



MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

JANUARY 20 – 26, 2020

TOOL KIT FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

As the level of government closest to the citizens, municipal government provides services and programs that enhance the quality of life for residents, making their town their home. It is this premise that prompted MML to launch a statewide campaign designed to increase public awareness of the value of local government and to encourage citizen involvement.

Mississippi Municipal Government Week will be held January 20 – 26, 2020, as a part of the League's long-term effort to increase public support for and involvement in municipal government, as well as provide a means to raise awareness of the wide range of services provided by municipalities.

MML has created this "tool kit" containing resources that can be used to supplement the week's activities in each individual city and town across the state. In this tool kit, which can also be downloaded electronically from the MML website at www.mmlonline.com, officials will find a resolution template, press release template, letter to the editor template, talking points for presentations that can be made to various groups, and ideas for activities that can be implemented to involve students in the celebration.

The Mississippi Municipal League is asking each municipality to use the resolution template provided in this tool kit to pass a resolution at your next board meeting declaring the week of January 20 – 26, 2020, as Municipal Government Week.

For any questions or additional information, contact the Mississippi Municipal League office at 601-353-5854.



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Resolution Template

Mississippi Municipal Government Week

A RESOLUTION OF THE <<CITY/TOWN>> OF <<INSERT CITY OR TOWN NAME>> RECOGNIZING MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WEEK, JANUARY 20 – 26, 2020, AND ENCOURAGING ALL CITIZENS TO SUPPORT THE CELEBRATION AND CORRESPONDING ACTIVITIES.

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

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

WHEREAS, municipal government provides services and programs that enhance the quality of life for residents, making their town their home; and

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

WHEREAS, Mississippi Municipal Government Week is a very important time to recognize the important role played by municipal government in our lives; and

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

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Municipal League and its member municipalities have joined together to teach students and other citizens about municipal government through a variety of different projects and information.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE <<CITY/TOWN>> OF <<INSERT CITY OR TOWN NAME>> JOINS WITH THE MISSISSIPPI MUNICIPAL LEAGUE AND MUNICIPALITIES ACROSS THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI IN DECLARING JANUARY 20 – 26, 2020, MISSISSIPPI MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WEEK.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE <<CITY/TOWN>> OF <<INSERT CITY OR TOWN NAME>>

DATE:



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Press Release Template

News

(INSERT MUNICIPAL LOGO)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Or date)

CONTACT: (name, phone, email)

(NAME OF CITY, TOWN OR VILLAGE) CELEBRATES MISSISSIPPI MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

The (City, Town or Village of _____) is proud to join the Mississippi Municipal League and its 291 member municipalities across the State of Mississippi in celebration of Municipal Government Week, January 20 – 26, 2020.

Municipal government is the level of government closest to most citizens, and the one with the most direct daily impact upon its residents. During Mississippi's Municipal Government Week, municipalities from across the state will participate in activities to showcase and celebrate cities and towns and the many services they provide.

"We are very excited about the upcoming event(s)," said (Mayor/City Manager _____). "This week gives municipal officials a chance to connect with the community (or youth, local residents, whomever) and celebrate the many services that the (city, town or village) provides."

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

Municipal Government Week is sponsored by the Mississippi Municipal League (MML), the official non-profit private organization of cities and towns of Mississippi. The mission of the MML is helping cities and towns excel through training, lobbying at the state and federal level, and providing resources and networking opportunities with state, federal and private entities. For more information about the Mississippi Municipal League, visit www.mmlonline.com.

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Note: Feel free to include specific information about your city. Press releases are more effective when limited to one page. 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.



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TOOL KIT FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

Letter to the Editor Template

Dear Editor:

The **City/Town/Village** of _____ is proud to join the Mississippi Municipal League and its 291 member municipalities across the State of Mississippi in celebration of Municipal Government Week, January 20 – 26, 2020.

