

Community Issues

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

In recent years the responsibilities of state and local governments have increased dramatically because of such issues as rising crime rates, homelessness, and environmental pollution. Contact the offices of your local government to find out what is being done to solve local problems and how volunteers can help. Find out when the town board or city council meets.

Working in Your Community

After you have obtained the information, interview people in the neighborhood to find out what they think should be done about various problems the community faces. Tell them about the town board or city council meetings, and encourage them to attend or to become involved in community activities. ■

Your Civics Journal

As you study this chapter, keep a list of issues you consider to be very important to your community. Perhaps your school is overcrowded, or the air is becoming more polluted. Next to your list of issues, write ideas of what you think should be done about each issue.





Dealing With Community Issues

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

public policy, infrastructure, priorities, resources, master plan, zoning board, bond

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss factors involved in **making public policy**.
- Identify several issues communities must consider when **planning for the future**.
- Identify some of the **difficult questions** communities face as they plan for the future.
- Identify five ways of **financing public policy**.

Schools, businesses, and other organizations usually have policies, or rules, that guide their actions. These policies allow decisions to be made consistently. Most businesses, for example, have policies about hiring, promoting, and firing employees.

Federal, state, and local governments also make policies. A policy a government makes is called a **public policy** because it affects all members of the public. A public policy is not a law. In many cases it is not even written down. In-

stead, a public policy is a general agreement among government leaders about how they intend to deal with certain issues or problems.

Making Public Policy

The ideas for policies, like those for laws, come from many different sources. They may originate with members of the legislative, executive, or judicial branches. Party leaders or interest groups may propose them. Members of the media, such as newspaper journalists and television commentators, may even suggest them.

One other important source of policy ideas, especially at the local level, is private citizens. Often, just one person can have a great effect on the policies of local government. In Oakland, California, for example, a man named Robert Patten believed that the beauty of a scenic road near his home should be preserved. When a storage company began building a large, unattractive warehouse near the road, Patten acted immediately. He gath-

Citizen Action Citizens may take part in a demonstration on public issues. *Where do ideas for public policy originate?*



EPA Inspector

The Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, is the federal agency responsible for protecting the environment. It employs thousands of inspectors to oversee the enforcement of pollution control laws and regulations.

Activities and Responsibilities

EPA inspectors work throughout the United States, inspecting air, water, and soil for evidence of pollution. Their work may involve travel and hazardous conditions. Investigating the cause and extent of pollution requires EPA inspectors to visit places where pollution might occur and test for pollutants and collect samples for analysis. Inspectors might visit industrial plants and test nearby water supplies to make sure the water quality meets

government standards. They monitor the air quality of major cities and in the vicinity of large factories. They also inspect dump sites and surrounding areas for toxic wastes or other hazardous materials. After completing their investigation, EPA inspectors compile reports of their findings and initiate action to stop further pollution.

Education and Training

EPA inspectors learn about pollution and its causes, environmental regulations,



EPA inspector

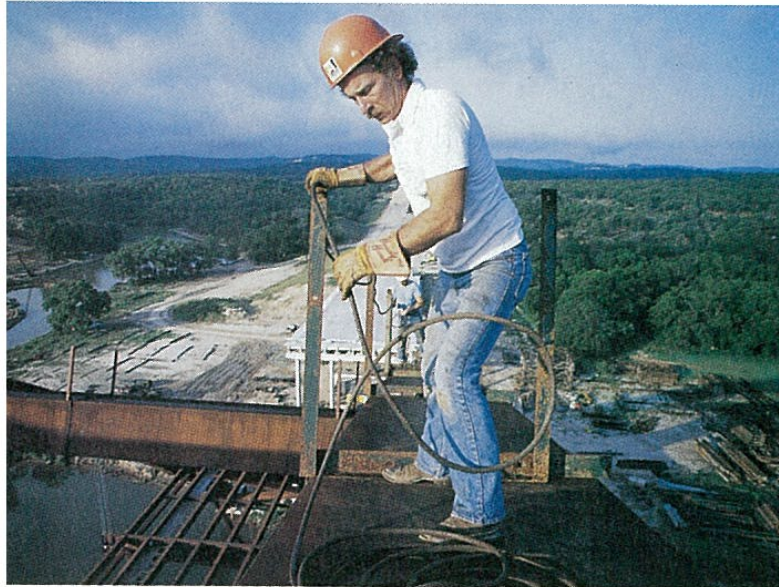
and proper inspection procedures through a combination of education and on-the-job training. EPA inspectors generally have a college education with a specialization in environmental or biological science, plus several years of experience in the field. As with most government jobs, EPA applicants must pass a civil service examination.



Use library resources or Internet sources to find information on current job opportunities with the EPA. Use the information to create a help-wanted brochure for the agency.

ered his neighbors' signatures on a petition and complained to the city government. As a result the city convinced the storage company to make some changes in the building's design. The city also changed its policy about what kinds of buildings would be allowed near the road.

