

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

This instructor's guide is designed to assist the instructor in stimulating class discussion and to bring to life the chapters in the book. This guide offers three different categories for the chapters:

Class Discussion

Class Assignment

Field Trips-Other Ideas

**Class Discussion** is based on the chapter reading, and is designed to stimulate a dialogue on the chapter contents. The regular use of these class discussion suggestions will be helpful in reminding students they have to stay current on the reading of the assigned chapters. Instructors can involve the students by breaking the class into teams that compete against one another, or just be listing on the board the answers they come up with. For example, in Chapter 21, Education, class discussion involves having the students identify all of the people involved in the school district, and in one way or another, are part of seeing that students receive an education-this list can be very long!

**Class Assignments** are geared more toward team and group activates, and can result in numerous debates and dialogue on different sides of topics. These assignments often will encourage the students to have discussions with their parents/guardians since the topics deal with real life issues. In some chapters, questions are asked to help lead discussions and then the teacher can determine what the interests of the class are and what assignments can then be made from these discussions.

**Field Trips-Other Ideas** provide suggestions for out of the classroom activities, but if this is not practical, these suggestions offer direction as to what organizations can be contacted and asked if they could send a representative to class. These field visits or representatives can bring to life the day to day issues that local governments face. Suggestions on whom to contact are identified, with specific references to various Appendices in the textbook.

Connecticut with its 169 municipalities and regional planning organizations have incredible resources to bring into the classroom, and for the most part, have employees that would love to share their work and experiences with students. This interaction will bring to life the readings, and hopefully, stimulate student interests to consider careers in local government. These career opportunities are spelled out in Chapter 30.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 1**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What are some of the key difference in local government vs. federal and state government?
2. If town hall closed down, what services would be impacted? Create teams and see who can come up with the most on the list. Put list on board. Save list and review at the end of the entire segment on local government and compare to see how much they have learned about local government.
3. Where is the town hall located in the town students live in? Is it centralized?
4. How many have visited the town hall? Why? (dog license, parent/guardian paying taxes, building permit, other?)

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Assign students on their way home to observe and make a list of the town services they can identify. Ask them for the number they have identified, and then recognize students with the most. Put the list on the board as they call out the services and then check who missed what services.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 2**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What are the three basic forms of government in Connecticut?
2. What form of government does your town have?
3. Can you identify who is the Mayor, or First Selectman, or Town Manager?
4. What is Home Rule? Why is it important?
5. Where is the State capitol located?
6. What makes a mayor strong? weak?
7. What is a town meeting?
8. How many towns and cities are there in Connecticut? Too few or too many?
9. What is the difference between a town and a city?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Find out for next class who is the Mayor, First Selectman or Town Manager.
2. Is your town a charter or non-charter town?
3. Find out if there are any town meetings coming up in the next few months. What for?
4. Who is the chairman of the Board of Education?
5. Why did Connecticut abandon county government?
6. Prepare a list of Connecticut towns and cities that are based on Indian names.
7. Prepare a list of Connecticut's rivers that are based on Indian names.
8. Go on line ([www.ct.gov/sots](http://www.ct.gov/sots)) or obtain a copy of the Blue Book and then look up your town officials.
9. Find out what year their town was incorporated. What other national events were going on in that time frame? Did your town precede the start of the US Government?

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Plan a trip to town hall and make prior arrangements with the Mayor, First Selectmen, or Town Manager.
- Plan a trip to the local police department. Depending upon the age of students, they love to see (and go inside) the local jail; find out how the prisoners obtain their meals.
- Invite local officials to class to talk about their jobs. Prepare ahead of time a list of questions on the town.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What are some examples of titles of local elected and appointed officials?
2. Does your municipal government have all of the titles listed in this chapter? If not, why not?
3. Does your municipal government have all of the boards and commissions listed in this chapter? If not, why not? If you have more than those listed, why?
4. What is the difference between elected officials and appointed officials?
5. Which determines if the position is elected or appointed?
6. Who do you think should run your local government? Why?
7. Is there anyone that has ever contacted their local elected official? What for?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Have the class identify the department managers in your municipality. Do you know the responsibilities of those department managers listed?
2. Has anyone ever gone to a local public meeting?
3. If you have contacted a local elected official, why did you?
4. Discuss some of the differences between the municipal government and the educational system.
5. Find out if your town government and board of educational work together on projects.
6. Discuss some of the joint projects that they have worked on in the past.
7. Have the class determine how easy or difficult it is to contact the elected and appointed officials using the municipal website.

