

Celebrate Florida City Government Week

This year's Florida City Government Week (FCGW) is October 20-26, 2013 and the Florida League of Cities encourages every city to take an active part in promoting their city through civic education and volunteerism. This is a great opportunity to partner with schools and civic groups, host an open house at city hall, or reach out to civic clubs and community organizations in your community. Florida City Government Week is part of an ongoing effort sponsored by the Florida League of Cities to raise public awareness about the services that cities perform and to educate the public on how city government works. Cities are encouraged to involve their local schools, businesses, media and civic clubs in planning City Government Week activities.

Cities have already received an email with a packet of information that includes ideas for celebrating the week. If you did not receive a packet, [click here](#) for a copy. Please note: We have a small amount of buttons and bumper stickers available for your use. These items will be made available upon request, until our limited supply is exhausted. Please email your requests for buttons and bumper stickers and send your adopted FCGW resolution to Gail Dennard at gdennard@flcities.com.

If you have any questions about this program, contact Sharon Berrian at (850) 222-9684 or sberrian@flcities.com.

CITIES CELEBRATE FLORIDA CITY GOVERNMENT WEEK

Here are some low cost ways to recognize the week, some of which can be ongoing activities:

- Set up exhibits at local shopping malls or other public places with information on your city government and its services.
- Sponsor a heritage day focusing on the history of the city and its government. This could be coordinated with a local historic group and include community workshops/speakers on selected historical city government events, buildings, parks, facilities and people.
- Involve businesses, sorority and fraternal organizations. Offer to send a speaker to their meetings to discuss current city issues or volunteer your time! Enlist their help in celebrating Florida City Government Week.
- Contact your local library; advise them of the week's activities. Ask if you can make available at their information desk details on celebrating Florida City Government Week.
- Work with senior citizens groups to find innovative ways to involve seniors in city government. Encourage seniors to volunteer their time with the city.
- Send speakers to senior citizen-related activities/events to tell them about the special week.
- Sponsor an essay contest for city residents. Instead of using cash as a prize, the winner's prize could be acting as "Mayor/City Commissioner for a day" or "City Manager for a day" or "Volunteer your time to a special cause on their behalf."
- Sponsor a poster contest for area children related to a particular city government issue, e.g., recycling, water conservation, fire or police services, recreation and parks, transportation, planning, etc. This idea could also focus on careers in city government. Or, host a competition to seek the best solution to a city government problem. Instead of a monetary award, winners could receive a certificate, an article in your local paper and recognition of students and teachers at city council meetings.
- Offer tours of city hall and other city facilities. Stagger tours to allow for small group interaction with city staff or city volunteers. For school groups, limit the focus of the tour to one aspect of city government, work with teachers to prepare students in advance and plan follow-up activities.
- Coordinate ongoing or new partnership programs with schools to stage something special during the week--student "mock" city council meetings (election of a Junior "student-based" city council) or "mock" code enforcement hearings, shadowing of city officials and staff, guest speakers from city government addressing school groups, city government career day, recognition of students and teachers at a city council meeting, volunteer or beautification projects at city sites, dedication of (or special events staged at) recreational facilities shared by cities and schools, recycling or environmental-related student activities, etc.
- Get acquainted with local school personnel and encourage opportunities for integrating city government into the school curriculum (*the League has lesson plans on its website-see the link below*). Another idea— key city government terms and definitions could be supplied for use in English classes (many can be found in the teacher handbook; math classes could address the city budget or could be exposed to the computer technology used in all aspects of city government today; and, of course, there could be more

integration of the local government curriculum into all the social studies classes (government, civics, history, geography, economics).

