

Getting Involved

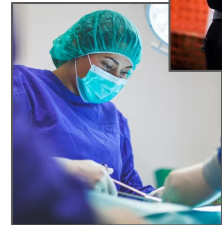
When leaving the Constitutional Convention in 1787, it is rumored that a woman approached Benjamin Franklin and asked about what type of government they had chosen. He replied, “A republic, if you can keep it.” What did he mean, “if you can keep it”? In order to keep our nation and government working and running smoothly, we need citizens to be involved. There are many ways for citizens just like you to get involved in their communities.

Public Service

What do a governor, a nurse, and a teacher all have in common? They are all public servants. Public servants are people who all work to benefit the public. Public service refers to the work and activities that focus on people’s needs and the importance of the public good. Some examples of public servants would be those who work in healthcare, education, law enforcement, military, government officials, or transportation. Public service is important for so many reasons! These individuals work hard to keep our community safe, provide basic needs for the community, and address community problems as quickly as possible. Our government wouldn’t be able to **function** (*work*) without the selfless work of public servants and the services they provide.



A police officer



A doctor

Volunteerism

Have you ever picked up trash in a park? Or have you ever asked your parents what you can do to help around the house? If you have, you have volunteered your time or services. When you volunteer, you are offering up your time or your services to help out without the expectation of getting paid. Volunteerism is an important civic virtue. Volunteerism keeps our community running smoothly by keeping its citizens safe and well cared for.



People cleaning up litter on a beach

There are many different places where someone can volunteer to help. You could volunteer at home, in



Volunteers giving out food

your school, and even places around your community. Volunteers come in all ages, too! Food banks, homeless shelters, animal shelters, and many other local organizations need volunteers to keep their services running. Some communities even depend on the selfless service of volunteer firefighters. Without the help of volunteers, it is hard to meet the needs of others.

Voting

Voting is another **crucial** (*important*) way for citizens to get involved. When people vote, they are sharing their point of view and ensuring that their voice is heard. Voting in elections is very important because people choose the individuals they want to represent them in the government. In the United States, you need to be at least 18 and registered if you would like to vote. During elections, citizens cast their ballots to vote for local, state, and national officials. Many people have fought for the right to vote over the years. And now, because every eligible person gets one vote, the act of voting is one of the truest forms of people being equal.



Voting sticker and ballot