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Call up your Municipal Clerk and find out who runs your city or town government.
- Check-out your city or town's website to look at its organization. Does it make sense?
- After reviewing the municipal website, invite the chief executive officer to class to discuss the website and ways to improve it.
- Visit the municipal public library and see if they have a copy of the municipal budget? Charter? Capital Improvement Plan? Ask the librarian if they know how often someone looks at it.
- Invite the chief executive officer to class to discuss ways the students think how the local government is being managed and way to improve it.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 4**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What title does the person hold who is the chief executive officer of your city or town?
2. Are they elected or appointed?
3. What are the advantages of having an elected position hold this job?
4. What are the disadvantages of having an elected position hold this job?
5. What are the advantages of having an appointed person hold this job?
6. What are the disadvantages of having an appointed person hold this job?
7. What joint projects do you think the municipal and school government could work on?
8. Can you name any department manager in your community?
9. Can you name any of the elected officials in your community?
10. How many of you know the name of your chief elected or appointed official?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. If your city or town has a charter, find out when it was adopted and amended.
2. How do you get news and updated information about your city or town government?
3. Check out your city or town website. Does it provide you with a good overview of your municipal government?
4. Does it provide information on your Board of Education, or do they have a separate website?
5. Discuss what town official you would like to invite to the class. Is the class in agreement or are there several different opinions? Invite one or all of the positions discussed.
6. What would you consider to be the “essential” public services provided by your local government?

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Compare municipal websites in your area, and report on which one you think is the best.
- Invite the CEO and ask if your community jointly provides any public services with other neighboring cities or towns? What services could be shared?
- What common public services do you think should be shared between communities?

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 5**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Are local governments mentioned in our Federal Constitution?
2. What role does Connecticut's Constitution play in local government?
3. How are regional problems resolved in Connecticut?
4. What functions are carried out by the State Government?
5. What functions are carried out by local governments?
6. How do citizens influence local and state governments?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Identify what year the municipality you live in was incorporated or founded. Is it younger or older than the United States?
2. What are the names of the eight counties in Connecticut and what are their functions?
3. Who represents your municipality in the State Legislature and what political party do they belong to?
4. Who determines the schedule for the school year in your municipality?
5. Who recruits and hires the snow plow driver in your Town or City?
6. Describe the highway numbering system used by the State of Connecticut. Odd numbered highways travel in which direction? Even numbered highways travel in which direction?

#### **Field Trips and Other Ideas**

- Invite a local public official (Mayor, Town Manager, First Selectman) to visit the class and tell the class what they do.
- Schedule a visit to the local town or city hall for a tour.
- Invite a local State Senator or State Representative to the class for a discussion about what they do, how they are elected, what political party they belong to and why, and what committees they may serve on in the legislature.
- Divide the class into two or more groups, give them a budget and a list of projects important to the community which different citizen groups support but would require either prioritization, or a major tax increase or both and see what each group decides and why they would do what they are recommending.
- Divide the class into three different groups local, regional and state and have them decide how certain government services should be delivered and why.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 6**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Why is the charter process important? Explain why it is designed to take a long time with lots of input and hearings.
2. What are the political implications of having a special referendum vs. placing the charter revision on the normal November ballot? (Much harder to get approval on special election due to the 15% majority rule—thus a person could publicly state they are in favor of the charter change, but because they are secretly against it, vote to put it on a special ballot and not the regular election when it only takes a simple majority vote)

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Determine if the town where students live is a charter town and what form of government it is?
2. If charter town, when was charted adopted? Has it been amended?
3. If not a charter town, interview selectmen on their thoughts of operating under the general statutes. Advantages? Disadvantages?
4. Are any towns in the area planning on revising their charter? Why?
5. Locate the Council –Manager towns on a map (See Appendix) and determine what part of the State they are located in. Have discussion as to why they are grouped in one particular section of the State?

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Contact the Secretary of State's office to see how many towns have changed their charter in the last few years.
- Invite to class a representative from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) in New Haven to speak about the process and the importance of self-governance.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 7**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What is a Union? Why do we have Unions?
2. What are the three major pieces of legislation effecting public employees and their employers in Connecticut?
3. What are negotiation, mediation and arbitration?
4. What are some of the major issues between public employees and the municipalities of the state and the State of Connecticut itself?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. What collective bargaining union represents the teachers in your school?
2. How is the President of your teacher's collective bargaining union selected?
3. What other collective bargaining unions are in your municipality?
4. What happened when the last contract agreement between the teacher's collective bargaining union and the Board of Education was negotiated in your town/city?
5. What is a "right-to-work" state?
6. Where are labor relations activities and responsibilities outlined in Connecticut?
7. What is meant by the term "bargaining in good faith"? What is a grievance?
8. What percentage of the municipal budget of your town is subject to the collective bargaining process?

