constructivist learning, several "teachable moments" will arise when students readily see a need to know particular concepts. During these moments teachers can use several techniques to teach concepts. For this purpose, lesson materials are included so traditional lectures can be used to provide information on more difficult subject matter. Alternatively, a Socratic method may be used, in which the teacher uses questioning strategies to guide students toward knowledge and understanding.

This unit includes information on the following areas for potential mini-lectures:

- Structure and role of local government
- History and causes of homelessness and policies to address the problem
- Public policy process at the local level
- Interest group politics

  Lesson materials are located in ***Teacher Materials.***

Resources Include:

- Entry document: Memo from city manager to staff
- Newspaper editorial from the *Franklinburg Gazette*
- Document describing three proposed sites for transitional housing for the homeless
- Map of City of Franklinburg showing the locations of proposed sites
- Transcripts summarizing testimony from interest groups at public hearing
- Chart: "Notes on Franklinburg's Process for Homeless Housing Policy"
- Letters to the mayor, city manager, and newspaper from the Coalition of the Homeless, and from East Side residents living near Proposed Site #3
- Classroom textbook and other materials that may be selected by the teacher

The Sequence of the Unit

Because Project Based Learning depends to a great extent on how a particular group of students goes about the task of constructing knowledge from real-world applications, the sequence of learning will differ in each class. As a result, it is virtually impossible to describe the exact unfolding of this project, even though it has been tested on several occasions. What follows is an example of the sequence of the project during one class. We have used this particular sequence in our *Procedure* section. The **bold** phrases below are cross-referenced in the margin for easier detection.

Pre-project planning

0. **Prepare for a successful project implementation**

Launching the Project

1. Discuss the **memo from the city manager** and attached newspaper editorial with the whole class

Framing the Question

2. Develop the **initial Know list** with the whole class
3. Develop the **initial Driving Question** with the whole class
4. Develop the **initial Need to Know list** with the whole class

Problem-solving and learning activities

5. **Divide students into groups** of city manager's staff
6. Have students examine the **document and map describing proposed sites** and begin discussing their views in small groups
7. Have students make **initial Project Log entry**
8. Undertake **mini-lecture on local government**
9. Give students **transcript of public hearings** with testimony from interest groups
10. Revise **Driving Question and Know/Need to Know lists**
11. Have students make **Second Project Log Entry**
12. Undertake **optional lecture/research/discussion on homelessness**
13. Undertake **mini-lecture on policy process** in city government
14. Distribute **"Notes on Franklinburg's Process for Homeless Housing Policy" chart**
15. Have students begin to **develop site recommendation and policy process explanation**
16. Hand out **letters from two groups**—the Coalition of the Homeless, and East Side residents
17. Finalize **Driving Question and Know/Need to Know lists** with the whole class

18. Have students make **final Project Log entry**

19. Have students submit **final written memo** with site recommendation and policy process explanation and/or make oral presentations

20. Use **assessment tools** to evaluate recommendations and process explanations

21. **Wrap-up and debrief** with the whole class

22. **Manage student reflection on the 21st century skills** practiced and the process of learning Project Based Government

23. **Multiple-Choice Test** to assess individual students' knowledge of key political concepts

24. **Make notes or adjustments to the unit** to improve student learning for the next time the unit is taught.

25. **Extensions to the Unit**

Step-by-Step Teaching Guide

Each of the above instructional activities is discussed in more depth below, with tips for successful classroom implementation.

Prepare for a successful project implementation

Pre-project planning

0. Prepare for a successful project implementation

There are a number of issues that must be considered before embarking on a project with students. These include:

- How much time will be devoted to the project?
- What content resources need to be prepared in advance (textbooks, articles, websites, etc.)?
- Do all students have the skills they need to tackle the project—including basic literacy skills as well as the ability to work in teams, make presentations, and conduct research? If not, is it necessary to pre-teach some of these skills, make sure students have adequate support, or deal with these challenges in other ways?
- How will student groups be formed? *(See comments in Chapter Two.)*
- How will groups report on their progress and be held accountable? Do report forms or other tools need to be developed?
- Is it necessary to arrange access to the library/media center or computer lab?
- Do parents or administrators need to be informed about the process of Project Based Learning and be assured that time spent on the project is focused on standards-specific learning goals?

In addition to considering the above issues, be sure student handouts and clarifying lesson/mini-lecture materials are ready—or at least underway. Finally, **decide if the culminating product will be done as a small group, in pairs, or individually.** This will affect how you present the task to students, use time, and assess their learning.

Launching the Project

Whole class

Meet with the whole class and inform students that in this activity, they will explore the workings of a typical mid-sized city government as they defend the city's policymaking process and make a recommendation about where to locate a transitional housing and services center for the homeless. They will study the structure of local government and learn how elected representatives, other officials, and interest groups must work together to create and implement public policy.

Entry Point:

1. Discuss the <u>memo from the city manager</u> and attached newspaper editorial with the whole class

Memo from the City Manager

Give students the first memo from City Manager Geronski, with the newspaper editorial attached. The memo explains that city leaders fear they will be accused of making backroom deals and not following the proper process when developing the city's policy on homelessness. The editorial raises hard questions about the process. The manager asks students, as members of his staff, to defend the policy process and to make a recommendation about where to put a new transitional housing center for the homeless. He tells them that they will receive more information about the three sites under consideration as well as comments made by various interest groups about the sites at public hearings.

See entry document, ***Student Materials*****.**

Framing the Inquiry

2. Develop the <u>initial "know" list</u> with the whole class

Initial "know" list

Whole class

The first step in answering the question is for students to assess what they know about th1e problem posed in the Entry Document. This should be done as a class by creating a "What Do We Know?" list on chart paper, an overhead transparency, or a computer projector. Ask students to carefully review the entry document and offer items for the list, making sure to *only record what is actually stated in the text, not what might be inferred*.

<u>What Do We Know?</u>

- The city manager is Geronski
- We're the city manager's staff
- We need to make a recommendation about where to put transitional housing for the homeless
- Three sites are proposed, and they are the "only practical locations available"
- The funds for housing are from a federal grant and cannot be used for anything else

- If we suggest anything else that costs money, it will have to come from cutting something else in the budget or by increasing revenues
- Some groups at public hearings have said they don't want the transitional housing in their backyard
- The city manager needs a memo ASAP
- We need to show the city has followed the proper policymaking process
- The newspaper is asking questions about why this is taking so long
- The mayor and the council are concerned about re-election, and the media are watching
- Our jobs might depend on how successfully the city addresses this problem

Initial Driving Question

Whole class

3. Develop the initial Driving Question with the whole class

After discussing the entry document with the students, have them draft a tentative Driving Question. Students should be prompted to start this process by filling specific information into the general Driving Question form:

How can we, as _______ do _______ so that _______?

The initial question may be far from the Driving Question that will emerge as students think about and work with the problem. This is expected. The Driving Question will evolve as students gain more insight and knowledge about the problem and its underlying issues. Remember, the problem is intentionally ill-defined so that the students must grapple with issues and concepts. It is this continual struggle that builds knowledge. The initial statement may look something like:

> **How can we, as the city manager's staff, decide which of the three sites is best for transitional housing for the homeless and show that we've followed the proper process, so that the mayor and city council are reassured and the city helps fix the problem of homelessness?**

Initial "Need to Know" list

Whole class

4. Develop the initial "Need to Know" list with the whole class

The next step in the problem-solving process is to coach students to identify information they need to know in order to provide a solution to the Driving Question. Again, being careful that students pay close attention to all parts of the entry document, create a class list addressing the question "What Do We Need to Know?" If students are missing a key piece of information about the problem, the content, or their task, ask questions to elicit items for the list. This is important because everything students are taught in the unit must spring from this list. Without a doubt, students will suggest things they need to know that, in reality, they do not need to know. Now is not the time to filter these questions out of the process. Rather, allow students to see their irrelevance once additional information is discovered.

The knowledge inventory will differ for each class because students are working to identify the knowledge they have and define the body of knowledge they do not have. An example of the type of items that might appear on the initial need to know lists follows. *Remember that every class will produce a different list, and every idea should be put on the board*. Sometimes seemingly strange ideas that come from a need to know discussion result in some of the more creative approaches to the problem's solution.

What Do We Need to Know?

- Where is the city, how big is it, what is it like? Is there really a Franklinburg?
- What is a city manager?
- What does the city council do?
- What are public hearings?
- What are the proper steps to follow, and has the city done so?
- What is a "backroom deal" and why is it bad?
- Where are the three proposed locations for the transitional housing and what are the pros and cons of each?
- How much does building transitional housing cost?
- What are "revenues"?
- Can we get more money?
- How big is the transitional housing, and what will it be used for exactly? What impact would it have on the area?
- What are the different groups saying about where to put the transitional housing?
- How bad is the homeless problem?
- What causes homelessness?
- What else is the city doing about homelessness?
- Why should the city provide services for homeless people?

Potential Hurdle
Students may tend to focus on the more "interesting" part of the task—choosing the site for homeless housing—and neglect the issue of whether the city has followed the proper process.

Potential Hurdle: Students may tend to focus on the more "interesting" part of the task—choosing the site for homeless housing—and neglect the issue of whether the city has followed the proper process. However, a large part of the city manager's need for his staff's help stems from the concern of whether proper procedure was followed. Also keep in mind that the content standards that need to be addressed in this unit are mainly about the organization and operation of local government, so be sure to elicit items for the need to know list that connect to those standards. Ask questions such as, "Do you know what a city manager is or what a city manager does?" and "What about the part that mentions following the 'six steps'…?"

Teachable Moments and Dialogues

Project Based Learning is most effective when there is continual dialogue between the teacher (as a coach) and students. When students are left to discover knowledge or find solutions on their own without teacher coaching or use of Project Logs, they may flounder or stray off track. To prevent this, teachers must actively direct students toward the curriculum goals by asking probing questions in class discussions, circulating and listening to discussions in group work, and evaluating the Project Log with meaningful, useful comments. Teachers may take advantage of teachable moments by giving mini-lectures using the lesson materials provided with this unit.

The lesson materials provided in **Teacher Materials** are meant for teachers to use to supplement their knowledge of the subject. It is not mandatory to use the specific lecture material. Much of the material can be used as needed or if questions arise that require a mini-lecture. For example, the first mini-lecture in Teacher Materials is on the basic structure of local government, but since it is short it could be combined with the next three mini-lectures on the forms of city government, planning and zoning process, and sources of revenue for state and local government. See the notes throughout the *Procedures* section on when and how to present lesson material to students.

*Lesson materials for mini-lectures are located in **Teacher Materials.***

Divide students into groups

Small group

5. Divide students into groups of city manager's staff

Begin by dividing students into small groups of three to five, each of which will act as a team reporting to the city manager.

Document and Map Describing Proposed Sites

Small group

6. Have students examine the document and map describing proposed sites and begin discussing their views in small groups

Distribute the first two resources, *Document 1107-3A* and the map of the city of Franklinburg, which describe and show the three proposed locations for the transitional housing center for the homeless.

Each team should read over the material and begin discussing the pros and cons of each site.

All handouts are located in ***Student Materials.***

You may wish to have a class discussion and add to the know/need to know lists at this point. Remember, you will want to eliminate as much from the original need to know list as possible by checking off items or moving them to the "know" list. Examples of what might be added to the know/need to know lists include:

What do we know?

- The City of Franklinburg has about 317,000 people
- One proposed site is downtown at a vacant lot owned by the city; it will cost $4 million
- Another site is an old hotel at the edge of an historic residential area; it will cost $2.2 million
- The third site is in an industrial area near the freeway; it will cost $3.1 million

What do we need to know?

- What are "zoning" and "variance"?
- What is "gentrification"?
- What is "below-market value"?

7. Have students make initial Project Log entry

Initial Project Log Entry

Individual

The Project Log

Throughout the project each student keeps a Project Log, which will help the student and teacher follow the construction of knowledge. To ensure that students stay focused on the underlying political issues and understand the content, the log should be checked periodically by the teacher. The log can also serve as an important assessment of how students or groups use problem-solving skills, develop new questions or "need to know" items, manage time and tasks, and work together as a team. Teachers who wish to do this may ask students to keep track of the project from the beginning by recording in their logs the Driving Question and know/need to know lists. Students should note any changes that need to be made as the project unfolds.

The first content-related Project Log entry can be introduced after the class is familiar with the role they are playing in the project. At this point students

Potential Question
Which of the three proposed sites makes the most sense to you at this point, and why? What issues are most important to consider when choosing a site?

should be asked to reflect on the issue of selecting a site for transitional housing for the homeless and on the general kinds of things to consider in making a city policy on the homeless.

Potential Questions to Ask: Which of the three proposed sites makes the most sense to you at this point, and why? What issues are most important to consider when choosing a site?

Mini-lecture on Local Government

Whole class

8. Undertake mini-lecture on local government

A mini-lecture on the basic structure of local government and forms of city government should now be given. Point out that since Franklinburg is the "city council-manager" form, city staff members get their direction from City Manager Geronski instead of the mayor. Note that the manager is not elected but is hired by the city council, which can fire the manager if he or she does not do an effective job.

Transcript of Public Hearings

Whole class

or

Small group

9. Give students transcript of public hearings with testimony from interest groups

The next resource to give students is the "Summary Transcript of Public Hearings," which reveals what various interest groups think about the proposed sites for the transitional housing. This document should be read aloud, and you may wish to have different students read and dramatize each part. Then, as a whole class or in groups, students should discuss what the transcript says about the pros and cons of each site. Point out that both informal interest groups and organized interest groups are represented, and discuss the potential basis of their views.

Revise Driving Question and Know/Need to Know Lists

Whole class

10. Revise Driving Question and know/need to know lists

Review the know/need to know lists and revise them based on the new information students have just received. Examples of what now might be added to the know/need to know list include:

What else do we know?

- Each site can serve the same number of homeless people (100)
- Each site would take about the same amount of time to build and would cost the same to operate
- The city has 200–300 homeless residents
- The homeless will get a temporary place to stay, with meals and services, if they follow rules

- Public hearings were held on three dates
- The “CCUSS” group doesn’t want the homeless in Franklinburg and thinks they should be arrested
- The Garfield District group thinks locating the homeless housing at Site #2 will hurt their neighborhood
- A social worker thinks the housing should be downtown, where the homeless need it most, or possibly in the Garfield District
- A former homeless man says people should be more sympathetic, and that the homeless would feel more welcomed if they could live in a residential neighborhood like Site #2
- The Chamber of Commerce thinks the homeless are bad for business and does not want the housing to be built downtown

What else do we need to know?

