



Lesson 4: Municipal Services


Objectives Students should be able to explain how major taxes and other revenues for local government affect services for citizens. They should also be able to identify the types of services provided by local government.


Materials Facts on Florida Cities
Local Government Vocabulary
Civic Review article
Activity 4-1: A Night Out

Vocabulary authority infrastructure
land-use plan privatization
sanitary landfill zoning

Strategies  Begin the fourth day of local government study by asking students the question “What is the purpose of local government?” Ask several students for their ideas. At this juncture in studying local government, many responses are possible but the topic for Lesson 4 is the services city government provides. If student responses do not include references to the provision of services by local government, refer once again to the reason given for the incorporation of most cities, to obtain the kind and level of services desired by citizens.

 List on the board the seven general categories of services found on the Facts on Florida Cities Pages. Using the vocabulary words to supplement the discussion, talk about each category and the areas of service within each one. Relate the discussion to Lesson 3 on revenues and services that citizens pay for. At the conclusion of the discussion, students should have a basic knowledge of the range of services cities provide.

 *Note:* Students may ask about education, and whether cities provide for it. School districts in Florida are actually separate units of local government; they share the same geographical boundaries as the counties, but they operate under their own elected government. Unlike cities or counties, which have many purposes, school districts are a special type of government created for one purpose only – to provide a public education for local students. As such, school districts run by boards of education are empowered to raise money to carry out their mission.

 Distribute copies of Activity 4-1, “A Night Out,” to the class. Have students read the story and identify the services provided by local government. Some of the services mentioned in the story are functions of county government. Go over the services that students identify.

Activity 4-1: A Night Out

Read this story very carefully. Then reread it, concentrating on each paragraph to see how many local government services you can find. How many services mentioned in the story might be offered jointly by city and county governments?

This was the big game of the season – Jefferson High School against Washington High School in nearby Greendale City. Marching band members stashed their instruments on the school buses and climbed aboard. At 5:00 p.m., the two buses pulled away from the city recreation parking lot.

Movement through city streets was slowed by rush hour traffic. Main Street was closed because public works crews were fixing a broken water line. A police officer directed traffic. At one intersection, the buses stopped as fire engines raced by. The buses traveled slowly, past the waterworks and down the hill to the edge of the city limits. Finally, on the interstate, they began to make good time. Students quietly began to eat their sandwiches; it was getting dark outside as they left the city.

The buses left the interstate and drove along County Line Road past the jail and a large public works garage. The highway soon approached the Jefferson airport where the runways were ablaze with lights and planes. Students pressed their noses against the windows to look. On the other side of the highway, flashing blue lights revealed the sheriff's car parked behind a speeder that had been pulled over.

When they got off the buses at Jefferson High, most band members quickly headed for the field house to have a drink of water and use the restroom before going to the stands. A city bus loaded with fans arrived just at kick-off.

School rivalry showed on the field; it was a tough, defensive game. At the end of the first quarter, a pileup left a Washington High quarterback stretched out on the field moaning. The crowd quieted as he was lifted by emergency medical technicians to an ambulance. By the end of halftime, word came from Greendale General Hospital that his injury was only a bad sprain; he would be all right. A cheer went up and the Washington High team raced onto the field geared to win.

It was Washington High's night. They won 13-3, their first victory against Jefferson in four years. A steady rain had started and the bleachers emptied quickly. Police officers guided traffic smoothly out of the parking area, around drainage ditches and onto the county road. Ground crews were already picking up discarded cups and papers to fill dumpsters with trash. As the buses pulled away, the field lights were dimmed and then turned off. Only streetlights lit their way through the dark rainy night.

The buses vibrated with victory songs. Even the airport went unnoticed this trip. Soon, however, weariness caught up with the musicians, and two quiet buses traveled down the interstate.