#### **Field Trips- Other Ideas**

- Invite the President of a local bargaining unit to speak to a class about how they perceive the role of unions in the work place. What are the issues they deal with, what types of grievances occur and how are they resolved.
- Invite the employer representative to the class and ask the same questions.
- Invite a State mediator to class and have them outline the most difficult issues they have had to deal with between employer and employees.
- Divide the class into groups of twos, representing the employer and representing the employees and provide each group of two with an issue that they can debate. Have them select a bargaining committee representing the employees and one representing the employer. Have them set "ground rules" as to how the negotiating process should take place. If they can't reach agreement, have students assume the role of State appointed mediators to try and work out a compromise. Have the respective employer/employee groups caucus. Create an arbitration panel and have presentations made before the arbitration panel. Have the arbitration panel make a decision and tell why they made the decision.
- Get a copy of a collective bargaining agreement and make copies for the class. Have them analyze the agreement and explain what the various provisions are for.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 8**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What are the main powers given to the states by the federal government?
2. Why do you think the federal government prefers to provide grants to states, rather than local governments?
3. Briefly explain the powers granted to our federal government?
4. Briefly explain the powers granted to our state governments?
5. Why do the powers of local governments vary from state to state?
6. Can you think of any items that you purchase that have both federal and state taxes applied to them? (gasoline, diesel fuel).
7. Name the three primary types of federal grants?
8. Highlight and describe the differences between these federal grant programs?
9. How has "federalism" changed over the years?
10. Is "federalism" different now than a decade ago?

#### **Class Assignments (Teams can be assigned and compete against one another)**

1. What types of federal grants does your state received from the federal government?
2. Find out if your school district receives any federal grant funds? If so, which ones?
3. Find out if your city or town receives any federal grant funds? If so, which ones?
4. Find out if your school district receives any state grant funds? If so, which ones?
5. Find out if your city or town receives any state grant funds? If so, which ones?
6. Name the last two states that were added to the United States of America? Debate whether Puerto Rico should become the 51<sup>st</sup> state.
7. Why do you think special districts are the fastest growing form of local government?
8. Are there any special districts that provided public service in your community? (sewer, water, trash disposal)

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Check with your elected or appointed officials, and ask them if your local government officials ever meet with their elected state representative. If so, what did they discuss?
- Check with your school elected or appointed officials, and ask them if your school officials ever meet with their elected state representatives. Is so, what did they discuss?
- Invite a federal representative or his/her staff person and ask them to talk about the federal government's role in local government.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 9**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. How long are the terms of office for the top elected officials in the students' town? If there is a town manager, how long has he or she been there?
2. What are Robert Rules of Order? Why are they important in running meetings? What would happen if there were no rules of procedure?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. What is the ruling political party in the students' town? Does it change that often? Is it the same political party for the Board of Education?
2. Invite the chief executive officer (Mayor, First Selectman, Town Manager) to class to talk about the political process of elections, length of time in office, should there be term limits, and what governs the procedures of the meetings?
3. Obtain a copy of Roberts Rules of order and have students prepare a paper on basics of running a meeting, i.e. who calls meeting to order, agenda, who has right to speak, how to make a motion, how to amend a motion, how to stop debate, number of votes needed to stop discussion, etc. This is a good background for the class project below.

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Have a class election to form a town council and then have students come up with ideas on some items they have to vote on. Have other students be in favor and against the proposals before the council and how they will be given the opportunity to speak on the proposal. Have one student be the press reporter so he/she can give an objective report on the process that took place. This can take a few classes, but it does get the students really involved. Try and incorporate Roberts Rules of Order into the proceedings (there are condensed versions available). This exercise can take up several classes.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 10**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Why is the local budget important? What are some important items in the local budget?
2. How long does the budget process take? Why does it take so long? Can it be shortened up?
3. A house has a market value of \$300,000 (or any number) what is the assessed value of the house? If the mill rate is 30 mills, how much are the taxes?
4. Are the property taxes in town too high? Why or why not?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Have students ask their parents/guardians if they have ever attended a budget meeting, and if so, on what topic? Did they speak at the meeting?
2. Have students ask their parents/guardians if they think local property taxes are too high. If yes, then what do they think should be cut.
3. Have students think about what car they want to buy, and then calculate the property taxes they have to pay on it. Also, have them calculate the sales tax on it.
4. What months are property taxes collected? (July, January). Have the students find out if this money is then invested since all of it is not needed right away.

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Have students attend a budget meeting-public hearing, town meeting on the local budget and write a report on the type of meeting, number of people, tone of the meeting, and any observations on it. (good assignment in the spring)
- Invite CEO to class and have them speak on importance of the budget and what do they see as the major budgetary item coming up.
- Have some students interview the CEO on the budget and what the CEO wants to get done.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 11**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. List the services that are provided by your municipality.
2. Prioritize these services giving reasons for why they are in the order they are recommended.
3. Discuss the ways these services are paid for and who pays for them.

