



## VOTING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

(Time varies)

### OBJECTIVE

Students research the individuals, groups, and committees that make up their local city government and determine what part voting plays in how local government operates.

### MATERIALS

Local phone book; access to the Internet

### GET READY

- ✓ Find some Internet sites that would connect students to the people/entities that make up their local government.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Using a phone book and/or the Internet, have students develop a list of the individuals, groups, and committees that make up their local government. For each person/entity, students should gather the following information, if needed by contacting someone at City Hall:
  - ✓ Name of individual position, group or committee
  - ✓ Contact information (name, phone number and/or e-mail address)
  - ✓ List whether individuals in this group are appointed, elected, or hired
- ✓ Pooling their information, students can construct a flow chart to determine how voting contributes to the makeup of the local government.

- ✓ Next, have students e-mail someone from each group or committee to find out how voting plays a role in the functioning of the group. Do the groups use voting to make decisions? How often? About what types of topics?
- ✓ After students receive replies to their messages, ask them to reflect on and discuss the role of voting in local government groups and committees.
- ✓ Have your students continue their research and write a report about a government group or committee explaining how voting is important to the functioning of that group/committee.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Do many groups in our local government make decisions by voting? Which ones?*
- ★ *Are there any groups that do not use voting? How do those groups make decisions?*
- ★ *What would happen to local government groups if there were no elections for members?*
- ★ *How do certain government committees use voting at meetings?*