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# Session 2

## INTRO TO CIVICS 101

**What is civic engagement?** Civic engagement is when people take an active role in the life of their communities. There are a variety of components to that. First is being aware of the issues that your community is confronting, but also being able to step back and analyze the dynamics and structures that have created that issue.

**Why does civic engagement matter?** Civic engagement is the foundation of a democratic society.

### **Know your community and representatives**

To engage you have to first know your community and who works in different roles from Federal, State and Local. Where do you live? Who represents you? What is their job? How can they help you and your community? How can you contact them?

### **What are your community's strengths and weaknesses?**

What are your community's strengths? What could be improved? Is anyone working on this issue?

### **Ways citizens can participate:**

#### **Kids**

- Reading newspapers, magazines, and reference materials and judging its accuracy
- Participating in a political discussion
- Trying to persuade someone to vote a certain way
- Signing a petition
- Wearing a button or putting a sticker on the car
- Contact elected representatives through letter writing, call, email, or contact through social media
- Volunteering for local organizations that you support
- Contributing money to a party or candidate
- Attending meetings to gain information, discuss issues, or lend support
- Working for a candidate by knocking on doors, mailing, and other activities
- Set up meetings with representatives to talk more about special interest
- Demonstrating through marches, boycotts, sit-ins, or other forms of protest

#### **Adults**

- Voting in local, state, and national elections
- Serving as a juror
- Running for office
- Holding public office
- Serving the country through military or other service
- Disobeying laws and taking the consequences to demonstrate that a law or policy is unjust