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Have the class research their municipality's budget (most are on the local community website, or available in the annual town report) and determine where the money is spent.
2. Divide the class into groups and have them research the surrounding community's budgets and compare the dollars allocated for various services among the communities. Look for similarities and differences and why.
3. Have students ask their parents what they think are the most important services the local government provides and why.

#### **Field trips and Other Ideas**

- Invite local officials familiar with the local community budget to class and have them explain the budget, budget process, and the allocation of the budget for various services.
- Have students look at prior year budgets and see where the budget has changed from year to year in the allocation of dollars for specific services. Have them email town officials to ask why things may have changed or haven't changed.
- Have students visit the various town services such as the police department, fire department, public works department, school superintendent and interview the head of the service (Department Head, Director) and ask them their opinion of what town services they provide and report back to the class on their interview.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 12**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What are the public safety services in your community?
2. Are any of the public safety services in your community provided by volunteers?
3. Are there requirements to become a Police Officer?
4. What is the average response time for an ambulance to reach a destination in your community after being called for an emergency?
5. What are the requirements for automobile drivers on the road when they encounter an emergency vehicle responding to an emergency call?
6. What type of emergency response apparatus does the local fire department have?  
Why do they have different types of equipment?
7. Who pays for the equipment provided to the public safety services?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Ask the Police Chief or one of the senior officers to visit the class as a speaker, and have them describe the police departments operations and the types of calls they respond to in your town.
2. Make arrangements for a visit to the local Fire Department and have a firefighter describe the types and purposes of the equipment they have. Discussions about response times are important.
3. Divide the class into three research groups: police, fire, emergency medical services, and have each group pick a spokesperson to describe the group's findings of how the community is served by each service.

#### **Field Trips and Other Ideas**

- Have students interview individuals serving in the police, fire or emergency management departments and report to the class their findings. Questions to be asked might include:
  - a. What was your most dangerous situation encountered,
  - b. What training did you have to accomplish to be selected for your position,
  - c. What hours do you work,
  - d. What do they do on duty when there are no calls.
- Field trips to the Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Departments are always productive.
- Make arrangements to visit the training facilities for police (State Police Academy-Meriden) or for fire (State Fire Academy-Windsor Locks). You can actually have a tour and see police and fire recruits participating in training.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 13**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What event in America led to the passage of the Homeland Security Act by Congress in 2002?
2. What was the name of the federal agency that dealt with emergencies, both natural and man-made, before the Department of Homeland Security was formed?
3. Explain why the State of Connecticut is different from most of the other states.
4. Name the titles of those local government positions that are the first-responders to emergencies.
5. What is the goal of a government's response to emergency, either natural or man-made?
6. Does your city or town have any of the citizen assistance and support groups that help provide support in the field of homeland security?
7. Which of these citizen assistance groups do you think is the most important, and why?
8. What is the name of the State of Connecticut agency that is responsible for emergency management and homeland security? Do you know where this State department is located?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Inquire on how your local police and fire departments cooperate during an emergency.
2. Briefly describe the name of the current national warning system, and provide a brief overview of how it works?
3. Check-out the websites for these citizen assistance groups to see how many have chapters in your state?
4. Find out if your city or town has any mutual aid agreements (police, fire, ambulance) with other neighboring communities? How do they work? Has there been any major situation that involved joint town cooperation?

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Visit your local police and fire department and ask them to review their role in homeland security and how it has changed since 9/11.
- Check your city or town's website to see if it mentions homeland security as a public service.
- Ask your principal to the classroom and ask him/her to review the school's security program (some security items he/she may not be able to discuss with you). Has your city or town ever held a simulated emergency management exercise?

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 14**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What services does your community's public works department provide?
2. Who collects your trash and garbage at home? Is there recycling in your community and how is it accomplished?
3. Does your school recycle? What happens to the recyclables?
4. When you flush the toilet at home or school where does the waste go?
5. The water in your school is safe to drink. Who provides the water? How do we know it is safe to drink? Where does the water come from?
6. How does your town name its roads?
7. How many miles of roads does your community have? What type of surface treatment do the roads have? How many bridges are there in your town?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Break the class down into different groups to undertake research on: roads, bridges and highways; trash; sewage system; water system; have each group select a spokesperson, and have them deliver a report to the class on their findings.
2. Pick a season of the year and have the class discuss what functions of the public works department are seasonal, non seasonal, routine, or unusual.
3. Have the class inventory what equipment a public works may have to have to do its job, and then have the public works director or a member of the senior departmental staff come to class to discuss the equipment inventory as well as the functioning of the department.

