Civics Academy

Empowering Communities
Through Civic Engagement

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA

MARLEINE BASTIEN
Miami-Dade County Commissioner For District 2

Become an active resident, learn how to participate in your local government and advocate for your community.

Arcola Lakes Branch Library
April 7, April 21, May 5, May 19
6 pm – 8 pm
8240 NW 7 Ave.
Miami, FL 33150

Westchester Regional Library
April 8, April 22, May 6, May 20
6 pm – 8 pm
9445 Coral Way
Miami, FL 33165

Main Library
April 10, April 24, May 8, May 22
12 pm – 2 pm
101 West Flagler St.
Miami, FL 33130

North Dade Regional Library
April 8, April 22, May 6, May 13
6 pm – 8 pm
2455 NW 183 St.
Miami Gardens, FL 33056

Naranja Branch Library
April 8, April 26, May 10, May 24
3 pm – 5 pm
14850 SW 280 St.
Miami, FL 33032

Learn. **Engage.** Become an Ambassador.

Session 2

Solving Local Problems through Governance & Advocacy

OVERVIEW

- What Are Policies?

- How Policies Are Created and Implemented

- Engaging with Elected Officials & Policymakers

- Opportunities for Civic Engagement (School Board, City Council, etc.)

- Strategies for Effective Advocacy & Grassroots Organizing

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Solving Local Problems through Governance & Advocacy

OBJECTIVES

- **Understanding the Policy-Making Process**
  - Participants will be able to describe the steps involved in developing and implementing local policies, from proposal to public input and final adoption.
- **Analyzing Advocacy Strategies**
  - Participants will evaluate different advocacy approaches, such as public meetings, contacting elected officials, and community engagement, to determine their effectiveness in influencing policy decisions.
- **Developing Policy Solutions and Advocacy Skills**
  - Participants will apply their knowledge by drafting a policy proposal on a local issue and delivering a concise advocacy pitch to practice effective civic engagement.

Agenda

Solving Local Problems through Governance & Advocacy

1 **Opening Activity**
15 minutes

2 Content Presentation
30 minutes

3 Hands-on Workshop
30 minutes

4 Interactive Discussion
30 minutes

5 Closing Reflection
15 minutes

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OPENING ACTIVITY

Why Local Government Matters: Decisions on transportation, housing, public safety, education, and environmental issues happen at the local level.

Think about a specific local problem that you feel passionate about or one that directly affects your community.

Write one (1) problem(s) on sticky notes and then group into general categories with the fellow participants.

Key Question: How can individuals and communities influence local policies to address pressing issues?

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Solving Local Problems through Governance & Advocacy

CONTENT PRESENTATION

- **Definition of Advocacy**: The act of supporting, recommending, or speaking on behalf of a cause or group to influence policies, programs, or societal norms.
- **Types of Advocacy**:
  - **Direct Advocacy**: Engaging directly with policymakers and decision-makers.
  - **Grassroots Advocacy**: Mobilizing community members to create change.
  - **Coalition Building**: Partnering with organizations and stakeholders.

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CONTENT PRESENTATION

- **Key Principles of Advocacy**:
  - Passion and authenticity
  - Evidence-based messaging
  - Consistent follow-up
- **Role of an Advocate**:
  - Educate the public
  - Build relationships with stakeholders
  - Amplify marginalized voices

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CONTENT PRESENTATION

Understanding the Local Policy-Making Process (10 minutes)

- **Step 1: Identifying the Issue**
  - Recognizing community needs through data, personal experiences, and public concerns.
- **Step 2: Policy Proposal Development**
  - Who creates policies? (Local government officials, agencies, advocacy groups).
  - Crafting a policy solution: feasibility, funding, and impact analysis.
- **Step 3: Public Input & Deliberation**
  - Public hearings, stakeholder meetings, and citizen feedback.
  - Role of media and social platforms in shaping public opinion.
- **Step 4: Approval & Implementation**
  - The role of elected officials in voting on policies.
  - Execution by government agencies and potential challenges in enforcement.