- What is a “public hearing”?
- What is an “interest group”?
- What is the “Chamber of Commerce”?
- Is the social worker right?
- What do more of the homeless people think about the sites?
- What is the city going to do about panhandling?

11. Have students make Second Project Log Entry

Second Project Log Entry

Whole class

Now return to the Driving Question and ask students if it needs to be revised, making any changes as necessary.

12. Undertake optional lecture/research/discussion on homelessness

Lecture/Research/ Discussion on Homelessness

Whole class

After reading the transcript, students may have questions or opinions about the nature of homelessness and possible solutions to the issue. The background lesson material in Teacher Materials contains a wealth of information on the history, causes, and demographics of homelessness, and the ways local, state, and national governments have attempted to address the issue. You may use this information to give mini-lectures or use it as a reference to answer students’ questions. These questions could also be answered through independent student research, if you want to allow the time for it.

Mini-lecture on Policy Process

Whole class

13. Undertake mini-lecture on policy process in city government

Use the information provided in Teacher Materials to give students a mini-lecture about the six steps of the policy formation process in municipal government. An example is provided to show how this process applies to homeless housing policy. Be sure to include information about the other levels of government and agencies that would typically be involved in the transitional housing site issue. The chart, “Policymaking Process in Local Government,” also may be used to explain the process to students.

Students may wonder why city government has to be so careful about its policy process, and why the process appears so time-consuming and cumbersome. Point out that rules such as the requirement for public hearings are important in a democracy. They give citizens several “points of access,” besides voting every few years, to influence their government. Also, city governments in the past have been guilty of corruption and secrecy, so laws now exist to promote open and honest government, free of inappropriate special interest influence.

The Project Log may be used at this point to have students reflect on how local government operates. Ask them to consider the trade-off between efficiency on one hand and inclusion, thoroughness, and careful planning on the other.

Potential Question
Is it more important for a city government to act quickly, or to follow a process that takes time? Why? What are the pros and cons of each way of governing in a democracy?

Potential Questions to Ask: Is it more important for a city government to act quickly, or to follow a process that takes time? Why? What are the pros and cons of each way of governing in a democracy?

Notes on Franklinburg’s Process for Homeless Housing Policy

Individual

14. Distribute “Notes on Franklinburg’s Process for Homeless Housing Policy” chart

Hand out copies of the chart from City Manager Geronski, “Notes on Franklinburg’s Process for Homeless Housing Policy.” Students should use the chart to record notes about how the six steps in the policy process were or will be taken. This exercise will help them organize information to include in their written report and, if you choose to require them, the accompanying visual display materials. If you wish, the chart may be turned in as a required assignment and used as a formative assessment to provide feedback before the students’ final products are collected.

Develop Site Recommendations and Policy Process Explanation

Individual

15. Have students begin to develop site recommendation and policy process explanation

Students should now begin deciding on their site recommendation and developing their explanation of the policy process, per the city manager’s request in the entry document.

<u>Potential Hurdle:</u> Students may need to be guided—in a class discussion or by coaching small groups or individuals—in reviewing the materials they have received to find “clues” about the policy process the city has followed. It is okay to allow a certain amount of reasonable guessing or making up of events to fill in the story as long as existing facts in the scenario are not changed. Note that Steps 4, 5, and 6 of the process are yet to come, so the students must foresee how those will be accomplished, based on what they have learned about the policy process in local government. Tell students they may be somewhat general in their description of the process, since the resources they have been given do not provide a clear-cut, detailed account. If asked, tell students that they are to assume the City of Franklinburg has followed the “typical” process in this instance, since they cannot know if the city manager is telling the truth in this exercise and because the staff would not openly contradict their boss, though they might raise concerns.

Potential Hurdle
Students may need to be guided—in a class discussion or by coaching small groups or individuals—in reviewing the materials they have received to find “clues” about the policy process the city has followed.

16. Hand out <u>letters from two groups</u>—the Coalition of the Homeless, and East Side residents

Letters from Two Groups

Individual

The final handout students receive is a sheet containing two letters sent to the city and the local newspaper. One, from the Coalition of the Homeless, explains that if Site #3 is chosen there will still be homeless people on the downtown streets because few will choose to stay in transitional housing at that location. The other letter is from residents of the East Side area near Site #3 who complain that their voices have not been heard in the policy process thus far. The city manager has scrawled a note on the copy of these letters, requesting his staff to take the letters into consideration as they finalize their recommendation for a site. This twist in the problem raises concerns about the wisdom of choosing Site #3, which may have appeared to be the “easiest” option since it was located away from downtown and the wealthier residential neighborhoods. The second letter adds a wrinkle that causes students to evaluate whether the city has, in fact, included all parties in the policymaking process—and consider who often gets left out.

<u>Potential Hurdle:</u> Students may tend to ignore these letters since they are not from powerful or “important” interest groups. Point out to students that these letters raise serious concerns about the potential political costs of Site #3. For one, if housing located there is not used, the homeless problem won’t be solved, which will anger voters and business owners. Also, the complaints of East Side residents could stir up voter anger against city officials because it will add to the perception that City Hall is run by special interests making backroom deals and ignoring certain groups of people. Finally, the elderly typically vote in the highest percentages of any group in the electorate. This disgruntled group, allied with a church known for its organizing ability, could make trouble for city council members at election time.

Potential Hurdle
Students may tend to ignore these letters since they are not from powerful or “important” interest groups.

Finalize Driving Question and Know/Need to Know Lists

Whole class

17. Finalize Driving Question and Know/Need to Know lists with the whole class

Once the class has thought about and discussed this turn of events, the know/need to know lists should be revisited and the Driving Question revised for the final time.

Final Project Log Entry

Individual

18. Have students make final Project Log entry

Have students make a final entry in their Project Logs, reflecting on the issue of who has power in local government and why. To avoid reinforcing a feeling that "this is how life is, so don't even try," coach students to see that there are some ways in which the less powerful can change their situation. For example, they can form an organized interest group, join with other groups, start a publicity campaign, find a sympathetic politician, or even hire a lawyer.

Potential Question Who tends to have more influence over the decisions made by local government, and why? How can those with less power increase their influence?

Potential Questions to Ask: Who tends to have more influence over the decisions made by local government, and why? How can those with less power increase their influence?

Final Written Memo

Individual

or

Small group

19. Have students submit final written memo with site recommendation and policy process explanation and/or make oral presentations

Students, in their teams, should complete and turn in their memo to the city manager. The memo should be in proper format, like the entry document for this unit, and accompanied by any charts or diagrams showing the policymaking process followed by the city.

An option here is to have the student teams make oral presentations of their recommendations, with the teacher playing the role of city manager.

Potential Hurdle Students may forget that, as the city manager's staff, their role is only to discuss the pros and cons of the sites and recommend their choice—not make the decision themselves.

Potential Hurdle: Students may forget that, as the city manager's staff, their role is only to discuss the pros and cons of the sites and *recommend* their choice—not make the decision themselves. Remind them of this, and also remind them that they will need to provide their boss with convincing evidence that their recommendation is just one step in a properly followed democratic process. Students may also need to realize that a city manager's staff would not make a decision about the politics of this situation—they would only be able to *point out* the political issues to other decision makers. For example, students are not given information about how many voters would likely support a city council member who voted for one site or another; staff members could only be expected to note the need for further information of this type. Similarly, if students want the city to spend money as part of their solution, note that they, as city manager's staff, cannot decide *how* to find funding—they can only suggest that city leaders will need to do this.

20. Use assessment tools to evaluate recommendations and process explanations

Assessment Tools

Individual

A rubric for assessing the written memo is provided in Teacher Materials. The rubric can also be used to guide students in meeting the expectations of the assignment.

When assessing students, remember that Project Based Learning is most effective when the students are placed in realistic situations. As a consequence, if students begin to alter the authenticity of the situation, the learning environment can easily be reduced to fun and games. This negates much of the validity of the technique and the knowledge gained from the unit. To prevent this digression, it should be stressed that responses must be accurate and reflect knowledge gathered from available resources. In other words, students cannot fabricate data and scenarios. They cannot give bogus answers to questions posed in the project.

Students must also be coached to see that "I don't know" is a legitimate answer to a question. This makes the classroom authentic. When presented with a problem-solving situation outside the classroom, there often may be more information available but limited time to seek out resources. This is one of the lessons that Project Based Learning teaches. To enable students to gain this insight, they must learn when to say they do not have the data to give an accurate answer to some questions that may arise in the unit. In other words, there are a limited number of answers because information is limited. *Students cannot make up answers. They must use the information that is provided.*

21. Wrap-up and debrief with the whole class

Wrap-up and Debrief

Whole class

It is critical that the wrap-up and debriefing section of the unit not be ignored. This is the part of the unit in which students, as a class, are given feedback on both process and content. *It is imperative that incorrect knowledge or statements be corrected at this point in the project*. How the debriefing is conducted is less important than the fact that it is conducted.

Process Debriefing

It is important that students have a chance to discuss how they felt about the process. This could be done with a series of questions. For example:

- How do you think you did?
- Is there anything that you think you left out?
- Is it difficult when there is not one right answer to the Driving Question?
- How does it feel to go through the project without specific direction?
- To successfully develop a solution to the problem, what skills and attitudes did you need while you were working?

Content Debriefing

As mentioned in the *Purpose and Rationale* section, students may have only a vague idea of what local government is and does. Although this unit focuses on the interesting issue of homelessness, try to keep the debriefing centered on how municipal government creates and implements public policy. Some questions to bring up include:

- Are local governments able to act efficiently when trying to solve problems, or are they too “bogged down” by bureaucratic procedures and interest group politics?
- What is the value in having such a careful, inclusive process for creating and implementing policies?
- What is the proper role of interest groups at the local level? Are they important in a democracy, and why?
- Has this unit added to or changed your thinking about the problem of homelessness and its possible solutions, and if so, how?

Manage Student reflection on 21st century skills

22. <u>Manage student reflection on the 21st century skills</u> practiced and the process of learning Project Based Government

Students should have a chance to discuss the process of learning in PBL, and to reflect on the 21st century skills of critical thinking, collaboration, and presentation that they used in the project. This part of the debrief could be done with a series of questions, for example:

- Did you find it to be difficult when there were several possible “right answers” to the Driving Question? Why?
- How does it feel to go through some parts of the project without specific directions, to make some of your own decisions?
- How much do you think you learned in terms of skills like working as a team and making a presentation?

Finally, ask students for feedback on how the project was structured, with questions such as:

- Did you need more resources to help you solve the problem—more lecture time, more readings, more time on the computer?
- Did you need more help in learning how to work together in your group?
- Did you have enough time for each step of the unit?
- Are there any suggestions you would make for improving how the unit is taught?

23. <u>Multiple-Choice Test</u> to assess individual students' knowledge of key political concepts

Multiple-Choice Test

Individual

The multiple-choice test for this unit may be found in the **Teacher Materials**, in "Assessment Tools."

24. <u>Make notes or adjustments to the unit</u> to improve student learning for the next time the unit is taught

Make Notes or Adjustments to the Unit

Do's and Don'ts

In reading through this unit, changes will inevitably come to mind. In this section we highlight changes that have worked and changes that have not worked. Please do not try the ideas that have failed, even though the temptation may be great!

Ideas to Try

If you wish to extend the unit and/or dramatize its conclusion, have student groups make oral presentations, giving their recommendations for a site for homeless housing and explaining the policy process. To raise the stakes and create an authentic audience, invite local elected officials and/or representatives of government agencies and nonprofits to be part of a panel hearing the presentations and asking questions. These guests should be provided with background information on the problem and the "City of Franklinburg." This unit is a natural springboard for studying local government in your school's community. Students could investigate actual issues and the policymaking process, either as a class or as individual or small-group projects. In communities where homelessness exists, students could find out how local governments and other organizations are dealing with it.

There are also, of course, ongoing debates in communities large and small where one can hear the phrase "not in my backyard!" Students could study issues ranging from locating waste treatment facilities to building prisons and constructing freeways. In a democratic society, tension will always exist between the needs of the larger community and the rights of citizens who are impacted by government actions.

Ideas Not to Try

As mentioned before, the scenario in this unit might lead students and teachers to overemphasize the issue of homelessness at the expense of learning about local government. Be sure to spend enough time and give enough emphasis to important content standards.

Extensions to the Unit

25. Extensions to the Unit

- Have students develop a civic engagement project. Begin by asking students to brainstorm several issues in the community that they feel need to be addressed. Examples might be: recycling, food drive or toy drive, park clean up, community awareness of local, state, national or international issues (hold a public forum, or speakers' series). Have students select three issues to develop into civic engagement projects. Divide students into small groups of 4–6. Have each group select a project. Then have them analyze the problems with the following questions: What is the problem? Why is it a problem? What actions can we take to address the problem? What is the expected result? Then have students plan their project by identifying the time frame (estimate of days to complete the project), communication tools to conduct and publicize the project, steps to take to complete the project, who will be responsible for each step, what resources are needed, and start and completion dates for each step.

- Have students examine the homeless issue in their community. Have them interview appropriate city or county officials about the history of homelessness in the community. When did it start? What were the economic conditions that led to this or contributed to its increase? How have local government officials addressed the problem? What have been their successes or failures? Where does the problem stand now? What current efforts are being made now? Have students develop a slide or video presentation on their findings and present to the class or a community forum.

- Students can examine their local city or county government. They can review the local government's website and visit city hall or the county court house to find out the basic structure, the budget identifying major revenues and expenditures, and any of the major issues local government is addressing. Have students attend several local government public meetings where these issues might be discussed. (As an option, some local communities have their meetings broadcast on local cable stations.) Have students analyze how the local government follows the six steps in the policymaking process.

- Ask students to brainstorm issues related to school that they are concerned about. These might be policy or funding issues or related to a particular incident. Have them develop a presentation on the issue following the analysis process in Activity A. Then have them attend school board meetings to present the issue. They can engage the board by asking questions, pursuing their support for addressing the issue, and volunteering their time to assist.

Teacher Materials

Local Government

Basic Structure

State governments have the power to establish local governments to perform functions throughout state territorial boundaries. Counties, cities, and townships are referred to as *general purpose* governments. They provide a wide range of services—from law enforcement to parks and recreation, human services, roads, and public works. Special districts and school districts are known as *special purpose governments*. They are much more limited in the number of functions they perform for the public.