#### **Field Trips and Other Ideas**

- Frequently Public Works Departments will, if asked, provide tours of their facilities, including offices, garages, water and sewage treatment plants.
- Local or regional trash plants will also provide tours. The Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority actually has a trash museum in East Hartford, Connecticut.
- Speakers are always interesting. The local director of public works, the sewage or water treatment plant superintendent or the equipment maintenance superintendent all have stories to tell. Ask them to evaluate the condition of the roads and bridges.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 15**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What power does a planning and zoning commission have? Is it short term or long term?
2. Is there an area of town that the students think could be improved? What steps would be involved? Who has to approve of changes?
3. What is the difference between planning power and zoning power?
4. Have a discussion on what impact a new road or highway in town would have on development?
5. Should there be more apartments in town so young people can live on their own? What is needed to have an apartment complex?
6. Is it important that the wetlands in town be protected? Why?
7. Have students discuss their community and describe it in terms of rural, suburban, city, industrial, orientated to water, mixed

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Have students find out if there are sewers in town. If so, how does this affect development?
2. Does the community have town or community water or does everyone have wells? How does this affect development?
3. Have students take photos of some land development in town they like and some they do not like. Have them explain why they favor one or the other. Can anything be done with it?

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Invite the Town Planner/Town Engineer to class to talk about current and future land use development.
- Visit the town planner's office and review the maps and the information in the office.
- Invite an official from a regional planning agency (see Appendix C) and have them talk about regional development and its impact on the students' town.
- Is there a hot topic on land development in the newspapers? Divide the class in half and have each side prepare arguments on either side of the argument. Allow class time for preparation.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 16**

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Discuss the concept of risk management, the management of reducing risks in your community and within your local government.
2. What risks are there present in the community and its local government?
3. What types of programs already exist for reducing risks? Are speed limits a risk reducing measure?? How about the emergency lights of emergency vehicles? How about salt and sand on winter highways? How about the treatment of the water we drink and the waste water we discharge? How about insurance?
4. What is the role of training in reducing risk? What is the role of systematized maintenance in reducing risk?
5. What is the process for identifying and prioritizing risk?

#### **Class assignments**

1. Break the class down into groups and have them research the various types of risk within different types of activities: public safety services, public works services, their school, their home, themselves personally, what risks do they see, how and why would they prioritize them?
2. Identify five risks and have the class develop a risk reduction program around the five risks.
3. What risk reduction techniques are reasonable and which are not. Have the class develop standards for measuring risks (i.e. the number of auto accidents at a particular location – could be obtained from the local police department) and possible remedies and their cost.

#### **Field Trips and Other Ideas**

- Have a local insurance agent that insures the town or city come to speak to the class about municipal risk and how they measure it, and how that measurement is used in determining the cost of the insurance the town or city buys.
- Have a speaker come from the municipality to talk about safety in the workplace. Does the municipality have a safety committee, who is on the committee and why. What type of activities does the safety committee undertake? Have the recommendations been implemented? Have they had a positive effect?

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 17**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. How has GIS used in our society today?
2. What is the difference in GPS vs. GIS
3. How many of the students have used GPS? (cell phone, boating, navigation system in car).
4. How did boats know where they were before GPS?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Prepare a list of how GPS and GIS can be used by municipalities? How was land use planning done before the introduction of GPS?
2. Go on line to Google Earth and plug in local addresses (this is very informative and can be used in many different assignment in class-a good tool).

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Visit the town hall and see how they are using GPS for various municipal functions
- Ask if any student has a hand held GPS and if they could bring it in and show how it works and how important it can be if they go hiking or camping
- Contact the regional planning organization (see Appendix C) and ask them to visit class and show how they use GIS

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 18**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. How does a municipal Health Department provide public health services?
2. What is the difference between municipal health services and health district services?
3. Do you think that municipal Health Directors should be appointed for terms of office, or like other department managers?
4. When a public health department provides courses for the public, what subject are they likely to focus on?
5. Do you agree with the CDC's (Center for Disease Control) ten essential public health services?
6. If not, which ones do you think should be changed and why?
7. Can you describe the human services provided by your city or town government?
8. Do you think a local city or town government should provide any additional health or human services?
9. If so, who would pay for them, or how would they be financed?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Prepare a list of the health or human services provided by your city or town government and who provides them. Is anything missing?
2. Look at your city or town's website. Does it adequately explain its health services?
3. Look at your city or town's website. Does it adequately explain its human services?
4. Check your municipal budget to see how much money is spent on these services. Have a class discussion on the worth of these services. Is there a need to educate the public about these services that they pay for and receive?

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Take a field trip to your municipal or regional health department and have them explain all the services they provide.
- Invite a public health official to class to explain the services provided. Ask if there is any other public health or human services that they would like to provide.
- If they would like more services, ask them how they would be financed – user fees and charges or state grants.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 19**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What is the role of the Town/City Clerk?
2. How is the Town/City Clerk selected? What knowledge, skills, and abilities does the Town/City Clerk need to perform their job?
3. What types of records would you expect to find if you visited your local town or city clerk's office?
4. What technological changes would you expect to find in the Town/City Clerk's office?
5. How does the Town/City Clerk assist in "getting out the vote" during election times?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Have each student access the local land records in the Town/City Clerk's office remotely from home or school computer through the town or city website and locate their home deed.
2. Contact the Municipal Clerk's office and ask where the back-up records of the municipality are kept, and in what format.
3. Ask the municipal clerk or research the Connecticut State laws (available on-line) as to what physical requirements are necessary for the preservation, storage, retrieval and conservation of municipal records.