City government is, without question, the government closest to the people. At a time when people nationwide seem to have less faith in their government, we in municipal government want to be sure the people here at home are aware of the critical services we provide.

Over 50% of Mississippi citizens live in a city, town, or village. In addition, thousands more rely on cities for places of employment, professional services and retail trade centers. These citizens look to us to provide important services such as police and fire protection, garbage pick-up, street and sidewalk maintenance, water and sewer service, parks and recreational services, and much more.

It is a constant challenge for **(name of city, town or village)** to provide such services within our budget and in the face of requirements imposed on us by other levels of government. During the current legislative session, the **(city, town, village of ____)** will join municipalities across the state in asking the Mississippi Legislature to refrain from passing any laws that preempt local authority. Locally elected officials, in both large and small towns, are best positioned to identify the needs and desires of their own citizens. Furthermore, the members of the Mississippi Municipal League will strongly oppose any legislation that creates an unfunded mandate on cities and towns. Unfunded mandates are effectively tax increases handed down by the legislature on local citizens and property owners. They may be unintentional when a bill is originally passed, but often they end up forcing counties or cities to raise taxes to finance the policy. The **(city, town, village, of ____)** will join the MML in fighting local preemptions and unfunded mandates to protect our current municipal revenue streams and keep local property taxes level.

Even in challenging times, I believe that our officials and employees are doing a great job in meeting the needs of our citizens. I am proud of our **(city's, town's, or village's)** record and look forward to the opportunity to showcase our services during Municipal Government Week. For a list of activities planned, please visit our website at **(_____)**, like our official Facebook page or call my office at **(000) 000-0000**.

Sincerely,

(Title)(Name)



MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

TOOL KIT FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

Talking Points for Mayors Civic Club, Chamber, or Citizen Presentations

- Mississippi Municipal Government Week is a special week set aside to emphasize to citizens and business leaders the important services that are provided by cities, towns, and villages across the State.
- There are 298 municipalities in Mississippi. Over 50% of the citizens in our state live in a municipality.
- 95% of cities and towns in Mississippi operate under the Code Charter form of government or the Mayor/Board of Aldermen form.
- Mississippi is a state of small towns; 85% of cities and towns in Mississippi have less than 10,000 citizens; 54% of cities and towns in Mississippi have less than 1,500 citizens. Here in the (town of/city of), we have ____ citizens and operate in the (form of government).
- Municipal government is the “government closest to the people.” Your local elected officials and municipal employees work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to provide important services to citizens such as water and sewage systems, fire and rescue services, police protection, beautification of parks, access to public libraries, and more.
- The services provided by cities, towns and villages are essential services that citizens can’t do without. These are typically not the kinds of services included in the popular call by some for “less government”.
- We live where we lead; we see you at city hall, but we also interact with you at church, the grocery store, sporting events, and many other activities that are part of everyday life in our town. We know what services are important to you and how we can improve how we operate in order to increase your quality of life.



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TOOL KIT FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

Talking Points Continued

- City officials are elected by their citizens, and therefore, are best positioned to identify the needs and desires of their own citizens.
- We support home rule! In 1985, the legislature granted municipalities in the state a limited home rule. Mississippi's home rule statute is a form of authority which allows a municipality to regulate its own affairs and to adopt orders, resolutions and ordinances necessary to do so. Home rule has increased municipal power by providing that municipalities can adopt any ordinances that they desire regarding municipal affairs for their city, as long as they do not conflict with state or federal law.
- It is important to keep this authority at the local level, which is why our town will join municipalities across the state in asking the Mississippi Legislature to refrain from passing any laws that preempt local authority.
- An unfunded mandate occurs when legislation is passed which requires another entity to perform certain actions without providing any funding to ensure the fulfillment of those requirements.
- With the constant challenges that municipalities face in providing services to citizens within the scope of their budgets, unfunded mandates are effectively tax increases handed down by the legislature on local citizens and property owners. They may be unintentional when a bill is originally passed, but often they end up forcing counties or cities to raise taxes to finance the policy.
- A key legislative priority identified by the Mississippi Municipal League will be to strongly oppose any legislation that creates an unfunded mandate on cities and towns.
- By joining the MML in opposition of local preemptions and unfunded mandates, your city officials are working hard to protect current municipal revenue streams and keep local property taxes level.



MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

TOOL KIT FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

Talking Points for Speaking to Elementary Students

What Is a City? A city is a place where you live, work, go to school and play. Some cities are also called towns or villages. Cities are communities that may be made up of several neighborhoods. A city is a municipal government created by the citizens through legislative special act, and established by vote of the citizens, through adoption of a charter. A city government provides services to its citizens and sets up rules that allow us to have a beautiful, safe and healthy place to live. The central building from which these services are offered and rules are made is called city hall. The people working at city hall provide us with many services like clean water, garbage collection, playgrounds, streets, lights, and police and fire protection. More than half of Mississippi's population lives in a city.

Who Runs City Hall? Every city is governed or run by a group of people who make and change laws. These people run the city because the people in the city voted in an election to let them do so. The people elected to run the city are usually called mayor, councilmember or commissioner. Most councils have five or seven members. The people adopt a charter, which is like a constitution, and in it the people decide how they will govern themselves. They meet as a council during the month to take care of city business. Anyone can attend these meetings. The meetings are usually held in city hall. How a city runs depends on what form or type of government is in place. The form of government is stated in each city's charter.

City Departments There are many departments that make up a city government. These departments are necessary to operate the city and to provide services to its citizens. Not all cities provide the same services or have the same departments. The services, and ultimately the structure of the city government, are decided upon primarily by the residents of the city. Some of the most common city departments are:

- ◆ Utilities - provides water and wastewater treatment (a few city departments provide other utilities like electricity and natural gas to homes and businesses).
 - ◆ Public Works - provides for garbage pickup, traffic lights, streets and road maintenance, and city building maintenance.
 - ◆ Planning - implements plans for the future growth and development of the city.
 - ◆ Finance - prepares payments for running the city, invests city revenues and handles the budget.
 - ◆ Parks and Recreation - provides recreational programs and activities for residents, such as sports, arts and crafts, and special events; staff also maintain city facilities, parks and playgrounds.
 - ◆ Police - makes sure that all laws are obeyed; keeps citizens safe and protects their property. Many police departments have programs/staff in schools to help students.
 - ◆ Fire - provides fire protection to the community; also has fire prevention programs to make people aware of fire hazards and teach what to do in a fire emergency.
- Other city departments might include: library, building inspection, engineering, technology services, code enforcement, and animal control.



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Activities to Involve Elementary Students in the Celebration of Municipal Government Week

- Host a city or town hall open house and set up information tables for each department that is represented. Designate one table to be a “Coloring Station” where children can draw pictures of their favorite city service, the front of their city hall, or what they would do if they were mayor for a day.
- Schedule “Milk and Cookies with the Mayor” at a local school or city hall where students can sit down with the mayor while enjoying a snack and learning basic information about their city and its services. Feel free to use the enclosed “Talking Points for Elementary Students.”
- Hold a “Touch-A-Truck” event where city service vehicles can be displayed and allow children to climb inside or view exciting features such as lights, sirens, radios, loud-speakers, etc.
- Visit local schools for short presentations on what makes your city special. Bring coloring booklet and/or word search included in this tool kit for students to complete.
- Coordinate a story hour at the library. Invite youth to attend and have a special guest reader, like a firefighter, city manager, councilmember or even the mayor.



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Talking Points for Speaking to High School Students

- What is a municipal government?
 - Different forms of government
 - Mayor - Council
 - Council - Manager
 - Commission

- Explain the job function of the different positions in government.
 - Mayor
 - Council
 - Clerks
 - Department Heads

- How does municipal government directly affect students?
 - What services does the municipality provide to schools and citizens?