Because each state can assign different responsibilities to the various units of government, it is difficult to generalize. However, following are the four typical types of local governments:

1. Counties

Maintain records of deeds, mortgages, births, and marriages; assess and levy property taxes; administer elections; provide law enforcement through a sheriff; maintain a criminal court and a local jail; and administer state welfare programs. Counties are responsible for public health and mental health; also recreation, including county parks.

2. Cities, Towns, Townships

Also known as *municipal* governments, they provide within their boundaries the basic functions of police, fire protection, streets, sewage, sanitation, and parks and recreation. Some cities also provide welfare services and public education. Townships are popular in the Midwest, where they act as subdivisions of counties and have the same responsibilities as cities. New England towns also deliver services similar to those provided by cities.

3. School Districts

Organized specifically to provide public elementary and secondary education. Most school districts are independent from other local governments.

4. Special Districts

Provide specific services not supplied by existing general purpose governments. Most perform a single function, such as mass transit, bridges, water, mosquito control, sewage disposal, airports, and convention centers.

Forms of City Government

At the city, or municipal, level, there are three systems of government:

1. Commission Form

This traditional form of city government gives both legislative and executive powers to a small body, usually consisting of five members. The board of commissioners is popularly elected and is directly responsible for operations of city departments and agencies. Each member of the board heads a city department, and the members take turns acting in the largely ceremonial role of mayor. Only a few American cities still have the commission form of government, which can have three main shortcomings. It is difficult to assign responsibility or leadership to any one person; there is a tendency toward "empire-building" in which each commissioner tries to gain funding and influence for his or her own department; and lack of coordination in policymaking and administration, resulting in inefficiencies and ineffectiveness.

2. Council-Manager Form

Most small cities operate under the council-manager form. In this system the balance of power favors the legislative branch, or city council, which has policy oversight and administrative authority in running city departments. The council appoints a city manager, who administers city operations and has the power to hire and fire personnel based on limits set by the local merit system. The city manager is a full-time professional executive who does not run for office, which is believed to make decision-making less political and less susceptible to corruption. The mayor in this system is either independently elected by the voters or is elected by the city council, in which case the office is largely ceremonial. The mayor usually presides over council meetings, but he/she has few budgetary powers, cannot veto bills, and does not have independent appointment powers beyond the council committees.

3. Council-Mayor Form

In this system, which is found in most large U.S. cities, the voters elect a mayor who wields executive power. In these "strong mayor" cities, the mayor oversees the local bureaucracy and has the power to set the budget, appoint city department heads, veto legislation, and control policy debate. A strong mayor is the undisputed master of the executive agencies of city government—which can be good or bad depending on the skill of the person holding the office. The city council has independent powers—usually lawmaking and budgetary—that are distinct from the mayor.

Planning and Zoning Process in City Government

State laws authorize and often mandate that cities develop comprehensive plans. These plans used to be prepared by hearings for example on proposed changes to an individual's property, on proposed new developments, and to study a modification to zoning ordinance. The decisions of professional planners and *planning commissions* are officially considered advisory, meaning that the comprehensive plan must be enacted by the city council to become law. But while the recommendations of the planning commission can be overturned by the city council, advice from a professional planning staff, with the support of influential private citizens on the planning commission, cannot be easily ignored.

Zoning divides the community into districts for the purpose of regulating use and development of land and buildings. Zoning originated as an attempt to separate residential areas from commercial and industrial activity, thereby protecting residential property values. The *zoning ordinance* divides the community into residential, commercial, and industrial zones, and perhaps subdivisions with zones for light industrial and heavy industrial, or single-family residential and multi-family residential. Property owners must use their land in conformity with the zoning ordinance; however exceptions are made for those who have used the land in a certain way before adoption of the ordinance.

Changes to a zoning ordinance usually originate at the request of property owners. They may wish to change the zoning classification of their property to enhance its value—for example, to change it from single-family to multi-family residential. Usually the planning agency will hold a public hearing on a proposed change before sending its findings and recommendations to the city council. The city council may also hold a public hearing before deciding on the change. City councils may ignore the recommendations of their planning agencies when strong pressures are exerted by neighborhood groups or environmentalists opposed to rezoning, or by developers and property owners supporting it. A *zoning variance* is a request for a limited and specific variation from the strict standards in a zoning ordinance as applied to a particular piece of property. It is not intended to encourage spot zoning or to grant special privileges, but this is frequently what happens.

Revenues and Expenditures for State and Local Governments

Just like the federal government, state and local governments must decide how to collect revenue and establish a budget for spending the revenues that are generated. Spending by state and local governments has risen dramatically in recent years due to inflation, increases in population, and the public's growing demand for more and better services.

Sources of Revenue for States, Counties, and Cities

- **Licenses and fees**, such as court fines, marriage and motor vehicle licenses, and parking and traffic tickets
- **Federal aid** accounts for almost half of non-tax sources of revenue for state and local governments, such as money for schools, highways, and social welfare programs
- **Gambling and lotteries**, in which a portion of the money generated is kept by the government
- **Publicly operated businesses**, such as toll roads, bridges, and ferries; 18 states also operate their own liquor stores. Many cities own and operate their own water, electric power, and bus transportation systems
- **Bonds** may be sold by the state or city to pay for long-term capital expenditures, usually for infrastructure such as highways, sports stadiums, or other building or repair projects. A bond is a promise to repay a loan with a set rate of interest. *General obligation bonds* are backed by the full faith and credit of the issuing government. In approving this kind of bond, the government agrees to increase taxes to pay the interest and ultimately to retire the bond. *Revenue bonds* are supported by the income from a project such as a toll road. In most cases, voter approval is not needed to issue revenue bonds, and the bonds can often be used to extend the total debt of a government beyond constitutional limits. Generally, both types of bonds are attractive investments, especially to wealthy investors, because the interest they pay is exempt from federal and state income taxes. Problems can arise with the use of bonds, however, when tax revenues drop due to an economic downturn, and the expected funds are not available to pay off the bonds. While most governments set aside money each year to pay off a bond when it matures, they sometimes must dip into a reserve fund intended for other purposes.
- **Taxes** may be levied by a state, county, or city in any way they please, as long as they stay within constitutional guidelines. Most state and local governments rely on a combination of four types of taxes:
    1. **Sales tax:** This tax is levied as a proportion of the retail price of a product at the point of sale. Paid by the customer, it may be a general tax placed on all products, or it may be placed on selective products, such as liquor and cigarettes. A sales tax is *regressive*—it is the same rate for everyone whether they are rich or poor. This disproportionately impacts individuals with lower incomes, as they are limited in their resources. On average in the U.S., sales taxes make up 48% of state revenues.

2. **Income tax:** This is levied as a proportion of income earned. In most states and a number of municipalities, residents must pay income tax not only to the federal government, but to the state or city as well. An income tax is a *progressive tax,* assessing higher incomes at a higher rate of taxation. Rates can vary from 1% on lower incomes to 10% or more on the highest incomes in some states. Individual income taxes account for 34% of all state tax revenue. Corporate income taxes are also used in most states, amounting to 7% of state revenues. Many people, especially fiscal conservatives, argue that income taxes depress the economy and tie up potential economic activity in government services, which they consider to have a marginal impact on the overall economy.
3. **Property tax:** Placed on the value of real estate, this tax is limited to state and local governments. It is the chief source of revenue for many city and county governments today. Taxes are levied on real property—land and buildings—and personal property such as recreational vehicles, pleasure boats, aircraft, and mobile homes. Property must be assessed for its value, and most cities have tax assessors who perform that duty.
4. **Other taxes and fees:** Additional taxes imposed by state governments including inheritance, estate, and business taxes. Most state and local governments also have user charges or fees. At the state level these include tuition and student fees at public colleges and universities, and entrance fees to state parks and recreation areas. At the local level they include licensing fees and other charges, such as public transportation fares. Cities and counties also use hotel/motel bed taxes, passing the charge onto out-of-town guests rather than local residents.

Comparison of Municipal Revenues by Size of City

Generally, larger cities depend more on state and federal funding compared to smaller municipalities, in part because they deliver more services on behalf of state and federal governments, such as social services and public safety. Smaller cities rely more on their own property taxes and charges for services.

Composition of General Revenue*	All Municipalities (%)	Population Less than 50,000 (%)	Population from 50,000 to 299,999 (%)	Population over 300,000 (%)
Federal government funds	5	2	4	7
State government funds	21	16	20	23
Property taxes	21	24	24	17
Other taxes	22	18	19	26
Charges/miscellaneous	29	35	31	25
Other	2	4	3	2

** Excluding revenue from utilities, liquor stores, and insurance trusts.*

Expenditures for Municipal Government

Cities spend money on a variety of services, including education, transportation, health, welfare, safety, and housing. In general, larger cities spend a larger percentage of their budget on education and health, hospitals, and public welfare. Smaller municipalities spend a larger portion of their budget on transportation and environment, housing, and waste management. It is important to note that larger governmental units, such as counties, often provide services and perform functions for small municipalities.

Composition of General Revenue*	All Municipalities (%)	Population Less than 50,000 (%)	Population from 50,000 to 299,999 (%)	Population over 300,000 (%)
Education services	12	7	14	14
Health, hospitals, public welfare	11	5	4	13
Transportation	14	26	14	12
Public safety	21	23	24	19
Environment, housing, waste treatment	21	24	16	18
Governmental administration	7	10	8	5
Other	14	4	20	19

** Excluding utility, liquor stores, and employee retirement or other insurance trust expenditures.*

For more information on cities in the United States:

- National League of Cities:
  http://www.nlc.org/home/

Homelessness

A. Historical Overview of Homelessness in the United States

Early American History

Homelessness in not a new problem in America. Throughout our history society has been confronted by the problem of people who live on its margins: homeless vagrants and drifters, hobos, dependent poor, the unemployed and unemployable. Starting in the earliest days of the colonies, Americans viewed the homeless as a threat to the Protestant work ethic of the individual who is able to overcome all odds to achieve success. In the past the public considered social isolation, alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental illness to be closely associated with homelessness, and from time to time reformers designed programs to address these problems. Today, not wanting to blame the victims, most people prefer to view homelessness as a single problem: being without a home.

The first American settlers came from a broad cross-section of English society that included many of England's wandering homeless vagrants, criminals, and misfits of all sorts. Recognizing the need to increase the population of the new colonies, English officials routinely offered criminals the choice of boarding ships headed for America as an alternative to prison. Once here, everyone was expected to work hard to build settlements, plant farms, clear the wilderness, and participate in community life. Those who did not work hard were viewed with alarm and suspicion. There was fear that idleness would undermine the work ethic—a moral principle embraced throughout the colonies as the means of survival under the harsh conditions of early American life. The colonists were extremely wary of the economically dependent because they put a serious strain on the limited resources of the new communities.

Early American Social Welfare Policies

Early American social welfare policies had four characteristics that are still relevant today.

1. Public assistance was linked to residency. Providing help to strangers or exiles from other communities was viewed as temporary, and proof of belonging in a community became a prerequisite for receiving assistance. Today, state and local governments worry about providing overly generous benefits that may attract the homeless and potential welfare recipients to their jurisdictions.

2. Early policies provided direct cash assistance to those deemed eligible—for example, a longtime community resident who had experienced personal tragedy such as an injury, long illness, or death of the family breadwinner. Because local communities had to levy a

special poor tax to provide relief, financial aid from the government was not very generous. Local officials preferred using alternatives, such as having the poor work for families needing laborers or servants, and apprenticing orphaned children to craftsmen so they could learn trades and become self-supporting. Today's welfare system continues the practice of providing direct assistance in the form of payments to families with dependent children (Temporary Aid to Needy Families, or TANF), general assistance for individuals. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for the disabled, and transfer payments such as food stamps and Medicaid (healthcare payments for poor people).

3. The poorhouse was borrowed from the English system. This was a multi-purpose institution that provided shelter for the aged and infirm and required work of the able-bodied. The poorhouse was a tax-supported residence where people were required to go if they could not support themselves. The aim was to cure those individuals with "bad habits and bad character" such as alcoholism, laziness, and mental illness. It was used as an instrument of control, threatening the loss of freedom to any who failed to attain and maintain self-sufficiency. The early American poorhouses were overcrowded and filled with sickness, alcoholism, and mental illness. Efforts at work rehabilitation failed for lack of suitable work opportunities. The horrible conditions led reformers to campaign for their closure in the late 19th century. Today, shelters or transitional housing for the homeless are governed by strict rules for humane treatment of the homeless, and services are provided for mental illness, substance abuse, and job placement.

4. There developed a basic distinction between poverty and pauperism, which was incorporated into the ideology of the American welfare system as the deserving and undeserving. The deserving poor were those who were poverty-stricken and aged, those with incurable diseases and physical disabilities, men who lost their jobs and were responsible for families, and widows and orphans. The poor were cared for at whatever level the local community could manage. Any able-bodied persons who were unwilling to work were viewed as paupers and were treated differently. They were driven out of public view, to stem the growth of laziness and to remove the specter of destitution from public view. Later this would be incorporated into antivagrancy laws and today's antihomeless laws.

19th Century Changes

Major economic, social, and political forces would bring dramatic changes to the nation's policy toward the homeless during the 19th century. Beginning in the 1840s, a massive wave of immigration brought millions of people to America. Many of these immigrants arrived poor or sick, and others could not find work. At the same time, industrialization brought displaced rural workers to the growing cities, which created unemployment and more poverty in the 1850s. The Civil War in the 1860s produced a new wave of destitution, displacement, and dispossession. Wounded war veterans, freed slaves, and widows and orphans now joined the ranks of America's homeless—the immigrants, urban poor, and unemployed. The need for assistance was far beyond the capacity of local governments and charity organizations. For the first time the federal government became an actor in helping the destitute and the homeless, enacting a system of pensions for Civil War veterans and their families.

As mentioned earlier, by the latter part of the 19th century, the poorhouses had disappeared. In their place police stations became the primary source of public shelter throughout the nation. Gradually, because of the miserable conditions in police station lodgings, the municipal lodging house was created. These houses were the main source of shelter for the unemployed and homeless residents of cities during the period preceding the Great Depression. Other options were created as well, such as boarding and rooming houses for working men and women, dormitory lodging, flophouses, and sleeping on the floor at bars. There were also charitable hotels run by organizations such as the YMCA, the gospel missions, and the Salvation Army, which sought religious conversion in return for comfort from the elements.