#### **Field Trips and Other Ideas**

- Arrange a class visit to the municipal clerk's office. Have the clerk explain the special requirements for the vault. Also ask the clerk about electronic storage.
- Have the municipal clerk attend a class and bring copies and explain about some of the types of records that are stored in the clerk's office or vault.
- Have the clerk bring absentee ballot registration forms for the students to bring home to their parents and explain the absentee balloting process.
- Have a dog visit the class if allowed and show the class the dog tag and dog registration form.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 20**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Although students are entitled to a free education, how is it paid for? What level is primarily responsible for K-12 education?
2. Have students identify all the people involved in providing education, and put the list on the board. Be sure they pick up on custodians, maintenance, bus drivers, hall monitors, psychologists, nurses, etc.
3. The local boards of education decide on textbooks, which is not the case in many other states. Should the State of Connecticut adopt textbooks that all students have to use? Why or why not? (A good debate issue)
4. What do student think about the statewide testing they have to take? How could it be improved?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Have students research how much it cost to educate a student in the school. How does this compare with state wide average to educate a student, or compare with other areas, such as a small town or a big city.
2. Is the quality of education among towns equal? If not, what can be done to improve it and equalize it?
3. Find out what DRG your school is in and what other towns are in your DRG. Ask the students if they agree with the assignment of their town in that particular DRG. Why or why not?

NOTE: The school business official can help with these questions and sources of data

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Invite the principal to the class and his him/her talk about how many employees are in your school, where does the money come from, any big upcoming plans for school renovations or improvements, etc.
- Invite the school business manager to class to talk about the business of education

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 21**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Have the students openly discuss the level of technology in the school that they have access to for education. Ask for their opinion on it, and what they would like to see (this could be good feedback for the school's IT department).
2. What changes have the students seen in their own lives in technology in the last 5 years?
3. What hardware would students like to have right in their own classroom?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Research the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) and how it will impact them in the classroom. Have them explain what the network is all about.
2. How could the use of technology change education in the classroom?
3. Has technology improved education in the last 5 years?

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Arrange a visit to the school's IT center and have the staff explain the hardware and software and how it is being used in the school district
- Visit the town hall and have a town official explain how technology is used in town operations, and what they would like to have.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 22**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Do students see the need for other municipal officials?
2. Are there special needs or requirements that municipalities must provide for when they are located in different parts of the state? Connecticut is a diverse state with a variety of climates and sub-climates, topography, hydrology and geology? Identify some of these municipalities and discuss what special requirements might be required.
3. Connecticut is also a diverse state with a variety of races, cultures, and demographics. Are there special municipal needs to service this diversity? Some municipalities house large universities, military bases, resort and entertainment businesses, medical complexes, and agricultural concentrations. There are municipalities with high densities of housing and others with low densities. Identify some of these municipalities and determine what types of special services might be required.

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Break the class down into different groups and assign a specific geographic region of the State of Connecticut to each group and ask them to determine if there might be any special need for additional staffing, or unique officials that may be needed.
2. Pick a diverse group of municipalities by size, location, population, demographic factors such as income, education, race or cultural diversity (the state of Ct. publishes this data through their EDRG – Educational District Reference Group listings – another source is the U.S. Census Bureau) and assign various municipalities to each group to research to determine if there is a need for special staffing or regulatory oversight.
3. Have students “inventory” their community and surrounding communities and compare the number and type of officials to determine why there may be differences and have them report to class.

#### **Field Trips and Other Ideas**

- Have some of the special or unique local officials (i.e. Harbor Master, Animal Control, Veteran's Agent, Housing Code Enforcement Officer) visit the class and describe what they do and why their position exists.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 23**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Put on the board the months for two years (J,A,S,O,N,D,J,F,M,A,M,J, etc) as shown on Figure 23-1, and have students give their opinion of the level of governmental activity by the different months. Plot this on the board.
2. Save this calendar, and then subsequent discussion on when is the best to affect government policy and to try and influence the political leaders.
3. Compare the students' calendar to the Figure 23-1 and have a discussion on the differences.
4. When does the municipal audit start? What period does it cover? Why is there an audit?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Research how big the town budget is, how much is spent for education, and how is the budget adopted. Has the budget ever failed to get adopted? What happened?
2. Research to see if the major town boards hold meetings in the summer. (Have students first identify the major town boards, i.e. Board of selectmen, town council, planning and zoning, board of education, board of finance, etc.)