- Share the League's model booklet with teachers—"My City: I'm Part of It, I'm Proud of it", containing lessons and activities about city government. Share it with your local schools. (*This booklet is available on the Internet, <http://www.floridaleagueofcities.com>*)
- Use the League's *ABC's of City Government booklet*, an educational supplement for elementary teachers, grades 2-5. Share it with your local schools. (*This booklet is also available on the League's website*)
- It's easy to develop a teachers' packet from your city that could be placed on your website, instead of incurring costly printing and mailing costs. Here are some ideas: offer a list of available speakers from city government; a list of resource materials available on city government; information on any special educational programs or services provided by your city (such as internships, mentor programs, volunteer opportunities etc.); and a "fact sheet" on the city government. This material could also include the city budget, organizational chart, copies of council meeting agendas, etc.
- Encourage schools to study the significance of your city's name, history, flag and/or logo design.
- Create an "adopt-a-school" program. Various departments of city government could "adopt" a school, or department within the school, to share information and plan speaking engagements to students that would enhance learning about a particular aspect of city government.
- Encourage a school City Government Club or Youth Council to study community issues that involve municipal services, volunteer opportunities and citizen participation in decision-making. *Visit the League's Resource page on the Website for ideas on developing a Youth Council.*
- Working in coordination with a middle or high school, create an advisory committee of students to study a particular city government issue of importance to teenagers (for example, recreation or volunteerism) and prepare a formal report with recommendations to council. Or, include student representation on an existing citizen committee, commission or board studying an issue of consequence to teens. Make a formal announcement of these appointments during Florida City Government Week.

FLORIDA CITY GOVERNMENT WEEK

There are several steps that can be taken to promote and publicize your city's project:

- Get the local media involved from the beginning!
- Be sure to designate a contact person for your project who can be reached by the media during city hours and after.
- Write a guest editorial that talks about Florida City Government Week and the importance of cities, and submit it to your newspaper(s) opinion page editor for use during Florida City Government Week. *(Check with your newspaper on deadlines.)*
- Schedule an editorial board meeting with your local newspaper(s) to formally discuss your city and the city's involvement with Florida City Government Week. *(Note: This meeting should occur at least one or two weeks prior to Florida City Government Week.)*
- Notify the education reporter or one that covers city activities for your local newspaper. Invite the reporter to sit in on or be a part of any meetings you have with the school.
- Keep reporters informed of your activities. Send the local newspaper(s), television and radio station(s) a media advisory to alert them to upcoming activities and a press release(s) to publicize your activities. *(A sample press release is enclosed.)*
- Send a letter-to-the-editor of your local newspaper(s). *(A sample letter is provided. Please amend as necessary. Be sure to verify the deadline and requirements for submission.)*
- As you coordinate this project with school officials, the supervisor of elections, your PTO/PTA, and other groups, encourage them to assist you in generating publicity.
- Consider scheduling an interview about your project on the local television or radio talk show and/or your cable-access channel.
- Highlight your activities on your city website, with a link to FLC's website. Be sure to put your website address on ALL communications with the media. *(This can also be done on your social media sites, if you have them.)*
- If you conduct this event during Florida City Government Week, you can publicize the significance of hosting your project during this week, which focuses on citizen participation and pride in city government. Your event can be coordinated with other Florida City Government Week activities. And don't forget to stress the importance of students understanding the election process—especially this year!
- A post-press release may be issued.
- Be sure to send thank you letters to the newspaper reporter/editor if you receive favorable press on the event.
- Don't forget to plan for and take good quality photos (both black and white and color - no Polaroid's) for reprint in local publications and for dissemination. The Florida League of Cities would be interested in these photos for possible use in their publications. (See Summary and Evaluation of Activities Sheet)

City Sample Press Release

News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(or date)

Contact: _____ (name)
_____ (phone)

(Name of City)
CELEBRATES FLORIDA CITY GOVERNMENT WEEK:
(DATE)

The City of _____ will be sponsoring Florida City Government Week October 20-26, 2013. Florida City Government Week activities are being celebrated around the theme, "*My City: I'm Part of It, I'm Proud of It*".

Because city government is the government closest to most citizens, and the one with the most direct daily impact upon its residents, municipal officials feel they have a responsibility to pass along their understanding of public services and their benefits.

"We are very excited about the upcoming events," said Mayor/City Manager _____. "We believe that through this event, (name of city) has a timely opportunity to help Florida's residents become more informed about the services of our city governments which, in turn, will lead to more knowledgeable citizen participation in the future. It is a responsibility that we take very seriously."

Events planned for the week are (list activities, date, time, and locations).