Effects of the Great Depression

The stock market crash of 1929 ushered in an era of national poverty unlike anything this country had ever experienced. Bread lines, soup kitchens, and widespread unemployment spread across the country. Homelessness and the need for temporary housing expanded dramatically. Literally millions of people were thrown into the streets, and they migrated from state to state seeking work and housing during the 1930s. The severity of the Great Depression required remedies that were very different from the existing policies for assisting the impoverished, unemployed, and homeless. Before 1930 America relied extensively on private, not-for-profit charity organizations and local government-run poorhouses and municipal lodging houses for help. At the state level a few states had enacted unemployment compensation and welfare relief for mothers. In 1935, following the precedent set by the states, the federal program, Aid for Dependent Children (ADC), was established. Later it became known as the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and currently it is called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Also at this time, the federal unemployment and Social Security systems were introduced. These required employers and employees to pay into the system to provide insurance for citizens during times of need and at retirement.

The 1960s and Beyond

In the 1960s exposure of continuing poverty and homelessness prompted a new generation of federal government programs, known as the Great Society, to enhance welfare programs. The "War on Poverty" was declared, which was intended to educate and train people for participation in the economic system and to empower poor and minority citizens. Unfortunately, the Great Society programs of the 1960s and 1970s were too little, and too late. At least three factors combined to produce widespread homelessness.

1. Social reformers in the 1960s sought to stop the "blame the victim" approach to public policy, launching efforts to deinstitutionalize the mentally ill and decriminalize public drunkenness. These efforts were designed to shift the major responsibility for care away from impersonal state-run institutions and the criminal justice system to more humane and less-restrictive programs. However, the alternatives were not adequately funded and implementation fell far short of delivering alternative community-based treatment and detoxification. Instead, many of the mentally ill, alcoholics, and drug addicts were released into society with no means to provide a roof over their heads. A substantial number of those in jail today for committing crimes are diagnosed as mentally ill.

2. National efforts were begun to redevelop America's decaying inner cities, tear down slums, and revitalize downtown areas with upscale real estate developments and housing. This led to the loss of tens of thousands of affordable housing units, displacing poor residents without affordable alternatives. Also, many of the low-cost housing units that were not destroyed were converted to larger, more expensive residential units. This drove up the cost of rent, which displaced millions more low-income people.

3. Massive restructuring of the international and domestic economies shifted jobs away from large-scale manufacturing in the developed world to a service economy. This move away from blue-collar jobs resulted in an increase in the numbers of people in poverty and homeless. More than 10 million jobs were lost in this country due to factory closures or decreased product demand between 1979 and 1985. At the same time, the nation shifted into various forms of low-paying service jobs in retail trade and consumer services. There were also changes in the labor supply that were connected to new demographics—for example, more young workers, immigrants, and large numbers of women were entering the workforce for the first time. The increasing reliance on low-paid female workers also fueled an increase in long-term unemployment and poverty for traditional blue-collar, low-skilled workers such as older males. The overall effects

of economic restructuring have been rising unemployment, a boom in low-wage/low-skill jobs, more temporary workers and part-time workers, greater poverty, and a dramatic increase in income inequality.

Recent Developments

American government at all levels was active in the homeless arena during the 1980s and 1990s. In the mid-1980s, state and local governments greatly increased their commitments to homeless services. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found in a 1988 study that the total dollars committed to shelter services in the United States had grown to $1.6 billion—up from $300 million just four years earlier in 1984. The HUD study indicated that 65% of the funding for shelter services came from state and local governments. In 1987 Congress enacted the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, which required that recipients match federal dollars with a certain percentage of other funds. Much of the McKinney Act money in the early years went toward fixing, renovating, and building structures that could serve as shelters. The types of shelter being built also changed with the addition of transitional shelters, which were primarily for families and the mentally ill, and specialized permanent housing, which provided supportive services for homeless people whose disabilities and handicaps made it unlikely that they would ever be able to house themselves.

As the years have passed, the uses of McKinney Act money have shifted. Having built new shelters and expanded the national capacity to shelter homeless people, HUD has directed its resources toward running programs. The Clinton Administration introduced the idea of a continuum of care and coordinated services in the 1990s. The goal was for local communities to make care and services available based on levels of need on a continuum. Programs included intake and assessment, emergency shelter, transitional shelter, and specialized services such as alcohol and drug treatment, which homeless clients would be able to access through a coordinated system. The Bush administration has continued to fund the continuum of care model and has pledged to end chronic homelessness in a decade according to then Housing and Human Services Department Head, Tommy R. Thompson (March 2003).

B. Definition of Homelessness

In the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987—the legislation that created a series of homeless assistance programs—the federal government defined “homeless” to mean:

- An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and;

- An individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:
    - A supervised, publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
    - An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
    - A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Categories of Homelessness

It is generally understood that there are two categories of homelessness: the literally homeless, and the at-risk population. In the first group are those who are living on the streets or in shelters; in the second group are those who are in imminent risk of being without a home.

Literally Homeless

Those who are literally homeless can be classified in terms of the duration of their homelessness. These are: 1) those who are absolutely or chronically homeless; 2) those who are periodically or episodically without shelter, such as migrant workers or women fleeing domestic abuse; and 3) those who are temporarily homeless due an extraordinary event such as sudden unemployment, a severe health problem, death of a household head, or loss of one's home.

They can also be categorized by where they sleep.

- Adults, children, and youth sleeping in places not meant for human habitation. These include streets, parks, alleys, parts of the highway system, transportation depots and other parts of the transportation system, all-night commercial establishments, abandoned buildings, squatter sites, building roofs or stairwells, farm outbuildings, caves, campgrounds, vehicles, and other similar places.
- Adults, children, and youth in shelters. These include emergency and transitional shelters for the homeless; domestic violence shelters; programs for runaway and homeless youth; and any hotel, motel, or apartment paid by voucher because the person or family is homeless.

At Risk of Becoming Homeless

The people most likely to become homeless are those in insecure housing or economic situations, where an unexpected event can result in literal homelessness. This population includes children and adults in institutions such as group homes, mental health facilities, and jail or prison; adults and children living "doubled up" in conventional dwellings; frail elderly people; and refugees.

In general, of course, the poor are most at risk of becoming homeless. In 2010, 46.2 million people in the United States were in poverty, based on the government definition of income before taxes and not including non-cash benefits such as Medicare and Medicaid. The following groups tend to make up most of the poor, with individuals sometimes belonging to more than one group:

Single-Parent Families

Among the more than 46 million people living in poverty in 2010, 9.2 million were families living in poverty. Nearly 3.9 million, or 51% of all families living in poverty, were in households headed by a female with no male head of household present.

Children

In 2010, nearly 21.6% of all children under age 18 were living in poverty—higher than for any other age group. Children represent almost 36% of the population living in poverty, even though they represent only 25% of the U.S. population.

Elderly

For people over 65 years of age, 3.5 million (10% of the total elderly population) live in poverty and must survive on minimal or nonexistent retirement funds such as Social Security or company pensions.

Working Poor

Even though families in this group have jobs, they are poor because they have periodic unemployment, part time employment, or simply do not earn enough. In 2010 the rate of families who earned less than 200 percent of the official poverty threshold increased from 28 to 32 percent.

Race and Poverty

According to the 2010 census, some racial groups in the U.S. have higher percentages of people living in poverty than others:

Racial Group %	Living in Poverty
Latino/Hispanic	26.6%
Native American	28.4%
African-American	27.4%
Asian-American	12%
Caucasian	13%

Disabled

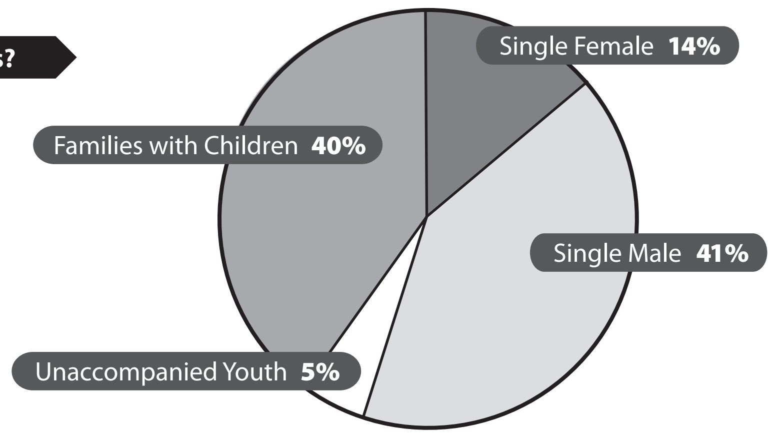
Among the homeless population, 13% are disabled. Various mental and physical disabilities may keep people from holding jobs, which increases the likelihood that they may end up on the streets.

C. Who are the Homeless?

One way of describing these seemingly disparate individuals is in terms of their demographic characteristics: gender, race, age, education, income, health status, and length of time without adequate shelter. It is important to remember that there can be significant differences in the demographic characteristics of the homeless, depending on where they live.

In the United States there are 2–3 million people in any given year who are homeless, some for a short period of time, and others for a longer duration, including those who become chronically homeless. Estimates are that single men comprise 41% of those homeless, families with children 40%, single women 14%, and unaccompanied youth 5%.

Who are the Homeless?



Gender

Almost half of the homeless people in the United States are single males. However, in large cities there are also large numbers of homeless women because of the lack of shelters for women and the prevalence of poor female-headed households.

Race

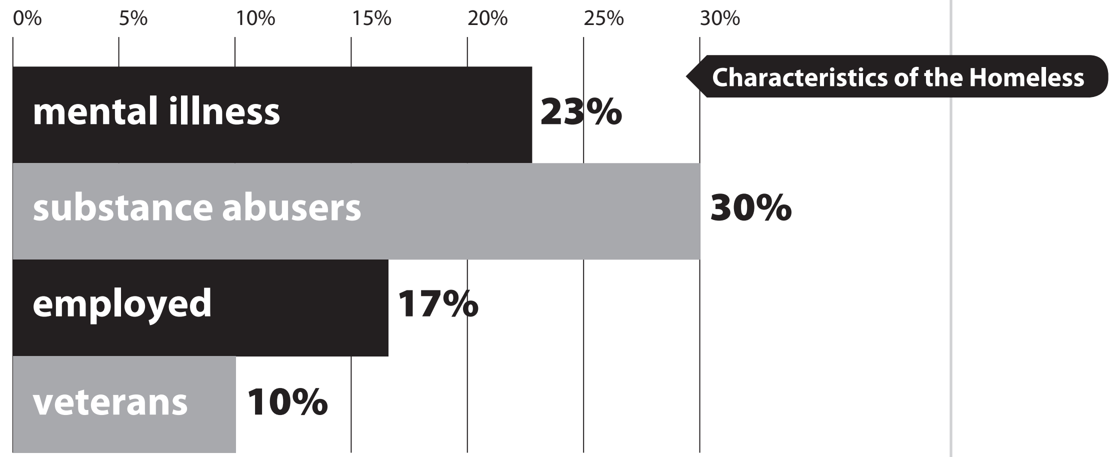
According to the most recent survey of the homeless population in 27 large metropolitan cities across the U.S., it is estimated that 49% are African-American, 35% are White, 13% are Latino, 2% are Native American, and 1% are Asian-American.

Age

Most of the homeless are between 31 and 50 years old, with a mean age of 35 years, which has decreased over time. This is due to the growing number of homeless young families, women and children. On the national level, approximately 39% of the homeless population is children.

Education

About half of homeless people have not completed high school, and substantial percentages are functionally illiterate, making them unable to deal with job applications or questionnaires.



Source: U.S. Conference of Mayors, 27 City Survey, December 2004

Income, Employment and Veterans

All homeless people have extremely low incomes, oftentimes below $6,000 a year. Many are completely dependent on soup kitchens or emergency shelters. Americans with annual incomes below $20,000 are almost three times more likely to be homeless at some time during their life than those with incomes above this amount. 17% of the homeless population is employed. Veterans of military service comprise 10% of the homeless population.

Health Status

Approximately 23% of the single adult homeless population suffers from some form of severe and persistent mental illness, and 30% of the homeless population is substance abusers. Additionally, the rates of serious physical health problems are very high among people experiencing homelessness.

Duration of Homelessness

The nature and extent of difficulties encountered by homeless people are related to the length of time they have been without adequate shelter. As a very general number, in terms of the urban homeless population, about 25% have been homeless for less than three months, 50% between four months and two years, and 25% for more than two years.

D. Causes of Homelessness

The causes of homelessness can be divided in two broad groups—structural and personal. Structural causes relate to how our society is organized and how resources are distributed, while personal causes refer to personal limitations that have become obstacles to functioning adequately in society.

Structural Causes

Several societal events have contributed to the increase in homelessness.

Decline of Low Cost Housing

The problem of housing in the United States is one of affordability. Low-income earners cannot afford the high cost of housing. In many large cities, single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels have been the last resort for semi-permanent housing of the very poor. However, the availability of SRO housing is diminishing as cities redevelop their central core areas to attract well-paid professionals. This makes it harder for the poor to find affordable housing.

Sharply rising housing prices and stagnant or declining wages and benefits for many working people have generated a growing mismatch between the supply and demand of low-cost housing. In 1970, for example, there was a substantial surplus of low-cost housing units affordable to households in the bottom quartile of the population, but from 1973–1993, 2.2 million affordable housing units were taken off the market either through condominium conversions or were abandoned or demolished. In 1999, there were only 4.9 million affordable rental units available to 7.7 million extremely low-income renter households, a shortage of 2.8 million units. In 2001, 4.8 million low-to-moderate-income working families spent more than one-half of their income on housing.

Lack of Services for the Mentally Ill

Most cities report that they have inadequate services available for helping the mentally ill. During the 1960s and 1970s a large number of the severely mentally ill population, who had been housed in state institutions, were released into ill-prepared communities. This created a new and socially marginal population of poor individuals who entered the pool of those competing for low-cost housing.

- **Veteran Issues**
  Approximately 33% of homeless men are veterans, although veterans comprise only 23% of the general adult male population. The combined effects of military combat trauma, increased rates of mental illness and addiction disorders, and the socio-economic demographics of those who tend to serve in the military, make this population more vulnerable to homelessness when faced with limited affordable housing, declining job opportunities, and stagnating wages.