- Compare the municipal body to the student council.
 - What are common characteristics of the student council compared to the municipal council / body?
 - Campaigning
 - Voting
 - Listening to the needs of the citizens / student body

- The importance of voting.
 - Why should we vote?
 - How does voting promote change?

- The importance of diversity within cities and towns.
 - Importance of parks and recreation.
 - Importance of providing different forms of transit.
 - Importance of accommodating to different cultural needs.



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Activities to Involve High School Students in the Celebration of Municipal Government Week

- Allow the members of the student council job to job-shadow city employees.
- Schedule a scavenger hunt around town where students have to take “selfies” with specific city buildings or examples of municipal services in action.
- Hold an essay competition using one of the following prompts:
 - Describe the cities of the future.
 - How would you make your municipality better for the future generations?
 - Why do you want to become a municipal official?
 - Or get creative and use a prompt unique to your city!



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**COLORING +
ACTIVITY BOOK
FOR ELEMENTARY
STUDENTS**

**THE NAME OF MY
CITY IS _____.**

**MY CITY IS _____ YEARS
OLD.**

**THE POPULATION OF OUR
CITY IS _____.**

DRAW A WELCOME SIGN FOR YOUR CITY



A word cloud of Mississippi cities and towns. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with Jackson being the largest and most central word. Other prominent words include Gulfport, Hattiesburg, Meridian, and Natchez. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with many smaller words filling the gaps between the larger ones.

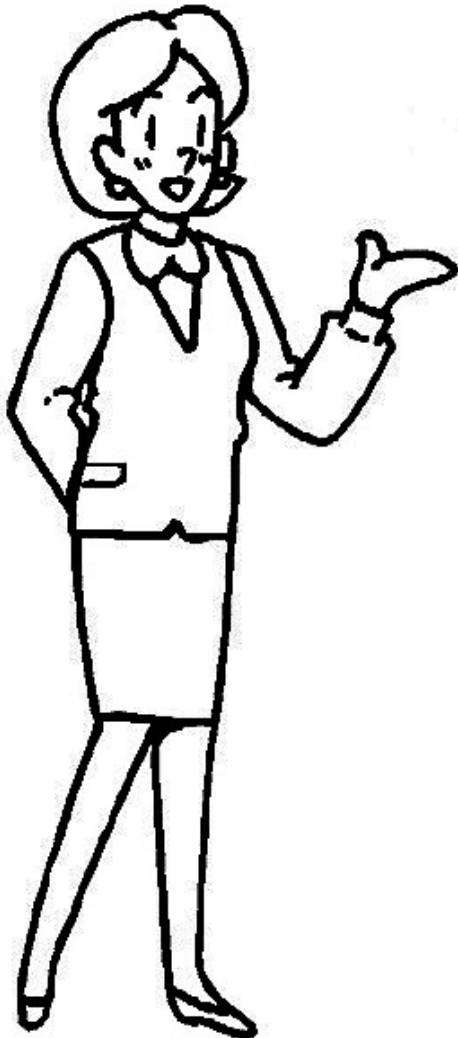
WHO IS IN CHARGE OF OUR CITY?

EVERY CITY IS GOVERNED OR RUN BY A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO MAKE AND CHANGE LAWS. THESE PEOPLE RUN THE CITY BECAUSE THE PEOPLE IN THE CITY VOTED IN AN ELECTION TO LET THEM DO SO.

THE PEOPLE ELECTED TO RUN THE CITY ARE USUALLY CALLED MAYOR, COUNCILMEMBER OR COMMISSIONER.

MY MAYOR'S NAME IS

_____.



WHAT SERVICES DOES YOUR CITY PROVIDE?