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Invite the CEO to the class to discuss the calendar that the students have developed and obtain their opinion on it.
- Invite the town finance officer to come to the class to discuss the budget preparation, keeping track of expenditures, and what the auditors look for.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 24**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Are any public utilities provided by the community that you live in?
2. Briefly describe the goals of energy conservation?
3. Which utilities are most commonly provided by a municipal government?
4. Which utilities are most commonly provided by the private sector?
5. When it comes to public utilities, do you think that state government has adequate regulations to protect the public?
6. What public utility is the most essential that we cannot live without?
7. Do you think that cities and towns should Wi-Fi certain parts of your community?
8. If so, which areas of your city or town should provide Wi-Fi services to citizens?
9. Do you think that this is a valuable public service? If so, who should pay to Wi-Fi selected areas of a community?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Prepare a list of whom you could have come to your class to explain about available utilities in your city or town. Is there any single person in your city or town government that could properly explain all available public and private utilities?
2. Research PURA on the web and prepare a list of what they regulate.
3. What do you think is the most important utility that should be conserved to protect the environment?
4. Ask your parents/guardians what are the most expensive utilities in the house. Do they fluctuate from month to month? Why?
5. Divide the class us into teams and see who can come up with the most utilities that are available and who provides them.

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Have the students on their way home prepare a list of all the utilities they see. Are they above ground, below ground or not visible? Have them identify if the utilities are in the road, alongside the road, or other locations. (Hint: Look for man holes and pipe caps in the roads for utilities such as sewers, water, gas, electric)

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 25**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Economic development is a way to raise revenues without increasing taxes. Do you think that most citizens appreciate economic development for this reason?
2. Explain the primary benefits of economic development to the local government (ties back to Chapter 10, Where Does the Money Come From?).
3. Some economic development incentives are service oriented and some are financially oriented. Which ones do you think help attract private sector investment in a community?
4. Do you know what economic development incentives are provided by your community?
5. Outside of revenues, what are the other benefits of economic development to a local government?
6. Does anyone know where the State DECD is located? Visit the DECD website.

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Find out who is in charge of economic development in your community? Is it a dedicated person or is the responsibility vested with the CEO or Town Planner? Discuss where would be the best place to have this responsibility and why.
2. Does your city or town have approved economic development incentive programs? Is there anything on the town website that addresses economic development.
3. Research the use of economic development incentives in your community. Ask the CEO if they were successful.
4. Should the Economic Development Director (if there is one) report to the Chief Executive Officer or the Planning Director, and why?
5. How would you educate the private business sector about your community's economic development incentives?
7. Divide the class into groups and see what incentives each group can come up with to promote economic development. Debate the proposals.
8. Check out your city or town's website. Are the municipal economic development incentives properly explained to the public?

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Go to your city/town hall and talk to your Economic Development Director or person who has this responsibility about the incentives provided by your community to the private sector.
- Invite a representative from the local Chamber of Commerce to class to talk about economic development in town, what is going on, and his/her ideas about improving economic development.
- Do you think your local public officials know the economic development incentives offered to cities and towns by their state government? If not, how would you help educate them?

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 26**

#### **Class Discussions**

1. Why and when did Connecticut eliminate county government?
2. What has replaced county government?
3. Is there more or less access to public officials and citizen participation in local government with Connecticut's current system of local government?
4. Would the efficiencies of eliminating municipalities and concentrating the delivery of services into counties or regional governments reduce participation and access to local government officials?
5. What services currently delivered by your local government do you think could be better delivered by a regional government and why?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Invite the head of your local government to your class and ask them about regional government. Which regional government does your municipality belong to, what services does the regional government provide?
2. Invite your school principle or superintendent to visit and discuss the pros and cons of a regional school district.
3. Break the class down into different groups assigning a functional area of local government (i.e. police, fire, public works, recreation) and have them decide whether some of these functions could be performed on a regional basis and which ones might not and why?