- **Declining Health Coverage**
  In 2010 the number of people without health insurance in this country rose to 49.9 million people or 16.3 percent of the population. Nearly a third of persons living in poverty have no health insurance of any kind. The rising cost of healthcare coverage takes a greater share of a working family’s income, impacting their ability to pay rent or keep a roof over their heads. Limited or non-existent coverage combined with a catastrophic illness or injury causes many people to end up homeless.

- **Erosion in Value of Public Entitlements**
  A reduced public benefit from the government, or their depreciation over the years due to inflation, is an impediment to families in poverty.

- **Low Wages and Unemployment**
  Recent studies show the correlation between wages and poverty or homelessness. In one study, 50% of homeless people said that they had experienced a drop in income the year before becoming homeless. This drop in income was usually due to the loss of a job or public benefits.

  Another study found that one-sixth of all whites, one-third of white women and black men, two-fifths of black women and Latino males, and one-half of Latina women earn sub-poverty wages.

  Furthermore, four economic factors, which affect mostly lower-skilled and less-educated workers, have been found to exert strong downward pressure on wages and demand for labor. These are:

  - Economic recessions, which typically depress employment and wage levels
  - Decreasing trade barriers and the growth of the global economy, which allows corporations to outsource labor
  - Shift to a postindustrial society and technological changes which have eliminated entire categories of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, combined with decreased unionization of workers
  - Declining value of the minimum wage because of inflation

- **Personal Causes**
  In terms of personal causes of homelessness, historical trends and local circumstances can affect individual factors. It can be hard to determine the precise influence of these causes on a person. Even factors that affect childhood development indirectly influence behavior, and thus can contribute to these personal causes. Additionally, it is worth noting that a large majority of homeless people report having more than one of these problems.

- **Mental Illness**
  Mental illness may be a cause or an effect of homelessness. Among homeless people, 20% to 25% have at some time experienced a severe and often extremely disabling mental illness such as schizophrenia, clinical depression, or bipolar disorder.

- **Substance Abuse**
  The most recent survey of the homeless population in 27 cities found that 30% of the homeless population had current substance abuse problems. Many of these cities also report a lack of services to treat substance abuse.

- **Problems in Interpersonal Relationships**
  Two-fifths of homeless people are separated or divorced; one-third have lost someone who was helping them with money or food. Domestic violence was cited by 12 cities as a major cause of homelessness for women.
- **Sudden Changes in Living Arrangements**
  One-fourth of the homeless have spent time in jail, hospitals, or group care the year before becoming homeless. Difficulty of prisoner reentry into society was reported by five cities as a major cause of homelessness.
- **Poor Health**
  Poor health was a major cause of homelessness for 20% of homeless women, 25% of homeless men, and 33% of the chronically homeless.

E. Responses to the Homeless Problem at the Local and National Levels

Homeless policy in America is distinguished by its decentralization, with creation and implementation managed by local communities. There are as many different policies as there are counties, cities, and towns. Some of the typical approaches used to serve the homeless include:

Temporary Shelters

Temporary shelter is provided by churches, religious organizations, nonprofit agencies, and local governments. This usually involves overnight accommodations.

Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) Hotels

These are usually older buildings in downtown areas for transients who traditionally stay for only a short period of time. Today, with the shortage of affordable housing, this form of housing is critical for those attempting to make the transition off the streets into more permanent long-term housing.

Transitional Housing

This is for individuals who are making the transition back into permanent housing. Many communities provide some form of transitional housing, allowing individuals and families to stay for a week or as long as one year, at minimal or no cost, while the head of household re-enters the workforce. This is usually combined with some form of job training and counseling offered by the community.

Semi-Permanent Affordable Housing

This form of housing allows tenants to stay as long as they want if they meet income guidelines. If they are able to find steady work and their income rises, they may voluntarily move to a home of their own. Other individuals with more serious obstacles may remain in affordable housing for long periods of time.

Supportive Services

In addition to housing, the needs of the homeless include general healthcare, treatment for drug and alcohol abuse, care for mental disabilities, and job training and counseling. Some states and local governments provide these kinds of services, others do not. Many faith-based organizations and nonprofit agencies also offer them, but their level and quality can be uneven.

New Strategies

Congress established the Interagency Council on Homelessness in 1987 with the passage of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The Council is responsible for providing federal leadership for activities to assist homeless families and individuals. During the 1990s the Clinton Administration introduced the use of a "continuum of care and coordinated services" in which services are provided based on levels of need. In some local communities, this includes the coordination of various services, both governmental and nongovernmental. Under the Bush Administration, local communities are being asked to develop 10-year plans to end chronic homelessness in their area. Today, the Interagency Council on Homelessness continues to coordinate the federal response to serving homeless individuals and families by providing coordination of essential federal services at the local level.

There is growing consensus from service providers that finding permanent solutions to the homeless problem is a strategy that appears to be working. Emergency shelters do not address underlying causes of why someone is homeless, as they focus on meeting immediate needs for shelter and food, and in some cases religious support. New kinds of services, such as the permanent supportive housing approach, help people who have been homeless for years get into housing and stay there. Research results support the effectiveness of this strategy and confirm the willingness of people homeless for 15 or 20 years to enter this type of housing and to stay there, with an 80–85% retention rate over a two-year period. In fact, original estimates of the number of units needed to serve a particular population size have been expanded because turnover has been low.

Other research indicates that, for those people living in transitional housing, having the opportunity to remain in their housing after a particular treatment has concluded makes them less likely to return to chronic homelessness.

Federal Funding for Homeless Assistance

According to the 2004 U.S. Conference of Mayors Hunger and Homelessness Survey, public funds to assist the homeless came from three major sources. Locally-generated money makes up 21% of the total, and state funds account for another 21%. The remainder, about 58%, comes from the federal government.

Each year the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department awards funds to homeless assistance projects under the Continuum of Care competitive grants process. In 2002 approximately $969 million was awarded for competitive programs and $150 million for emergency shelter grants (ESGs). In 2005–2006, approximately $1 billion was available for the continuum of care homeless assistance programs. The competitive programs provide funding for transitional and permanent housing and supportive services. ESGs provide homeless prevention and emergency assistance. Within each local continuum of care system receiving a grant, there are organizations that are assisted by HUD's awards for competitive programs.

The McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 created HUD's homeless assistance programs. These include the Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care Program, Single-Room Occupancy Program, and Emergency Shelter Grant Program. Title V of the McKinney Act also provides suitable federal properties categorized as unutilized, underutilized, excess, or surplus for use in assisting the homeless. Properties are made available to states, local government, and nonprofit organizations. They can be used to provide shelter, services, storage, or other uses of benefit to homeless persons. The program provides no funding, and properties are made available on an "as is" basis. Properties are leased without charge, although the user must pay for operating and repair costs. Depending on the availability of the property and other factors, surplus properties may also be deeded to the user.

Federal partners providing homeless assistance include the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Department of Labor, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Agriculture, and the Interagency Council on Homelessness. Numerous nonprofit organizations, state and local agencies, and advocacy groups are also involved with homeless assistance programs.

While many federal agencies appear to be involved with the problem of homelessness, their allocated resources are limited and highly competitive between states and communities. With limited federal grant funding available, local communities must compete with each other to secure funding. There is also competition among service providers within local communities for funding resources.

The Public Policy Process

Public Policy and Who Makes It

Public policy is defined as "the actions of government to address society's needs."

Policy actors are those individuals and groups, both formal and informal, who seek to influence the creation and implementation of the policy responses by government. At the federal, state, and local levels, there are institutional policy actors from the three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. At both levels the legislature is the central institution in the policy process. The President at the federal level and the Governor at the state level are the chief executives with numerous constitutional and informal powers, including the introduction and signing of legislation into law and the veto of legislation with which they disagree. In cities, the city council and mayor typically perform legislative and executive functions, sometimes independently and sometimes in combination.

In addition to the institutional policy actors, there are also noninstitutional actors that play a significant role. The news media influences policy by defining which problems are important for the public to consider. Political parties seek to influence policy on a wide spectrum of issues. They also develop platforms, draft candidates, and mobilize voters. Organized interest groups lobby elected officials and agency staff members to adopt their policy positions.

Basic Stages of the Policymaking Process

Every policy has a unique history, but the typical policymaking process at all levels of government includes the following six stages:

1. Problem Identification

Placing the issue or problem on the government's agenda so that policy makers will begin to formulate a policy to solve it.

2. Agenda Setting

Deciding what issues will be decided, and what problems government will address.

3. Policy Formulation

Developing policy proposals to resolve problems and build widespread support for the proposed policy.

4. Policy Adoption

Turning a proposed policy into an official action by the government, usually in the form of a bill or ordinance, which is passed by the legislative branch and signed into law by the chief executive.

5. Policy Implementation

Making sure that the policy is carried out as intended. Policymaking does not end with the passage of a law; rather, it shifts from the legislative and executive branches to the departments, agencies, and commissions that are responsible for carrying out legislation.

6. Policy Evaluation

Assessing whether or not the policy achieves its stated purpose. This can be a formal process by the government itself, by outside evaluators, or by interest groups. After a policy is implemented, some will call for changes and corrections, and others will disagree. The policymaking process will inevitably continue, the problem will be re-examined, and new proposals will be proposed to address the problem.

How Each Stage Typically Unfolds in Local Government—Homeless Housing Example

1. Problem Identification

At this initial stage, the issue of homelessness is identified by some group in the community as a problem with a demand for government action. While homeless persons may have lived for some time in the community, it may take an incident or some action that sparks public attention, such as a news story about a homeless encampment found on a riverbank near the downtown area. The story causes a demand for government to take action to resolve the problem. Or, there could simply be an accumulation of evidence about a problem over time until some group affected by the problem starts to demand action. For example, the local business community may complain to the police chief about an increase in the number of homeless people on the street, which is affecting their business traffic. Local homeowners might perceive the presence of homeless persons as having a negative impact on their property values. Another group could be the religious community or the nonprofit agencies that provide services to the homeless. They may complain that the government has dragged its feet for too long and done too little to address the growing problem.

At this early stage of the policy process, there is no guarantee that any action will be taken by government actors. Consider the issue of poverty. Even though society knows it exists, it is not easy to come up with a solution. Most societal problems at this stage do not get resolved. They may languish or fade away, due to more pressing problems.

2. Agenda Setting

Setting the public policy agenda is the critical step in the policy process. Most issues rarely make it onto the policy agenda of lawmakers. With numerous social problems needing to be addressed, most legislators have finite resources and limited attention spans. A problem needs the right combination of timing, interest group pressure, and policy specialists who can transform a problem into a solution that benefits elected officials. The key to agenda and policy change is finding the window of opportunity for adding a problem to the policy agenda.

For the issue of homelessness, the right set of factors is needed to move the issue from an ongoing problem onto the policy agenda of government. For instance, political factors could include an upcoming local election that is a contest between a challenger and incumbent. The challenging candidate decides to highlight the issue constantly, complaining that the city is taking no action. Another possibility could be strong interest group pressure to get the city to address the problem. The interest group could be homeless advocates, or it could be a group opposed to the homeless presence. If either of these types of groups has the ability to register its concerns on the local government agenda, then it is likely to be heard by those in power. If enough heat, or political pressure, can be applied at a time when other concerns are not dominating the policy agenda, then it is possible to have the issue discussed by those in and out of government. This is a major hurdle, as it starts the process of addressing the problem in some formal manner. This step usually includes public hearings held by local government to get reaction from residents and other concerned parties.

At this early stage of the process, some entity, whether government, nonprofit, for-profit, religious, or citizen action group, will become more fully engaged to move the problem toward possible solutions.

3. Policy Formulation

Once the attention of people in government is aroused and they have begun to seriously consider the issue, the next step is to develop a way to resolve the problem. This stage of the policy process is known as policy formulation. The process of examining and evaluating alternative courses of action is known as policy analysis.

In the *Not in My Backyard* unit scenario, the issue of homelessness has already made its way onto the policy agenda. We are in the policy formulation stage, where credible alternative solutions must be devised and debated by all those interested in addressing the homeless problem.

It is here, if there is to be a solution, that the problem identified as homelessness must be examined in terms of possible alternatives and funding. Two things need to be considered in constructing a homeless housing facility: 1) how to pay for it, and 2) the pros and cons—including the politics—of constructing or renovating at the various locations. Both points are critical to ensuring policy adoption.

Find the Money

To address the problem of homelessness, financing must be found. Whether it is the government, homeless advocates, or the business community who have raised the issue, the question of funding is front and center. Acquiring funds for homeless projects is usually a multisource effort that involves agencies, foundations, and various forms of fundraising. Usually, a person knowledgeable about funding sources for a specific type of housing—whether it is short-term temporary, transitional, or more long-term—is brought in or is already on the local government staff. This person puts together a budget for the project, based on what is being considered, and provides possible funding sources. Typically, funding sources include federal, state, county, and city governments, plus private foundations. It is not unusual to have several sources of funding.

- **At the federal level,** there are a variety of resources to address homelessness. Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs at the Housing and Urban Development Department include:
    - Supportive Housing Program. Provides housing, including housing units and group quarters, that has a supportive environment and includes a planned service component.
    - Shelter Plus Care Program. Provides grants for rental assistance for homeless persons with disabilities through four component programs: Tenant, Sponsor, Project, and Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) Rental Assistance.
    - Single-Room Occupancy Program. Provides rental assistance paid to a public housing agency that has rehabilitated housing into single-room units designed for individuals.
    - Formula Program (Noncompetitive) Grants. The Emergency Shelter Grant Program is designed to help improve the quality of existing emergency shelters for the homeless, provide additional shelters, fund the costs of operating shelters, provide social services to homeless individuals, and help prevent homelessness.
- **State and local governments** can provide other resources, such as land and various services, on the front end to get a project built and afterwards to staff the project. Local governments must also collaborate financially with other levels of government. For example, the federal Shelter Plus Care Program grant requires a dollar-for-dollar match by local government.

Investigate Likely Options—Consider Pros and Cons

At the same time that financial and other resources are being gathered, those who seek policy formation must carefully weigh the political likelihood of success. If there is no consensus by the various interests involved with the project, then it does not matter if funding is available. Usually, if the government is the impetus behind the idea of housing the homeless, then government bureaucrats will first investigate possible site locations. They will need to consider the pros and cons of each potential site.