☐ Garbage collection



☐ Fire protection



☐ Clean water from your faucet



☐ Law enforcement



☐ Elections



☐ Streets and traffic control



☐ Parks and open spaces



☐ Library resources



☐ Emergency medical care



☐ Jails

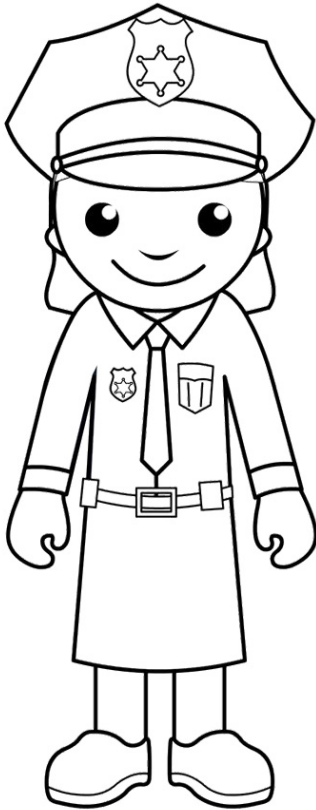


☐ Places to play sports



☐ Public health services

PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR THE CITY HAVE IMPORTANT JOBS!



**POLICE
OFFICERS
KEEP OUR
CITIES SAFE
BY SOLVING
CRIMES AND
MAKING SURE
PEOPLE ARE
FOLLOWING
THE LAWS.**



**OUR CITY'S
WATER
DEPARTMENT
MAKES SURE
EVERYONE
HAS CLEAN
WATER TO
DRINK AND
PLAY IN.**



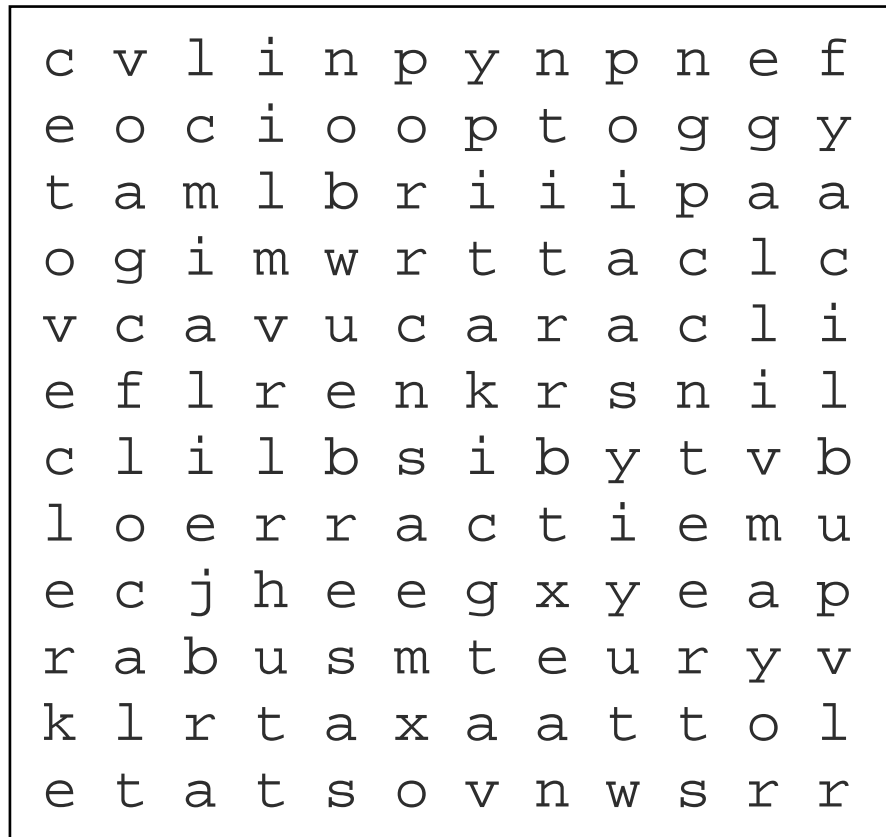
**FIRE
FIGHTERS
FACE SCARY
SITUATIONS
TO SAVE
LIVES AND
BUILDINGS
WHEN THERE
IS A FIRE.**

**CITIES MAKE SURE
WE HAVE FUN AND
CLEAN PARKS TO
PLAY IN!**



MY HOMETOWN WORD SEARCH

How many words about municipal government can you find in the puzzle below?