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CONTENT PRESENTATION

Analyzing Effective Advocacy Strategies (10 minutes)

- **Public Participation in Decision-Making**
  - Attending city commission meetings, testifying at hearings.
- **Contacting Elected Officials**
  - Writing emails, making phone calls, and setting up meetings with policymakers.
- **Community Organizing & Coalition Building**
  - Mobilizing residents, forming alliances with organizations, and utilizing grassroots tactics.
- **Media & Digital Advocacy**
  - Using social media campaigns, opinion pieces, and petitions to raise awareness.

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CONTENT PRESENTATION

Interactive Activity - Case Study: Affordable Housing

Miami-Dade County has been grappling with an affordable housing crisis, characterized by soaring rents and a substantial shortage of affordable units. Between 2019 and June 2023, the median asking rent in Miami increased by 27%, positioning the Miami metropolitan area as the second most expensive rental market in the United States.

In response to escalating housing costs, activists and community organizations have actively advocated for increased funding for rent relief and affordable housing initiatives. Their efforts have led to several notable developments:

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Solving Local Problems through Governance & Advocacy
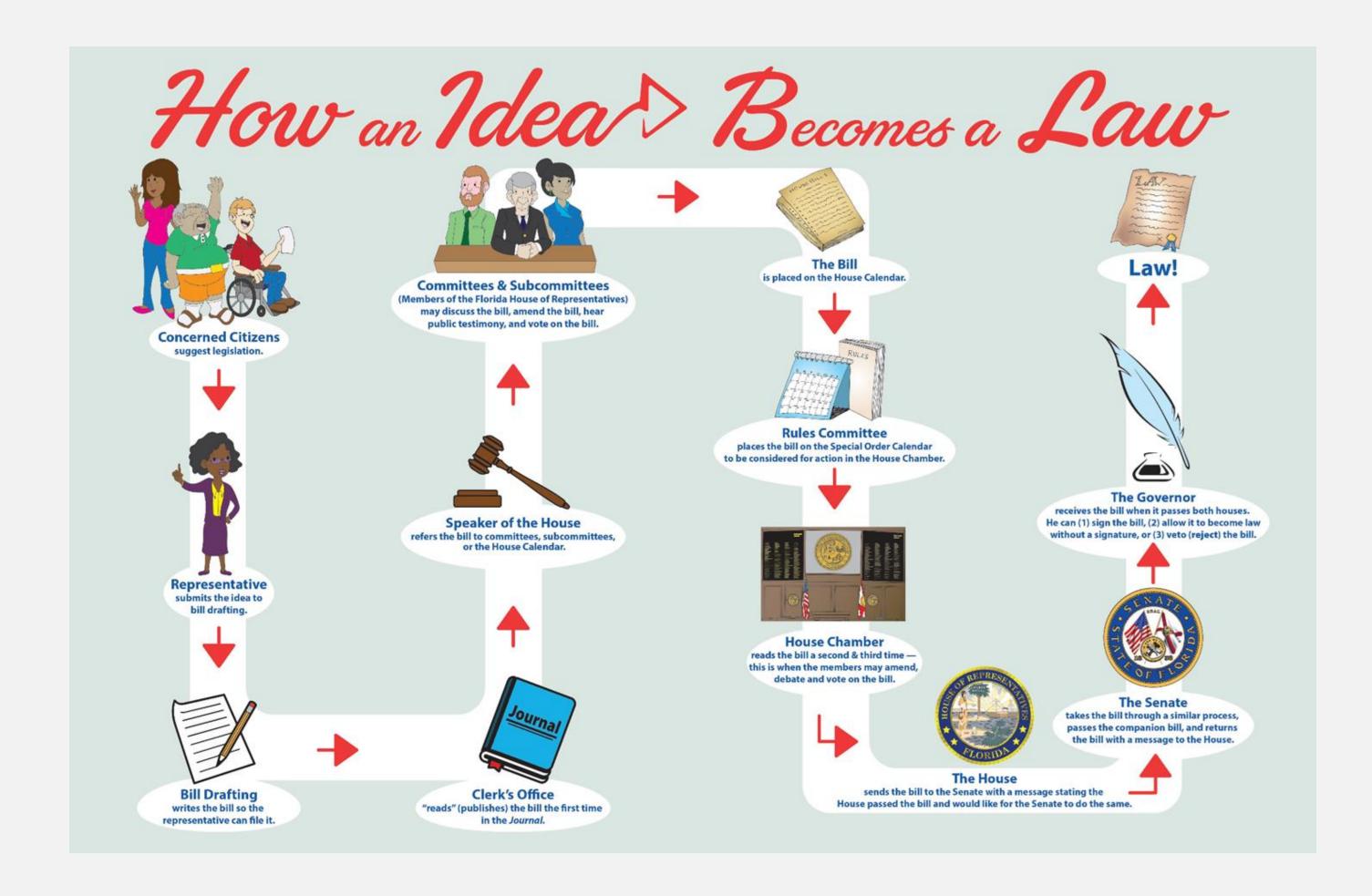
CONTENT PRESENTATION