One set of questions revolves around where the potential sites are located. What is the cost of acquiring the property? Is it government owned or privately owned? How is the property zoned—for commercial, residential, or mixed use? In order to build or rehabilitate the property, what, if any, zoning changes will be required? For example, is a zoning variance needed? A *variance* is a change in the current zoning law. It does not change the law but allows for a waiver, such as a smaller set-back distance from the street for a home. However, a change in the zoning law, or *rezoning*, is a request by a property owner or government to change a parcel, or several parcels, of land from one designation to another—such as from retail to manufacturing use, agricultural to residential use, or low- to high-density use. Another set of concerns involves the impact of modifying the site location in terms of the environment. Are there any environmental impact requirements for the site, such as a new or updated Environmental Impact Report? These issues need to be investigated as part of the staff recommendation of site location possibilities.

In addition to site location and zoning issues, there are community concerns that must be considered as well. Are there any political problems with the site? That is, is it located where there is potential neighborhood opposition or opposition from the business community? To answer these questions, government staff may consult with elected officials to gauge potential support or opposition for a particular location. Also, informal conversations with community activists help to estimate whether there is enough political will to proceed, and to determine the extent of opposition to a project site. This is often a political calculation on the part of local government leaders. Is the opposition strong enough to block the project? Will opponents be able to use the fight over the site location to challenge incumbents in the next election?

To determine which option in a site location debate will receive the approval of local government, there may be a period of public debate and public hearings where neighborhood groups have an opportunity to express their opinions, interest groups put forward their views, and city officials make their recommendations. After these hearings are held, local government will either choose to decide on a specific location or choose not to make a decision, thereby leaving the decision on hold, or effectively killed, until another time when the issue can be reintroduced into the policy debate.

4. Policy Adoption

Based on the financial considerations, land use issues, and political realities, the main political actors coalesce around a site location with the necessary funding. After going through the first three stages, all options and choices have been narrowed to one main proposal. This proposal is usually brought to the city council for approval.

Even at this late date, however, a problem can arise that can delay or stop a proposal from moving forward. Failure to secure funding is one huge hurdle. If funding has been secured, then it could be a political disagreement that cannot be resolved and derails the housing site proposal. Politicians may decide that the political risk is too great to support a proposal that will alienate an important constituency. Or, the various interest groups may be so divided that consensus is not possible, and postponement is the best way to save the idea of building a homeless shelter for a future day. In this case, the project could be sent back to the staff for further review. However, normally at this stage of the process consensus has been reached through negotiations by the key political actors, and a policy solution is adopted by local government.

5. Policy Implementation

Once a decision has been made regarding a policy solution, the implementation stage begins. This stage involves taking the decision of the elected officials or the voters, putting the law into action, and monitoring to see that it is effectively carried out. A clear process must be developed, with timelines and deadlines. For a property that must be transformed from one type of usage to a homeless shelter, there must be a procedure to determine who will develop and/or manage the property if the city chooses not to be the owner-operator.

There must be a reasonable period for interested developers—local building construction companies, in the case of homeless housing—to submit their bids. Local government employees in a department whose responsibility it is to oversee planning and building consider the proposals and award the contract. However, policies and procedures for how this process unfolds are normally drafted by government employees and approved by elected officials. The elected officials also make the final decision on who is awarded the contract if it is deemed politically sensitive or highly controversial. The legislative branch sets the guidelines and authority for the government agency to carry out.

For example, a city sets its zoning laws after public hearings and then sets building codes for what are acceptable building materials and rules. In this context, the building department then carries out enforcement of the rules.

After a developer is selected, the building is constructed or rehabilitated. Building codes must be adhered to and zoning laws followed. Once the building is completed, a manager is hired to take responsibility for day-to-day management of the property.

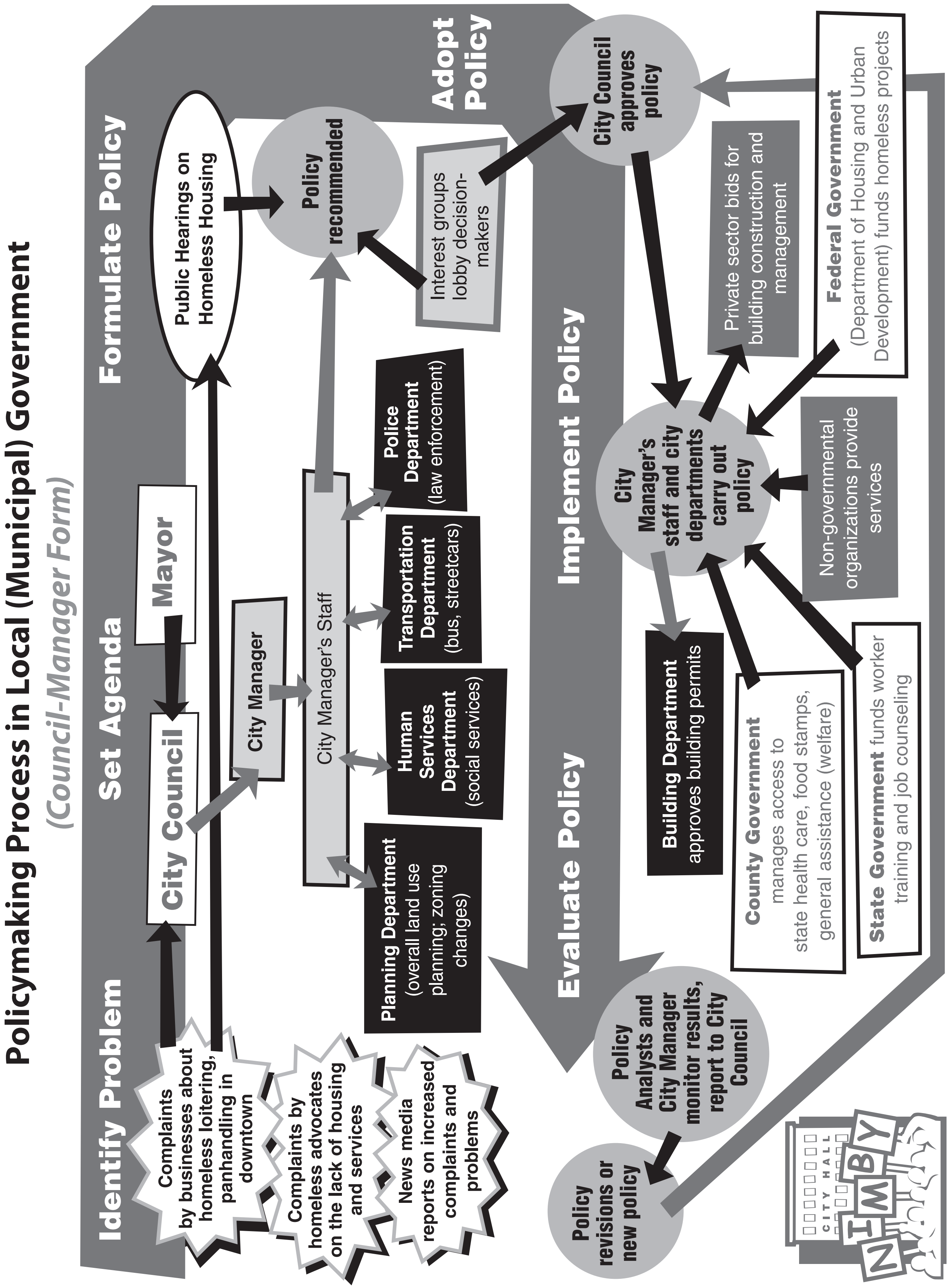
6. Policy Evaluation

This is the final stage of the policy process, in which trained policy analysts evaluate the usefulness or success of a program, policy, or project. The evaluation process can be simple or complicated. If the original legislation or decision was written in vague language, then it may be difficult to quantify any results.

Performance evaluation tools can include the following criteria:

- Progress in meeting the goal of temporarily housing the homeless. What is the current and projected homeless population, and does the project meet this need?
- Adequacy of community resources and human and health services to serve the current and projected homeless population.
- Progress in establishing and implementing an organized system of programs serving the homeless—the continuum of care model.

Based on a performance report, new or improved policies may need to be established. This starts the whole process over again, beginning with the recognition of the problem. As a result, policymaking is a continuous process, and government at any given time is at various stages of numerous issues.


Policymaking Process in Local (Municipal) Government
(Council-Manager Form)
Identify Problem
Set Agenda
Formulate Policy
Adopt Policy
Implement Policy
Evaluate Policy
Complaints by businesses about homeless loitering, panhandling in downtown
Complaints by homeless advocates on the lack of housing and services
News media reports on increased complaints and problems
City Council
Mayor
City Manager
City Manager's Staff
Public Hearings on Homeless Housing
Policy recommended
Interest groups lobby decision-makers
City Council approves policy
Planning Department (overall land use planning; zoning changes)
Human Services Department (social services)
Transportation Department (bus, streetcars)
Police Department (law enforcement)
City Manager's staff and city departments carry out policy
Private sector bids for building construction and management
Federal Government (Department of Housing and Urban Development) funds homeless projects
Non-governmental organizations provide services
State Government funds worker training and job counseling
County Government manages access to state health care, food stamps, general assistance (welfare)
Building Department approves building permits
Policy Analysts and City Manager monitor results, report to City Council
Policy revisions or new policy
NIMBY
CITY HALL

Interest Group Politics

Definition

An interest group is a private organization of like-minded people whose goal is to influence and shape public policy. The main purpose of interest groups is to influence policy and gain political advantages for their members and their causes. The reasons people join interest groups, and the amounts of time and money they commit, vary widely.

Types

There are many types of interest groups. The most common types are:

- **Economic interest groups.** Most interest groups are formed on economic interests. That is, they are based on the manner in which people make their livings. Among the most active and effective are those representing business, labor, and agricultural interests.
- **Professional associations.** Some occupations require extensive and specialized training, such as doctors, attorneys, and teachers. They have groups that represent their interests.
- **Public interest.** These groups represent the interests of the public good on issues of concern for consumers, such as Common Cause, an organization started by consumer rights advocate Ralph Nader. Also, there are groups that lobby around issues, such as the environment, animal rights, literacy, and countless other causes.
- **Social equity groups.** Instead of focusing on economic outcomes, other groups focus on bringing about social change. Many of these groups focus on equality issues that promote civil liberties and civil rights. Examples include the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Japanese American Citizen's League (JACL), and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).
- **Other types.** These include *religious* (Christian Coalition, National Council of Churches), *government* (National Association of Counties, U.S. Conference of Mayors), *single-issue* (Mothers Against Drunk Driving, National Rifle Association), and *ideological* (People for the American Way, National Conservative Political Action Committee).

Development of Interest Groups

From the days of the founding of our country to the present, people have argued about the influence of interest groups. James Madison, one of the Founding Fathers, viewed interest groups as "factions"—a necessary evil in politics. He defined a faction as "a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion." Madison saw interest groups and political parties as power-hungry forces that must be controlled to keep them from taking over the government. He argued that their freedoms should be guaranteed, but that their influence must be checked by the government structure provided for in the Constitution.

Throughout America's history, interest groups have emerged to reflect the critical concerns of the public. For example, a number of antislavery groups formed in the 1830s and 1840s as slavery became a major source of conflict in this country. During the 1860s labor unions began to form, and later business associations grew as the industrial revolution expanded. More recently, such issues as women's rights, environmental protection, and healthcare have led to an explosion of new interest groups.

How Interest Groups Operate

Interest groups exist to influence public policy. They use a wide range of techniques, including lobbying, electioneering, litigation, and shaping public opinion. Lobbying involves putting group pressure on legislators, the legislative process, and the administrative process to influence policy outcomes and impacts. Electioneering brings interest groups into political campaigns to help elect candidates who favor their positions, or to help defeat candidates who oppose their positions. If a group fails in the lobbying and/or electoral arenas, it may turn to litigation, calling on the courts to gain support for its causes. Many interest groups will file *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) briefs or submit written arguments to the courts in support of one side of a case. Shaping public opinion is critical to building consensus for a particular bill or cause and rallying the support of the general public. Opinion-sharing techniques include buying media broadcast time, publishing research on a topic, and creating activities that draw publicity to an event or action.

How Local Community Groups Operate

At the local level, land is a prime resource, and control over its use has the most far-reaching power. Historically, land use was determined by private owners who responded to free market economic forces, putting their land to its most productive use. Over time, though, land use decisions essentially have been removed from private property owners and placed in the hands of local government agencies. Local governments respond to both economic and political forces when determining how land in their communities will be used.

An important neighborhood presence is when neighbors join together in **homeowners associations.** Home buyers are often obligated by deeds to their property to belong to these associations, which number more than 230,000 nationwide. These associations are private corporations with government-like powers and an elected board for making decisions. Homeowners associations have an active role in many local issues involving planning, public safety, and education. One of their goals is to increase property values, so they work to prevent detrimental land use decisions.

Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) has become a rallying cry for many community residents who oppose growth or projects that will negatively impact the community. "NIMBYs" are groups—usually homeowners and voters—who are most directly affected by a private or public project. They organize, sue, petition, and demonstrate to block projects. Virtually every controversial project inspires NIMBY opposition. NIMBYs are particularly active regarding waste disposal sites, highways, prisons, mental health facilities, lowincome housing projects, power plants, and factories. Government agencies and private corporations seeking to locate projects in communities are well-advised to conduct professional public relations campaigns well in advance of ground-breaking. If they don't, a stalemate is very likely to occur because local government leaders, while wanting to grow and develop their community, fear political backlash from their voters.

Power and Influence at the Local Level

In any community, wealth, power, and other political resources are distributed unequally among many individuals, organizations, and interest groups. While it is generally true that wealthier people can gain more access to local government, some groups and their leaders have greater direct influence than others on the policymaking process. The general citizenry retains indirect influence through the election process, since unpopular decisions by local government officials can mean they are not reelected. Power is not concentrated in the hands of a small elite group for all issues and policy areas—it is more diffused among several interest groups. Various groups and leaders exert special influence around specific policy arenas.

In mid-sized cities such as "Franklinburg", there are multiple policy arenas such as education, recreation and parks, economic development, housing, law enforcement, human services, and public administration of these programs. Around each of these policy areas, interest groups cluster together and jockey for influence with policymakers. For example, business interests will tend to use a vehicle such as the Chamber of Commerce to lobby for their concerns around the issues of economic development, affordable housing, and redevelopment of blighted areas. Real estate interests may have a separate association of realtors that lobbies local government leaders and advocates on their behalf.

