Who Can Help?

Match a public concern with the officials who can act on it.

9-12.GOV.21 "Identify and be able to engage with key officials, both elected and appointed, in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches at the federal, state, and local levels."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each elected official and circle each appointed official. Write L, S, or F beside each action students could take to reach an official at the local, state, or federal level.

A Safer Crossing

1. After a car nearly hits a student at a busy crossing, classmates want a safer route to school. The elected city council can change local traffic rules and approve city spending. Students can speak at a council meeting and request a marked crosswalk. The city's public works director, an appointed official, can review street design and explain what changes are possible. Students can send that office photos and the time of the near miss. If someone challenges a ticket under a city ordinance, a municipal court may hear the case. A court clerk can explain how to find public court records.

2. Then the students learn that the crossing is on a state highway, so the city cannot make every change alone. Elected state legislators can propose laws and decide state transportation funding; students can write to their own legislator about safer crossings statewide. The state's transportation agency manages state roads, and its director is generally appointed rather than elected. Students can ask the agency how it reviews requests for a signal at this location. If a dispute involves a state traffic law, a state court may hear it. States select judges in different ways; a court clerk can provide filing and public hearing information.

3. The group also learns that federal transportation grants may help states pay for safety projects. An elected U.S. representative can support federal funding laws and contact agencies for constituents, but cannot order a signal installed. Students can write to their representative to describe the crossing and ask about grant programs. The U.S. transportation secretary, appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate, oversees a federal department that administers transportation programs. Federal district judges, also appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate, decide cases under federal law. They do not take private requests to settle ordinary street design debates.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which local elected officials could approve city spending for the crossing, and how could students address them?

2. Because the crossing is on a state highway, which appointed state official's agency should students contact, and what should they ask?

3. Which elected federal official could students contact about transportation grants, and what could they ask?

4. If a dispute involves a state traffic law, which branch at the state level might hear it? Which court official could provide public hearing information?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A city-owned library has a broken entrance ramp. In 4 to 5 sentences, propose a plan involving one elected official, one appointed official, and a judicial-branch contact. Identify each one's government level and a suitable way to reach them; use the court contact only for case information, not to request a private decision.

ANSWER KEY

Who Can Help?

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.GOV.21

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each elected official and circle each appointed official. Write L, S, or F beside each action students could take to reach an official at the local, state, or federal level. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which local elected officials could approve city spending for the crossing, and how could students address them?	**City council members could approve city spending. Students could speak at a council meeting and request a marked crosswalk.**
2	Because the crossing is on a state highway, which appointed state official's agency should students contact, and what should they ask?	**They should contact the state transportation agency, led by its generally appointed director, and ask how it reviews requests for a signal.**
3	Which elected federal official could students contact about transportation grants, and what could they ask?	**They could write to their U.S. representative, describe the crossing, and ask about grant programs.**
4	If a dispute involves a state traffic law, which branch at the state level might hear it? Which court official could provide public hearing information?	**The state judicial branch, through a state court, might hear the dispute. A court clerk could provide public hearing information.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would speak at a city council meeting and ask council members, elected local officials, to fund the ramp repair. I would email the appointed city facilities director to report the broken ramp and ask when repairs can begin. If a lawsuit arises, I would ask a state court clerk in the judicial branch how to find public filing instructions. I would not ask a judge to decide the case in private.

Accept other appropriate officials if the student correctly identifies their level, elected or appointed status, and a suitable way to contact them. The judicial contact should help with public case information, not receive a private request to decide an issue.