Changing a public policy is not always easy, however. It may take months or even years. During that time disagreements about what the public policy should be or how a policy should be changed may arise. Like congressional committees, local governments often do research and hold public hearings before



Improving the Infrastructure Governments build roads and bridges to make transportation easier. *What is an infrastructure?*

making policy decisions. The policy that results is often a compromise that reflects many points of view.

Planning for the Future

Making policies to solve current problems is not always effective. The most useful public policies are usually those that try to prevent problems before they occur. This requires looking at what is likely to happen in the future and planning for it now. A growing number of local governments are setting up planning commissions to do this kind of work. A planning commission is an advisory board whose members may include government leaders, businesspeople, local residents, and architects.

Short-term Plans

Local governments and their planning commissions make both short-term and long-term plans. A short-term plan is a policy designed to be carried out over

the next few years. For example, Oakland's decision to protect the scenic road near Robert Patten's home is a short-term plan. In the future the Oakland planning commission may change its mind.

Long-term Plans

A long-term plan is a broader, less detailed policy than a short-term plan. It is designed to be followed over 10, 20, or even 50 years. To make long-term plans, a planning commission must make educated guesses about a community's future needs. For example, it might try to determine future transportation, education, and recreation needs by looking at recent population and economic patterns.

Difficult Questions

Planning for a community always involves searching for answers to a number of difficult questions. Take, for example, a small town whose local computer software company suddenly becomes successful. As the company expands, it builds several new buildings. Attracted by the growing economy, other businesses move into the town. People flock to the town to work for these companies.

A situation like this raises a number of questions for a local government. For example, will increased traffic cause problems on local roads and highways? Should the town build new roads to accommodate more vehicles, or should it encourage the development of public transportation? What other demands will the growing population place on the town's **infrastructure**—its system of roads, bridges, water, and sewers? If the infrastructure needs to be expanded, how will the town pay for the work?

Evaluating Priorities and Resources

Hundreds of local governments and planning commissions around the country face questions like these every year. The answers to such questions usually depend on two things—priorities and resources. **Priorities** are the goals a community considers most important or most urgent. In setting priorities, a community must first decide what it values most. For example, is it more important to have commercial success or a peaceful place to live? While assessing its values, a community must also determine its more specific goals and rank them in order of importance. For example, a community may decide that its most important goal is to attract business. Following that may be goals of improving community services, preserving open spaces, upgrading the school system, and so on.

Once a community has set its priorities, it must look closely at its **resources**.

These are the materials, people, and money available to carry out the community's goals. Suppose, for example, that a community has decided to improve its public transportation system. Is there enough money to build and maintain a new trolley system, or would an expanded bus system be more affordable? Which system will attract the most riders and earn the most revenue? To plan effectively, a community must consider how much money and what other resources are available.

Creating a Master Plan

After setting priorities and evaluating resources, a planning commission makes practical decisions about the community's future. It usually expresses these decisions in a document called a **master plan**, which states a set of goals and explains how the local government will respond to the changing needs of its citizens over time.

Priorities and Resources Local governments may set aside land and funds to create parks. *Why do you think communities want parks?*



A planning commission normally submits its master plan to the local government, which then decides whether to accept and enforce it. If the master plan is accepted, the local government is responsible for carrying it out. The legislative branch must approve funds for any projects outlined in the plan. The executive branch makes rules and regulations to enforce the plan. In many communities an important commission called a **zoning board** decides where houses, stores, factories, and offices may be built. For example, the zoning board may set up a residential zone in which no businesses are allowed.

Communities often have a housing board, which makes sure that the community has safe, affordable housing. Often, a recreation department will set aside land for parks and athletic fields. If a public transportation system is part of the master plan, a special commission is usually set up to build or improve it.