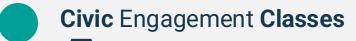**Interactive Activity - Case Study: Affordable Housing**

Emergency Rental Assistance: Miami-Dade County has distributed over $110 million in emergency rental assistance, preventing the evictions of approximately 17,000 families. miamidade.gov

Policy Reforms: The county has implemented measures such as updating the Emergency Rental Assistance Program to help keep residents in their homes and adopting a Tenant Bill of Rights to enhance tenant awareness of their rights and available resources. miamidade.gov
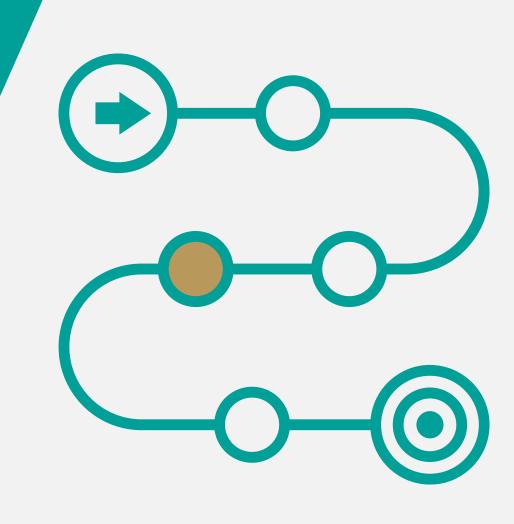
Affordable Housing Development: Currently, Miami-Dade is developing 14,000 affordable and workforce housing units to increase the housing supply.

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Hands-on Workshop

Now it's time to write your very first law!

Use the guidelines below to identify a real problem that you think should be addressed by local government, then craft a bill that addresses that problem.

1. Problem

Identify a problem that you think should be addressed by local government, specifically Miami-Dade County.

How (if at all) is this problem currently being addressed by decision makers?

2. Solution

List some options for solving the problem.

What will happen if nothing is done to address the problem?
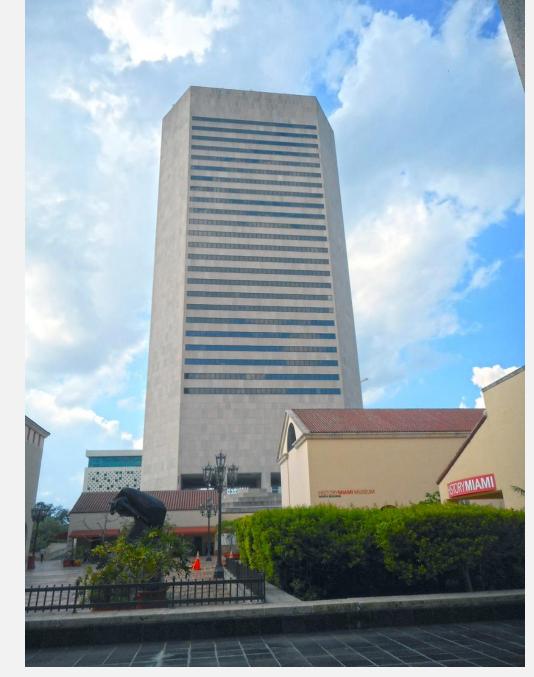
3. Your Proposal

Which option do you think is the best and why?

Which community members will be affected by these changes?