Cities across Florida will be celebrating City Government Week, sponsored by the Florida League of Cities (FLC), to showcase and celebrate cities and the many services they provide. The League is the official organization of the municipal governments in Florida, designed and established to meet and serve the needs of Florida's municipalities and their citizens.

[It would be good to get a quote from school officials or other groups that you involved in the project.]

Note: Please include specific information about your city, keeping information to the point and brief. Press releases are more effective when limited to one or two pages. Also, you may want to follow up with phone calls to your local media representatives to personally invite them to your city's event. If the public is invited to an event say so and provide relevant details.

Sample Resolution

Florida City Government Week 2013

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF _____ RECOGNIZING CITY GOVERNMENT WEEK, OCTOBER 20-26,2013 AND ENCOURAGING ALL CITIZENS TO SUPPORT THE CELEBRATION AND CORRESPONDING ACTIVITIES.

WHEREAS, city government is the government closest to most citizens, and the one with the most direct daily impact upon its residents; and

WHEREAS, city government is administered for and by its citizens, and is dependent upon public commitment to and understanding of its many responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, city government officials and employees share the responsibility to pass along their understanding of public services and their benefits; and

WHEREAS, Florida City Government Week is a very important time to recognize the important role played by city government in our lives; and

WHEREAS, this week offers an important opportunity to spread the word to all the citizens of Florida that they can shape and influence this branch of government which is closest to the people; and

WHEREAS, the Florida League of Cities and its member cities have joined together to teach students and other citizens about municipal government through a variety of different projects and information; and

WHEREAS, Florida City Government Week offers an important opportunity to convey to all the citizens of Florida that they can shape and influence government through their civic involvement.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF _____ AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. That the City of _____ does encourage all citizens, city government officials and employees to do everything possible to ensure that this week is recognized and celebrated accordingly.

Section 2. That the City of _____ does encourage educational partnerships between city government and schools.

Section 3. That the City of _____ does support and encourage all city governments to actively promote and sponsor "Florida City Government Week."

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City of _____.

A Summary and Evaluation of City Activities

My City: I'm Part of It, I'm Proud of It 2013

Name of City, Town, or Village:		Contact:	
		<i>(Name/Title)</i>	
Telephone: ()		Email:	
Fax: ()			
Date of Event:			
<i>Month/Date/Year</i>			
Name of school involved in celebration:		Telephone: ()	
Description of <i>My City...I'm part of It, I'm Proud of It</i> activities (including attachments, if necessary, and include whether these activities took place in conjunction with 2013 Florida City Government Week):			
Summarize the most effective activities:			
Other groups, officials, or persons involved in the celebration:			
<i>(Include titles and their organizations)</i>			
List all media and public relations tools used:			
<i>(Example: local newspaper, local government access channel/website, etc., news releases, local television station)</i>			
Additional Comments:			
The following supportive materials are enclosed:			
Color Photos:		Black & White Photos:	Are negatives available?
Yes ___ No ___		Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
			Other:

Sample Letter to the Editor

Florida City Government Week

To the Editor:

During the week of **October 20-26, 2013 (CITY NAME)** will join other cities across Florida in celebrating Florida City Government Week. This week has been set aside to recognize the many services city governments provide and their contribution to a better quality of life in Florida. Our theme, *“My City: I’m Part of It, I’m Proud of It”* pays tribute to the role citizens play in making our cities great.

City government is truly government of, by and for the people---the people who are making the decisions about our community are your neighbors, business owners and community leaders. City government is administered for and by its citizens and is dependent upon public commitment to carry out its responsibilities.

Furthermore, students across the state learn information about state and national government, while information on city government is sometimes barely highlighted. Every citizen deserves the right to know about the local impact of government decision-making. This is a unique opportunity to teach students and adults about the form of government that affects them daily.

During this week, we want to recognize the role city government plays in our lives from public safety to trash collection to promoting our community’s culture and recreation. We hope you will join us in this celebration and learn more about your city and how it operates for you.

Sincerely,

Mayor _____

Note: If you are sponsoring Florida City Government Week Activities, you will want to include information on those events and include an invitation to the public to attend those events.