In most medium to large cities, in addition to neighborhood groups and business interests, some interest groups advocate for the poor. These groups will lobby for such things as housing for the homeless, job training for welfare recipients, protecting children's rights, and health care for seniors. These groups are usually small and do not have many resources. Some are religious in nature, others are local non-profits, and others are branches of national organizations. One such national group is the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), a nationwide community organization of low- and moderate-income families working together on community problems in 75 cities.

Each of these interest groups has varying amounts of influence in their community depending on the policy that is being debated. Generally business interests have the most influence around economic development issues. However, homeless advocates tend to be influential around issues affecting the homeless population, and neighborhood groups tend to dominate the policy agenda around issues involving quality of life concerns in neighborhoods.

Internet Resources

For more information on homelessness, see the following resources:

Websites

- Interagency Council on Homelessness:
  http://www.ich.gov/
- National Alliance to End Homelessness:
  http://www.endhomelessness.org/
- The National Coalition for the Homeless:
  http://www.nationalhomeless.org/
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty:
  http://www.nlchp.org/
- The Urban Institute:
  http://www.urban.org
  - 2010 Research Report, "Strategies for Improving Homeless People's Access to Mainstream Benefits and Services."
    http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=412089
  - 2010 Research Report, "Life after Transitional Housing for Homeless Families"
    http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=1001375
- U.S. Conference of Mayors 2011 Report on Hunger and Homelessness:
  http://www.usmayors.org/pressreleases/uploads/2011-hhreport.pdf
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:
  http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/11/FamilyHomelessness/rb.pdf
  - 2011 report on addressing family homelessness: Promising Practices in the Field
- U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):
  http://www.hud.gov/homeless/index.cfm
- U.S. Bureau of the Census:
  http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml

Rubric for Written Memo: Policy Process Explanation and Homeless Housing Site Recommendation

Component and Its Recommended Value	Exceeds Standards (score 4–5)	Meets Standards (score 3)	Does Not Meet Standards (score 1–2)
I. Explanation of Policy Process (50%)	Includes a *thorough* explanation of how the city has followed, and will follow, *each* of the six stages of policymaking *All* information is accurate and complete	Includes a *brief* explanation of how the city has followed, and will follow, *each* of the six stages of policymaking All information is accurate and complete, or *nearly so*; inaccuracies are *not significant*	*Omits* an explanation of one or more of the six stages of policymaking, or the explanation is *very brief* *Significant* information is inaccurate and/or *substantially incomplete*
II. Recommendation for Homeless Housing Site (30%)	Defends choice of site with *detailed* analysis of pros and cons; *thoughtfully* considers political, economic, social, and ethical issues involved Explains *thoroughly* the pros and cons of other sites not chosen Recommendation contains *accurate* information, *clearly* states reasons for choices, and *persuasively justifies* choices in terms of what is best for the city	Defends choice of site with *brief analysis* of pros and cons; considers *some of* the political, economic, social, and ethical issues involved Explains *briefly* the pros and cons of other sites not chosen Recommendation contains *accurate* information, *clearly* states reasons for choices, and justifies choices in terms of what is best for the city	*Omits* an analysis of pros and cons, or does so in a very *brief and/or incomplete* way; does not consider most issues involved *Omits* explanation of the pros and cons of other sites not chosen, or does so very *briefly or incompletely* Recommendation contains *significant incorrect* information, uses terms *inappropriately*, and/or *does not justify* choices in terms of what is best for the city (may tend to rely on *personal opinion*)

Component and Its Recommended Value	Exceeds Standards (score 4–5)	Meets Standards (score 3)	Does Not Meet Standards (score 1–2)
III. Overall Quality of Work and Solution to the Problem (10%)	Solution to the problem is *consistent* with the scenario as presented; shows an *in-depth* understanding of key facts about the situation Has not altered the parameters of the problem and/or "made up" facts to avoid grappling with key aspects of the content Discussion of terms and concepts is sound, and shows *originality* and/or *thoughtfulness*; shows *independent thinking* about what has been explained by the teacher, textbook, or other materials	Solution to the problem is *generally consistent* with the scenario as presented; shows a *basic* understanding of key facts about the situation Has *not* altered the parameters of the problem and/or "made up" facts to avoid grappling with key aspects of the content Discussion of terms and concepts is *basically* sound, but may *lack originality* and/or *thoughtfulness*; may have some of the flavor of "repeating back" what has been explained by the teacher, textbook, or other materials	Solution to the problem is *not consistent* with the scenario as presented; *misunderstands or does not address most* key facts about the situation *May* have altered the parameters of the problem and/or "made up" facts to avoid grappling with key aspects of the content Discussion of terms and concepts is *inaccurate* and/or *simplistic*; has the flavor of "repeating back" what has been explained by the teacher, textbook, or other materials
IV. Quality of Writing and Format of Memo (and other material that may be submitted) (10%)	Writing is *free of* significant errors in mechanics and grammar; ideas are *clearly understandable* and *appropriate* to the audience (i.e., the city manager) Memo is done in the proper format, with a "business-like" tone and appearance **If** a chart, diagram, or other graphic is submitted, its layout, color, design elements, headings, and text are carefully done and *professional-looking*; all information is *clearly readable and understandable*	Writing has *few* significant errors in mechanics and grammar; ideas are *for the most part* understandable and appropriate to the audience Memo is done in the proper format, with a "business-like" tone and appearance **If** a chart, diagram, or other graphic is submitted, its layout, color, graphic elements, headings, and text show *some care* was taken; significant information is *for the most part* clearly readable and understandable	Writing contains *several* significant errors in mechanics and grammar; ideas are *not clearly* understandable and appropriate to the audience Memo is *not* done in the proper format; tone and appearance are *not appropriate* to the setting **If** a chart, diagram, or other graphic is submitted, its layout, color, graphic elements, headings, and text show *little evidence* that care was taken; significant information is *unclear* or not understandable

Presentation Rubric

(for secondary and upper elementary grades)

	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Above Standard
Eye Contact & Physical Presence	• does not look at audience; reads notes or slides • holds things in hands nervously or keeps hands in pockets • posture does not show confidence; (fidgets, slouches) • clothes are not appropriate for the occasion	• makes some eye contact, or scans the room quickly, but reads notes or slides most of the time • uses a few gestures but they do not look natural, or keeps hands too still to look natural • posture shows some confidence, with only a little fidgeting or nervous movement • some attempt to wear appropriate clothing for the occasion	• keeps eye contact with audience most of the time; only reads notes or slides sometimes • uses hands naturally, making some gestures • confident posture • clothes are appropriate for the occasion	*In addition to* ***At Standard*** *criteria:* • keeps eye contact all the time, slowly scanning all of the audience; does not read notes or slides • uses gestures smoothly, naturally to emphasize or illustrate points • moves with purpose
Speaking	• mumbles or goes too fast or slow • speaks too softly to be heard • frequently uses "filler" words ("uh, um, so, and, like") • pronounces several words incorrectly • speaks in a style that is not appropriate for the occasion	• speaks clearly some of the time; sometimes too fast or slow • speaks loudly enough for some of the audience to hear, but may speak in a monotone • occasionally uses filler words • pronounces a few words incorrectly • speaks in a style that is appropriate for the occasion, most of the time	• speaks clearly; not too fast or slow • speaks loudly enough for everyone to hear; changes tone to maintain interest • rarely uses filler words • pronounces words correctly • speaks in a style that is appropriate for the occasion	*In addition to* ***At Standard*** *criteria:* • adds variety to speaking style (lower or higher volume, change of pace, use of character voices) • uses pauses for dramatic effect or to let ideas sink in

	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Above Standard
Organization	• does not meet requirements for what should be included in the presentation • selects too much or too little information or the wrong kind of information • gets ideas mixed up • time is not used well; the whole presentation, or several parts of it, are too short or too long • does not have an introduction and/or conclusion	• meets most requirements for what should be included in the presentation • sometimes selects too much or too little information, or the wrong kind, about some topics • some ideas are connected, but not all • some parts feel too short or too long; too much or too little time is spent on one topic, slide, or idea • has an introduction and conclusion, but they are not clear or interesting	• meets all requirements for what should be included in the presentation • selects the right amount and kind of information to present • states main idea & moves from one idea to the next clearly, in an order that makes sense • time is well spent; no part feels too short or too long • has a clear and interesting introduction and conclusion	*In addition to **At Standard** criteria:* • has a memorable introduction and conclusion • connects introduction and conclusion (returns to a story, theme, or metaphor) • effectively uses humor, stories, or Metaphors
Audio/Visual Aids	• does not use aids (pictures, drawings, objects, posters, maps, recordings, slides, other electronic media, etc.)	• uses aids but they do not add much to, and may distract from, the presentation • aids are hard to read or hear, or are messy (writing or graphics are not neat or sound is not clear) • aids are not ready to use and are not smoothly brought into the presentation	• aids add to the presentation • aids are easy to see and/or hear, and are neat • aids are ready to use and included smoothly into the presentation	*In addition to **At Standard** criteria:* • aids are especially creative and/or powerful • shows skill in creating aids and/or using technology • smoothly handles problems with aids and technological glitches, if they occur
Response to Audience Questions	• does not address the audience's questions; says little or goes off the topic	• may answer some of the audience's questions, but not clearly and/or completely • may try to answer a challenging question by faking it	• answers audience's questions clearly and completely • when asked a question he or she does not know the answer to, says "I don't know" or explains how the answer could be found	*In addition to **At Standard** criteria:* • answers questions in a way that adds details, examples, or new points to the presentation • smoothly handles questions that are unclear, off the topic, distracting, or challenging

Test for *Not in My Backyard*

Answer Key

1. The 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution allows state governments to establish local governments. Which of the following is *not* considered a general purpose government that is allowed to be established by the states?
   - A counties
   - B territories
   - C cities
   - D townships

2. Which of the following is *not* considered a "special purpose" government?
   - A school district
   - B water district
   - C municipal government
   - D parks bureau

3. One of the forms of city government is the Commission form. This type of city government can be described as
   - A a board of commissioners, each heading a department and taking turns being mayor.
   - B a system used by nearly every American city.
   - C a council of commissioners that appoints a city manager to run operations.
   - D an elected mayor who oversees the local bureaucracy.

4. Which of the following is *not* a shortcoming of a Commission form of city government?
   - A There is a tendency toward "empire-building."
   - B It is difficult to assign responsibility or leadership to any one person.
   - C There is a lack of coordination in policy making and administration.
   - D Only a few American cities have this form of government.

5. Which of the following describes a Council-Manager form of government?
   - A A council which has policy oversight and administrative authority in running city departments and appoints a city manager who administers city operations.
   - B Each council member heads a department and takes turns being mayor.
   - C The manager is elected by voters and wields strong executive power to set the budget, appoint department heads, and control policy debate.
   - D A local government system found in most large U.S. cities.

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    - D They didn't have an opportunity to participate in the public hearings.

Memo from the City Manager

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

City of Franklinburg • City Hall, Suite 300 • (123) 456-7890

August 13

To: City Manager's Staff
From: City Manager Geronski
Re: Location of Transitional Housing for the Homeless

We've got a problem. Part of our strategy to help our city's homeless population—and to help the businesses and citizens who've been most concerned about it—is to build transitional housing for the homeless. We've been developing our homeless policy for three years now, and this housing is key to making it work. But now the mayor and city council are hearing questions about "back-room deals," and they're worried about being attacked for stalling the plan or favoring certain special interest groups. You've probably seen the attached editorial in the newspaper. The mayor and council want us to help convince the citizens of Franklinburg that all is well, so I need you to send me a detailed memo on two things *asap*:

1. Explain that we *have* followed the proper process in developing our homeless policy, and that we will continue to do so as we move to implementation. I believe there are six steps in the "textbook definition" of the policy process. Please show which steps we've taken so far and explain how we'll be taking the next steps. I will send you chart for organizing your thoughts and to make notes. From that, you could create a checklist or a diagram or something to show clearly that we haven't forgotten anything or anybody – the public, all the appropriate city agencies, and other levels of government. If you spot a mistake in our process, tell me if, how, and why we should fix it, explain it, or ignore it.

2. Recommend where to put the transitional housing, explaining the pros and cons of each of our three possible sites and why your choice is best. I'll send you background material on the sites, which are the only practical locations we have available at this point. We have arranged adequate funding for whichever site we choose—though spending less always looks good. The funding comes from a federal housing grant, which cannot be used for any other purpose. So, if you come up with any ideas that require the city to spend more, we'll either have to make cuts in the budget or increase revenues somehow. You should also take a look at the summaries of the public hearings we held recently. I hope you're in the mood for some lively reading—everyone seems to be saying "not in my backyard!"

I'm counting on you. The mayor and city council are nervous about next year's elections, and the news media are watching. Our heads will roll if the homelessness problem gets much worse.

Attachment

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THE FRANKLINBURG GAZETTE

EDITORIAL

Questions, Delays on Homeless Policy

August 6, 2006

· Printable version
· Email This Article

Opinion

- Main Opinion Page
- Letters to the Editor
- Open Forum

IT IS CLEAR TO ALL that our city needs to address the problem of homelessness—now. We have a growing homeless population. Franklinburg has long prided itself for taking care of its citizens, even the least fortunate among us. But our economy will be hurt when tourists decide not to visit our historic downtown, and when businesses lose customers who fear harassment or would rather not see such human misery in our streets. The quality of life for all citizens declines when the homeless are left to panhandle, sleep, and create a mess in public spaces.

For some three years now, since the mayor and city council took office, the city has been developing a policy and a plan to help address this situation. Now a transitional housing and services center is about to be built, but we have serious concerns. Why has this process taken so long? Can't the city move any faster? And who has had significant input into the plan? Rumors are flying around City Hall that special interests have had too much influence. Have certain developers been told they will be given lucrative contracts to build the housing? Have all members of the public had a voice? Has the city thoroughly considered how to implement this policy so that it goes smoothly and includes the county, state, and federal levels of government?

The citizens of Franklinburg deserve a fair, open, efficient policymaking process. The mayor and city council, along with City Manager Geronski, must give us some answers.

Back to top

Document and Map Describing Proposed Sites

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

City of Franklinburg • City Hall, Suite 300 • (123) 456-7890

Document 1107-3A

Proposed sites for transitional housing for the homeless
(see attached map)

Site #1: Corner of Avenue D and Van Buren Street

.8 acre located in the downtown business district. Near major shopping and hotel area as well as city, county, and state government offices. Two blocks from Father Markham's Ministry, which feeds the homeless and offers spiritual guidance and life counseling services. Site is a paved lot owned by the city, currently leased to a car-parking company.

