

WHY PROJECT CITIZEN?

As a citizen of the United States you have a right to say what you think government should do about problems in your community. You also have a right to say what you think about problems in your state, the nation, and about international problems. You have the right to try to influence the decisions people in your government make about all of those problems.

To be able to participate effectively, however, citizens need to know which levels of government and which governmental agencies are responsible for changing, enforcing, or developing a specific public policy. For example, state legislatures may direct agencies to enact policies resulting from federal legislation. Or, local governments may create policies in order to carry out responsibilities assigned to them through laws enacted at the state or federal level. Additionally, as part of the process of developing and implementing policy, governmental agencies must determine if the new policy conflicts with existing legislation or policy.

This project is intended to help you learn how to express your opinions, how to decide which level of government and which agency is most appropriate for dealing with the problem you identify, and how to influence policy decisions at that level of government.



For more information:

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**The Alabama Center
for Law & Civic Education
Presents**



We the People: Project Citizen is a curricular program for middle, secondary, and post-secondary students and adult groups that promotes competent and responsible participation in local and state government. The program helps people learn how to monitor and influence public policy. In the process, they develop support for democratic values and principles, tolerance, and feelings of political efficacy.

Entire classes of students or members of youth organizations work cooperatively to identify a public policy problem in their community. They then research the problem, evaluate alternative solutions, develop their own solution in the form of a public policy, and create a political action plan to enlist local or state authorities to adopt their proposed policy. Participants develop a portfolio of their work and present their project in a hearing showcase before a panel of civic-minded community members.

This project is being funded by and held in conjunction with the Alabama Bicentennial Commission.

ACLCE

The Alabama Center for Law and Civic Education develops and implements programs in civic education for public and private schools at elementary and secondary levels, cooperating with educators and scholars in the social sciences, humanities, and the law. The Center offers curricular materials, leadership training, teacher education, and research and evaluation in civic education. The principal goals of the Center's programs are to help students develop (1) an increased understanding of the institutions of American constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they are founded, (2) the skills necessary to participate as effective and responsible citizens, and (3) the willingness to use democratic procedures for making decisions and managing conflict.

Notable Quote

My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.

- John F. Kennedy



Project Citizen Curriculum Focus

Project Citizen focuses on the role of state and local governments in the U.S. federal system. The curriculum involves an entire class of students or members of youth or adult groups in a series of structured, cooperative-learning activities that are guided by teachers, organization leaders, and adult volunteers.

Working in four cooperative teams, the students learn to interact with their government through a five-step process that includes the following:

- Identifying a problem in their community that requires a public policy solution
- Gathering and evaluating information on the problem
- Examining and evaluating alternative solutions
- Developing a proposed public policy to address the problem
- Creating an action plan to get their policy adopted by government

Students' work is displayed in a class portfolio containing a display section and a documentation section.

Notable Quote

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead



Project Citizen Training

A one day Professional Development Training will be hosted in the summer near all inservice centers in the state. Participants will receive a \$100 stipend.

Each participant will receive a classroom set of student books and a teacher's guide.

Participants will earn 6 hours of STI-PD credit.

All resource materials will be provided.

Mileage Allowance and lunch are included.