#### **Field Trips and Other Ideas**

- Class visitations by local government officials, the Mayor, Town/City Manager, First Selectman, school Superintendent are all great opportunities to talk about the current structure of local government in Connecticut, the opportunities and problems of regionalization at both the policy level, and the service delivery level.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 27**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Does your City/Town Hall have news coverage provided by a local newspaper? If so, does your local government have a full-time news reporter?
2. Does your local newspaper have their newspaper on a website for the public to read? Do more people use the website and the web for news or read hardcopy?
3. Do your public meetings have a news reporter present to provide press coverage of the meeting?
4. Are all notices of public meetings appropriately posted so citizens know about these meetings? Where are these notices posted?
5. Does your city or town also receive news coverage from local radio or television stations?
6. Do you think that both good and bad news makes the local media, or just the bad news?
7. Did you ever hear of the FOIA before you read this book? Why is it an important agency?
8. What topics can be discussed in an Executive Session? Can a vote be taken in Executive Session?
9. Are you aware of anyone in your community filing a complaint with the FOIC? What was it about?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Find out if your city or town government has a municipal ethics commission. Is there any ethic clause in the town charter or town ordinance? If not, how do you think municipal officials should handle ethics violations in your community?
2. Have you ever read about any possible ethics violations from your local public officials?
3. Does your community provide any ethics training to newly elected or appointed public officials?
4. Check-out your city or town's website to see if any mention is made of their ethics code or expected ethical practices.
5. Do you feel that most types of ethical behavior in local government reflect common sense?
6. Have you ever attended a meeting of your city or town's ethics commission or the State's FOIC?
7. Are you aware of "closed sessions" held by your elected officials on any topics that relate to ethical issues? When was the last one, and what topics did they discuss?

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- What local public official would you have explain your city or town's ethics code to your class?
- Find out the next meeting of your city or town's ethics commission and attend their meeting.
- Invite a member of the press to class to discuss the impact of the FOIC on local government information.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 28**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What are the three big items in labor negotiations that are very important to employees?
2. Pensions are an important benefit package for employees. What is the difference between a defined benefit pension and a defined contribution pension?
3. When you enter your first job, which type of pension would you prefer? Why? Is age a factor in deciding which type of pension benefit is best for the employee? Why?
4. What is Social Security? Why is it important? What age does it start?
5. Do you think it will be in existence when you retire?
6. What is Medicare? Why is it important?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Determine what type of pension plan is offered in your town. Compare this to the teachers' pension plan.
2. What is the advantage to the town in the arrangement for teachers' pensions? (Hint: the State and the teachers pay for the pension plan; it is no cost to the town.)
3. Ask your parent or grandparents what type of pension plan they have? What do they think about the type? What would they like to have? Also ask them if there are in Social Security and what it means to them.
4. Ask your teacher what type of pension plan he/she is in and what do they like and dislike about the plan. (Note: the school business manager can help with this)

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Visit the town hall and find out who handles pension. Ask them what type of plans they offer and are they fully funded.
- Visit the business office of the board of education and ask the same questions, both for teachers and other employees, such as secretaries and custodians. Compare the plans. Break the class down into different groups and have them defend the advantages and disadvantages of the two types of plans.
- Ask your teachers if he/she is in Social Security? What are their thoughts on this?

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 29**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. What political decision-making would qualify to be a “public policy”?
2. Are all major public policies considered, debated, and approved at public meetings?
3. Why would you expect public policy recommendations to be made by your city or town government’s professional staff?
4. Can you name some of the most influential special interest groups in your community?
5. Do you think that citizens should be involved in the public policy setting process?
6. Give some examples of distributive public policies. Regulatory policies. Constituent policies.
7. What two membership municipal organizations represent cities and towns at the State level of government? Do they try and influence public policy?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Select a recent town or city public policy issue in your community and identify who was involved and why they were involved (budget, zoning approval, new school, all day kindergarten, security guards in school, etc.).
2. Do you think that your town or city adequately addresses public policy issues? Select a few and discuss with the class on their opinions.
3. Has any student ever attended a public meeting? What topic? What was the key public policy issue?
4. Pick a major public policy issue and have students debate if the local elected officials represent the citizens.
5. Has a member of any of any special interest groups every knocked on the door to present their viewpoint? How about at a public venue with a table set up to distribute information?
6. Do you think that the local political process is much different than the state’s political process?

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Make arrangements for an elected or appointed official from your city or town government to explain the public policy process in your community? Have them identify who is involved, both overtly and covertly in the background.
- Attend at least one public meeting to gain insight into your local government’s public policy setting process. Students can go together and then make a report on the meeting.

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION**

## **Instructor's Guide**

### **Chapter 30**

#### **Class Discussion**

1. Have the class list the types of jobs that exist in town hall; put the list on the board. Then ask the students what education they would need to have these types of jobs.
2. What are the good paying jobs? Rank highest to lowest. What is the relationship of the job to its education requirements and pay levels?

#### **Class Assignments**

1. Have the students find out all the jobs at town hall and what the titles are.
2. Have the students find out all the different types of jobs there are on the board of education side.
3. Put the lists on the board and compare the job opportunities between the two.
4. See if more students would prefer to work for the town or the board and why.

#### **Field Trips-Other Ideas**

- Have the students write a paper on the job in local government (town or board of education) they would like to have. Have them explain why. Have them write out the educational level that is required for the specific job.
- Invite a career counselor from the board of education or from the college attend class and discuss careers.
- Invite a specific person to talk about their job. Select people based on the interest of the students, i.e. teacher, police officer, first selectman, town manager, finance officer, public works employee, animal control officer, etc.