How do you think they will react to your proposal (positively or negatively)?
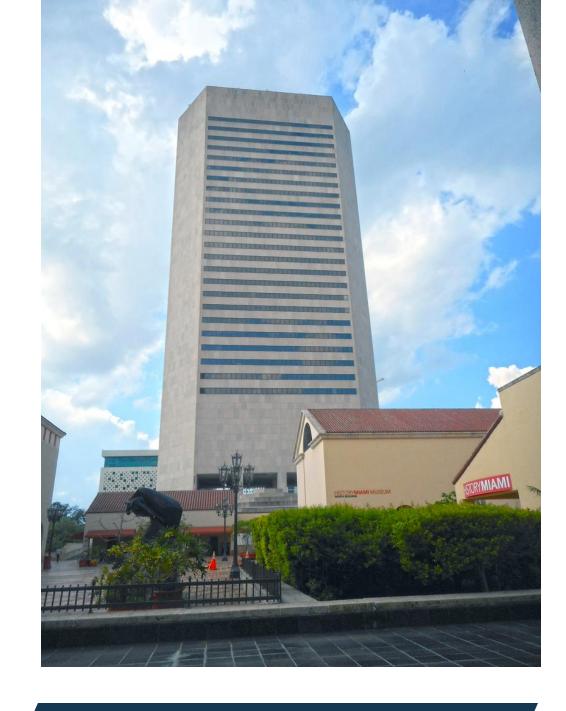
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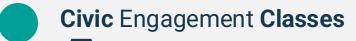
CLASS ACTIVITY

Practicing Your Story of Self & Us
Complete the 1-minute story format example - Meeting with an Elected Official

GOALS: One goal is for you to begin learning how to tell your personal story of why you are called to advocate on a particular issue and how to tell your community's story of why you have the capacity to help address your chosen issue.
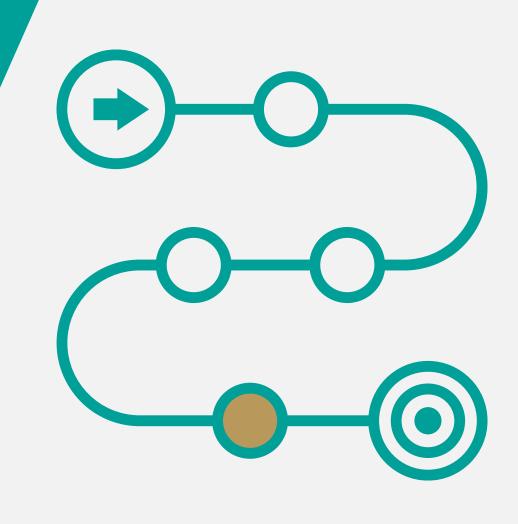
You may choose to focus on the Story of Us or the Story of Self for this exercise. Another goal is to begin learning how to coach others' stories by listening carefully, offering feedback, asking questions, etc. In this way, you can develop leadership in others, as well as yourself.

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INTERACTIVE Q&A

Discussion Questions

1. **How do local leaders, community organizations, and residents interact and collaborate to address these problems?** (Explores the dynamics of local impact and influence)

2. **How can residents build coalitions and alliances with other organizations and individuals to work towards a solution for a problem?** (Explores the power of collaboration)

3. **How can advocacy efforts be tailored to specific audiences (elected officials, community members, stakeholders)?** (Considers the importance of targeted messaging)

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CLOSING REFLECTION

- What's one key takeaway from today's session?

Call to Action:

- What's one action step you can take this month to engage with policymakers?

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CONTACTS

- **Miami-Dade County**
  - https://www.miamidade.gov/

- **Miami-Dade Public Library System**
  - https://www.mdpls.org/

- **Community & Education Well-Being Research Center at the University of Miami**
  - https://sites.education.miami.edu/cewrc/

- **Maurice A. Ferre Institute for Civic Leadership at Florida International University**
  - https://www.ferre.fiu.edu

- **CABA Pro Bono**
  - https://cabaprobono.com/

- **Catalyst Miami**
  - https://www.catalystmiami.org/

- **Engage Miami**
  - https://engage.miami/

- **Family Action Network Movement (FANM)**
  - https://www.fanm.org/

- **Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center**
  - https://www.santla.org/

Mayor Daniella Levine Cava

CONNECT WITH YOUR MAYOR

Learn. **Engage.** Become an Ambassador.

ENGAGE

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https://linktr.ee/MiamiDadeBCC_

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