- ***Zoned*** commercial (variance required)
- ***Estimated cost*** for new construction: $4 million

Site #2: 211 Garfield Road

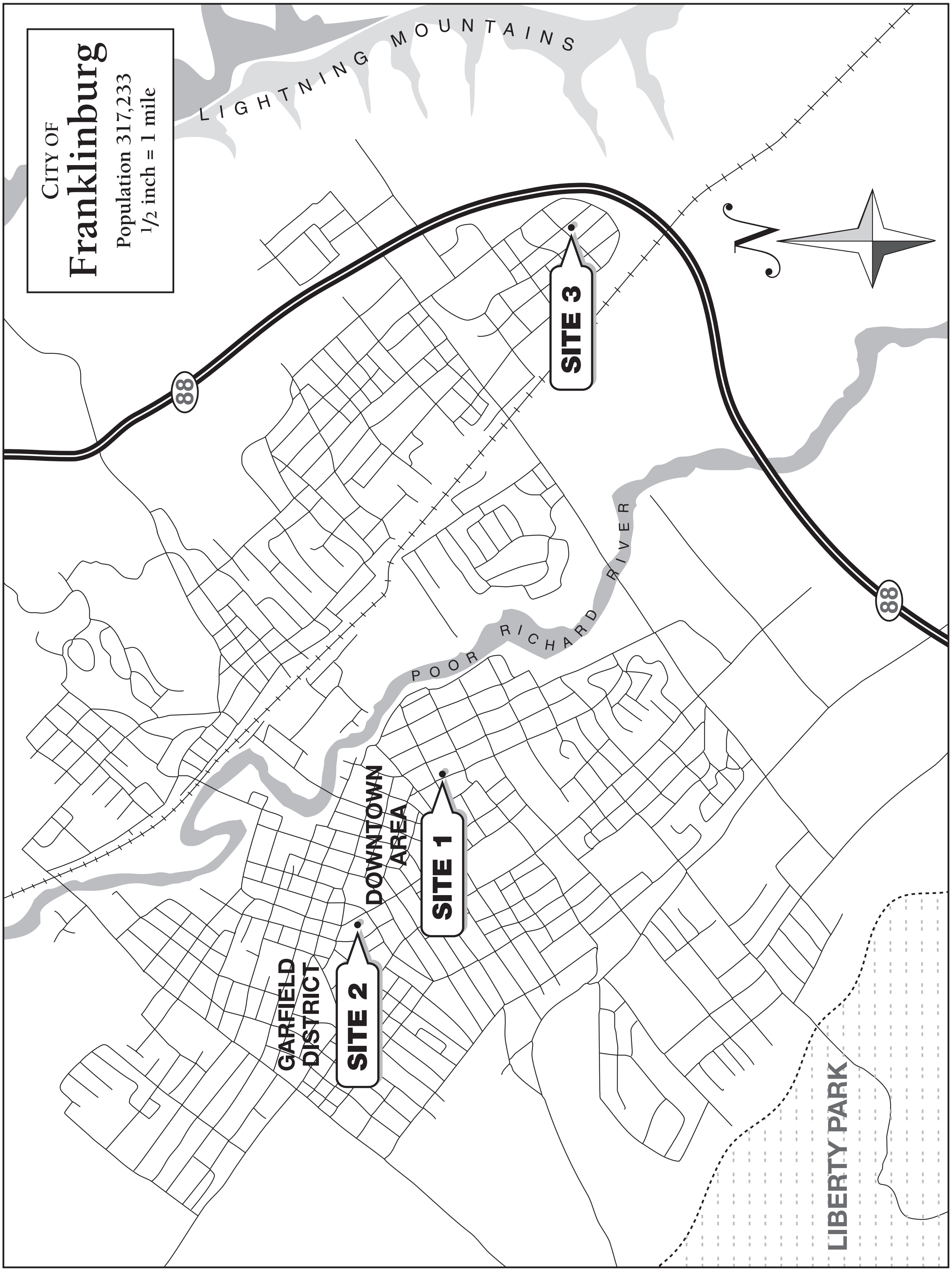
1.5 acres located at the edge of residential area with single-family homes in historic Garfield District. Area has recently seen gentrification. Site currently occupied by a hotel built in the 1920s but not operated since 1987; owner will sell it to the city at far-below-market value.

- ***Zoned*** single-family residential (hotel had a variance; new variance for transitional housing would be required)
- ***Estimated cost*** to purchase and convert building to transitional housing: $2.2 million

Site #3: 16550 Industrial Parkway

2.2 acres located near the freeway and railroad yard in the city's East Side area, six miles from downtown. Site is owned by the city and currently occupied by a warehouse built in 1979 to store city vehicles and street maintenance equipment, which are soon to be moved to a larger facility nearby. Some mixed commercial-residential areas within one-half mile.

- ***Zoned*** light-industrial (variance required)
- ***Estimated cost*** to convert building to transitional housing (including some required hazardous waste cleanup, mostly paints and diesel fuel): $3.1 million


City of Franklinburg
Population 317,233
1/2 inch = 1 mile
LIGHTNING MOUNTAINS
88
SITE 3
POOR RICHARD RIVER
88
DOWNTOWN AREA
SITE 1
GARFIELD DISTRICT
SITE 2
LIBERTY PARK

SUMMARY TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

ON PROPOSED SITES FOR FRANKLINBURG TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS

PROPOSAL PRESENTED AT THE HEARINGS: The City of Franklinburg will build a transitional housing center to serve the homeless population, now estimated to number between 200 and 300 persons. The center will provide temporary housing for at least 100 people in single occupancy and shared rooms and include a kitchen to serve meals. Space will also be used for counseling and mental health services and an office to assist residents in finding jobs and permanent housing. The center will accept single adults and couples and families with children who abide by strict behavior rules. No weapons, drugs, or alcohol will be allowed. Three sites are under consideration, as found on document 1107-3A. Housing at each site can be built in approximately the same amount of time, will serve an equal number of clients, and will provide the same services at the same ongoing costs.

TESTIMONY FROM THE PUBLIC: Public hearings were conducted this year on three dates: May 3, May 21, and June 17. The following are representative samples of comments made by various citizens and interest groups about the three proposed sites.

CITIZENS FOR CLEANED UP AND SAFE STREETS (CCUSS) REPRESENTATIVE: "We believe the homeless situation has gotten way out of control. But still the city talks about spending more money to build housing for the homeless. Too many people give panhandlers money, and the social workers and some church leaders treat them like they've been wronged by society. OK, some of the homeless need to be in a mental hospital. A few more just need a chance to get their lives together, like battered women with children. But let's face it. Most of them are drunks, drug addicts, or just plain bums who have chosen to live on the streets. We think they should be dealt with by the police. Our last petition on this issue was signed by more than 4,000 registered voters, so do not take us lightly."

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPRESENTATIVE: "Business and hotel owners don't want to appear heartless. We truly care about the less fortunate among us. However, we also care about our customers. What happens if they have to step over a sleeping homeless person to get into our store? Or if they have to smell urine on the sidewalk, or be hassled by panhandlers? I'll tell you what happens—they go to the malls out in the suburbs instead of downtown to shop. Same for the tourists and people attending conventions. They're not going to want to stay in our hotels or dine in our restaurants. And we all know what that means: Franklinburg will be a less-inviting place to visit, live, and work—and the city's tax revenues will drop like a rock. For these reasons, we strongly urge the city to locate the transitional housing center far away from downtown at Site #3. An acceptable alternative would be Site #2, since that is a more residential area and in some ways would be more appropriate for transitional housing. Remember, business owners, their employees, and customers are voters—and this is not a small group."

36 **SAM AIYAM, FORMER HOMELESS PERSON:** "A lot of the folks you've heard from today seem to think the homeless are some sort of vermin that need to be eliminated. Well, let me tell you that most of us are not that different from everyone else. We just need a chance to get back on our feet after a rough patch. With the economy the way it is these days a lot of people could become homeless. And some of them, well, if they turn to drugs or alcohol, they need help, not time in a jail cell. You know as well as I do that the state isn't paying much for mental health hospitals and such, which is what some of the homeless need. This transitional housing center would really help. And putting it in a neighborhood like the Garfield District would help the most, by making homeless people feel like they're being welcomed back into the community."

46 **GARFIELD DISTRICT HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE:** "We are very concerned about proposed Site #2, which is in our neighborhood. We represent over 5% of the people who voted in the last election, and many of our residents are active in civic affairs. As you know, the Garfield District has some of the oldest homes in Franklinburg. It has recently seen a rebirth, with nicely painted houses, well-tended gardens, and young families and professionals living there who want to protect their investment. We agree that the homeless need someplace to go, and that our existing shelters and services are not enough. So we support the city's policies aimed at helping them lead better lives. However, locating transitional housing right on the main road entering our neighborhood, on the same block with a park and single-family homes, is not wise. Children now have a safe place to play in the park. Homeowners are enjoying the peaceful, quiet streets. Property values have been going up. All of this would undoubtedly change if a hundred homeless people were living there—with late-night coming-and-going, noise, litter, and perhaps behaviors that would be inappropriate for children and unpleasant for adults to be around. We ask that you locate the transitional housing, therefore, in either Site #1 or #3."

61 **LATONYA KERRING, SOCIAL WORKER FROM FATHER MARKHAM'S MINISTRY:** "I would echo what Sam said earlier about the homeless being where they are for reasons that are usually beyond their control. 'There but for the grace of God go I' is a phrase worth remembering here. With the economy as it is today, a lot of the new homeless are single women with children who can't work enough to make ends meet. Others just need an address to put on a job application and a place to take a shower and get a meal until they can find a place of their own. The transitional housing you're planning would make a world of difference to these people, and it would help meet the concerns expressed by our business community. Please build it where it's needed, which is NOT Site #3. Father Markham's Ministry already serves many of the homeless just a few blocks away from Site #1, and we would welcome any additional help. We also understand, however, that studies show many of the homeless are better able to uplift themselves when they live in a quieter, residential neighborhood like Garfield Road. Both the city's sizeable group of liberal voters and our more conservative citizens want, above all, for the problem to be solved and not merely put off for another day."

Notes on Franklinburg's Process for Homeless Housing Policy

Components I & III may be omitted from oral presentation due to time constraints, but should be included in written paper

Stage	***Who*** *did or will be doing this*	***When*** *it was or will be done:*	***How*** *it was or will be done:*	***Result*** *of this step and/or what we expect* ***will need*** *to be done:*
1. Problem Identification				
2. Agenda Setting				
3. Policy Formulation				
4. Policy Adoption				
5. Policy Implementation				
6. Policy Evaluation				

Staff-Received these recently.
Please take into consideration!
-Geronski

Letters from Two Groups

August 12

To the Mayor, City Manager, and Editor of the Franklinburg Gazette:

We have just formed our group, the Coalition of the Homeless (COOTH), so our voice can be heard in the debate about your policy on homelessness. We're afraid that you're going to locate the transitional housing center in a place that won't do you much good! If you want to get the homeless off your streets, the transitional housing has to be used by people. If you put it on Site #3, how will we get to the services we need? The welfare office, treatment programs, and health clinics are all close to downtown, which is also where panhandling has to be done. There are not a lot of bus lines over on the East Side, and six miles is a long walk. You will have wasted money on near-empty housing, while you continue to hear complaints from downtown businesses and lose support from angry voters.

Take it from us, Site #2 is a much better choice. The city would really be helping solve the problem of homelessness by locating the transitional housing center there. A lot of the homeless would choose to live in a residential neighborhood and would benefit more from it. Garfield Road is still close to downtown and it's near public transportation. We admit that Site #1 is close to where most of homeless are living now—the streets and abandoned buildings of downtown. But Site #1 would feel like you're trying to keep us separate from everybody else, and the Chamber of Commerce wouldn't be happy either.

— COOTH

August 14

Dear Mayor,

We would like to inform you that we, the people who live near Site #3 for the proposed homeless housing center on the East Side, were never asked about what we might want. We just read about this whole issue in the paper recently and we did not know about any public hearings. Of course we are concerned about the homeless, but we aren't sure this is the right place for their housing. We have serious concerns about safety and noise in our neighborhood. We know we're not as rich or well-connected as the people in the Garfield District or the downtown businesses. We don't have our own representative since Franklinburg doesn't have district elections for city council. Many of us here are elderly, but we do vote in high numbers. And our church has organized people before—and can do so again! Our younger neighbors may be working two jobs and living in apartments. They may not be following what's going on down at City Hall. But is that a reason to ignore them?

Yours sincerely,

Fanny Mae Parks Dolores Santiago

Fanny Mae Parks and Dolores Santiago
East Side Residents

Name: ______________________________ Date: ______________

Test for *Not in My Backyard*

Please circle the letter of your answer.

1. The 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution allows state governments to establish local governments. Which of the following is *not* considered a general purpose government that is allowed to be established by the states?
   - A counties
   - B territories
   - C cities
   - D townships

2. Which of the following is *not* considered a "special purpose" government?
   - A school district
   - B water district
   - C municipal government
   - D parks bureau

3. One of the forms of city government is the Commission form. This type of city government can be described as
   - A a board of commissioners, each heading a department and taking turns being mayor.
   - B a system used by nearly every American city.
   - C a council of commissioners that appoints a city manager to run operations.
   - D an elected mayor who oversees the local bureaucracy.

4. Which of the following is *not* a shortcoming of a Commission form of city government?
   - A There is a tendency toward "empire-building."
   - B It is difficult to assign responsibility or leadership to any one person.
   - C There is a lack of coordination in policy making and administration.
   - D Only a few American cities have this form of government.

5. Which of the following describes a Council-Manager form of government?
   - A A council which has policy oversight and administrative authority in running city departments and appoints a city manager who administers city operations.
   - B Each council member heads a department and takes turns being mayor.
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or e-mail it to us at **access@teachinteract.com**

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Comments: ____

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To help illustrate to others the experiential activities involved and to promote the use of simulations, we like to get photographs and videos of classes participating in the simulation. Please send photos of students actively engaged so we can publish them in our promotional material. Be aware that we can only use images of students for whom a release form has been submitted.

To Parents:

I give permission for photographs or videos of my child to appear in catalogs of educational materials published by Interact.

Name of student: ____ (print)

Age of student: ____ (print)

Parent or guardian: ____ (print)

Signature: ____ Date: __________________

Address:

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____

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