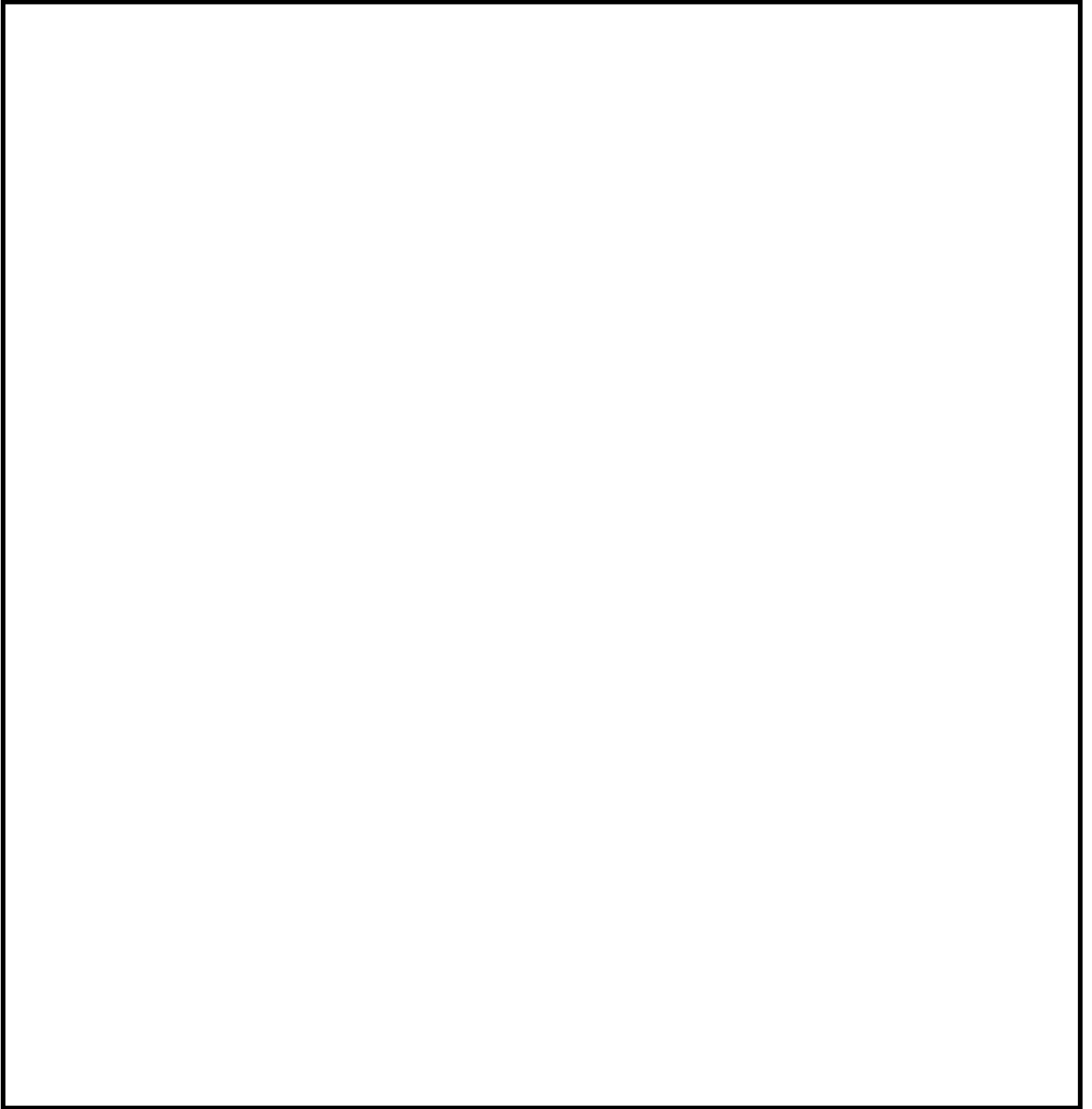
Word Bank

bus
city
clerk
community
election
fireman
garbage

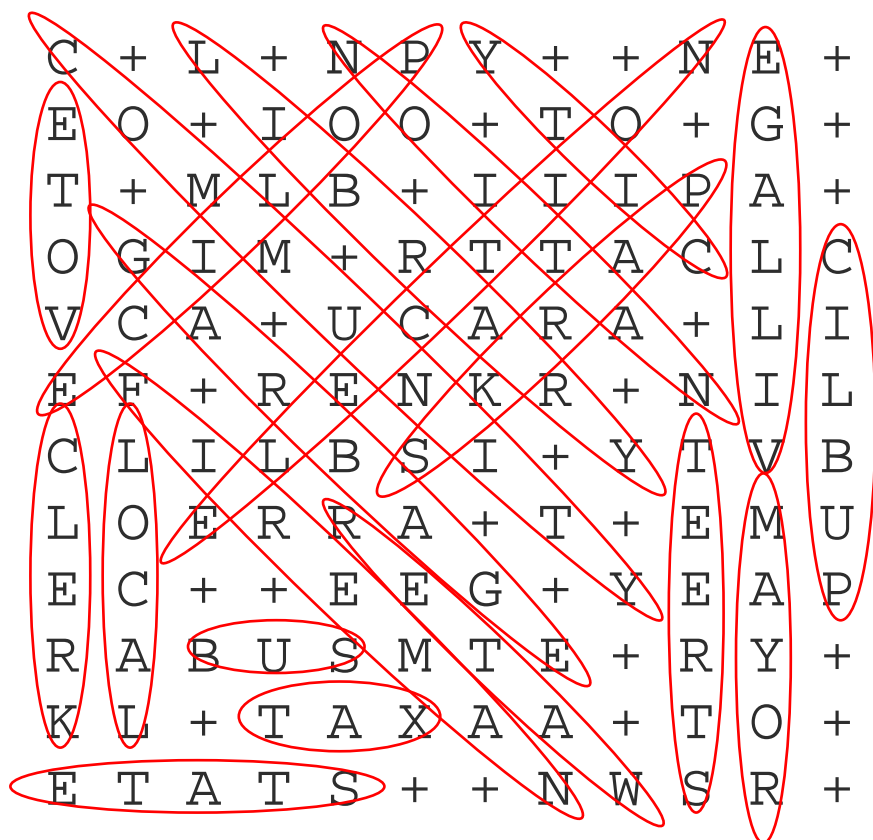
library
local
mayor
nation
parks
police
public

state
street
tax
village
vote
water

**DRAW YOUR
FAVORITE PART OF
YOUR CITY!**



WORD SEARCH SOLUTION



(OVER, DOWN, DIRECTION)

BUS (3,10,E)
CITY (10,4,NW)
CLERK (1,7,S)
COMMUNITY (1,1,SE)
ELECTION (3,8,NE)
FIREMAN (2,6,SE)
GARBAGE (2,4,SE)
LIBRARY (3,1,SE)
LOCAL (2,7,S)
MAYOR (11,8,S)

NATION (10,6,NW)
PARKS (10,3,SW)
POLICE (6,1,SW)
PUBLIC (12,9,N)
STATE (5,12,W)
STREET (10,12,N)
TAX (4,11,E)
VILLAGE (11,7,N)
VOTE (1,5,N)
WATER (9,12,NW)