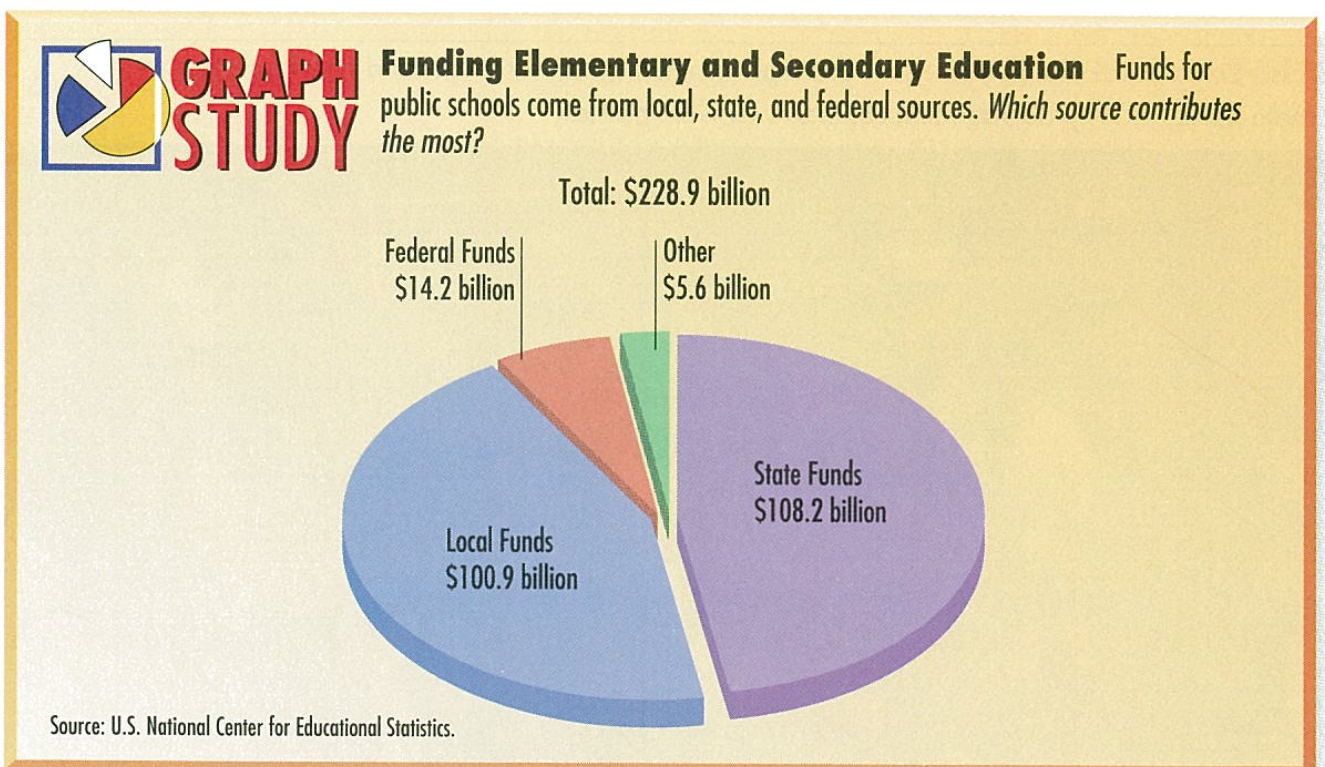
Financing Public Policy

No local government can carry out any of its plans without first deciding how it is going to pay for them. Taxes are the most common source of revenue for local governments.

Different Kinds of Taxes

Nearly every local government imposes a tax on property—the land and buildings—within its borders. Some places also impose a property tax on items such as boats or cars. The advantage of a property tax is that it is a steady source of revenue. The main disadvantage is that a property tax is difficult to apply fairly. No mathematical formula can determine how much a piece of property is worth. Tax assessors can only make estimates.

An increasingly popular source of local revenue is the sales tax. With a sales tax, people pay a fixed percentage of the





Public Transit Washington's subway system is one of the newest in the country. *Are subway fares considered taxes or user fees?*

purchase price—usually 5 to 8 percent—in addition to the purchase price. The advantage of a sales tax is that it is easy to collect. The major disadvantage of a sales tax is that it puts an unfair burden on low-income families.

An income tax, the chief source of revenue for the federal government and for many states, also appears at the local level. Many large cities have income taxes. The primary advantage of an income tax is that the burden falls most heavily on those who can most afford to pay. The main disadvantage is that it is more difficult and costly to enforce.

Businesses pay most of these kinds of taxes and a variety of other taxes. For example, many communities require certain businesses to have a license to operate. To receive its license, a business must pay a fee to the government.

Other Sources of Income

One common source of revenue is user fees. These include tolls charged on roads and bridges and fares for public

transportation. User fees are often considered a fair way to raise money because they require only those who use government services to pay for them. Like sales taxes, however, user fees fall hardest on low-income people.

Many local governments find that they must borrow money to pay for the services they provide. They may borrow money from banks, but more often they borrow money from the public by issuing bonds. A **bond** is an IOU or promissory note from the government. For example, if you pay \$100 for a bond, the government promises to pay the \$100 back—with interest—by a certain date. Issuing bonds is an easy way for a local government to raise money quickly. The drawback, however, is that the government must eventually pay back not only the amount of the bond but also interest.

★ SECTION 1 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define public policy, infrastructure, priorities, resources, master plan, zoning board, bond.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What are some of the factors involved in making public policy?
- 2 What are several issues communities must consider when planning for the future?
- 3 What are some of the difficult questions communities face as they plan for the future?
- 4 What are five ways of financing public policy?



Social Issues

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

urban renewal, voluntarism

OBJECTIVES

- Identify two problems associated with the public **education** system.
- Identify two ways in which communities have tried to solve **housing** problems.
- Identify two ways in which communities are trying to solve the problem of **crime**.
- Discuss the **outlook for the future** regarding the efforts of communities to solve their problems.

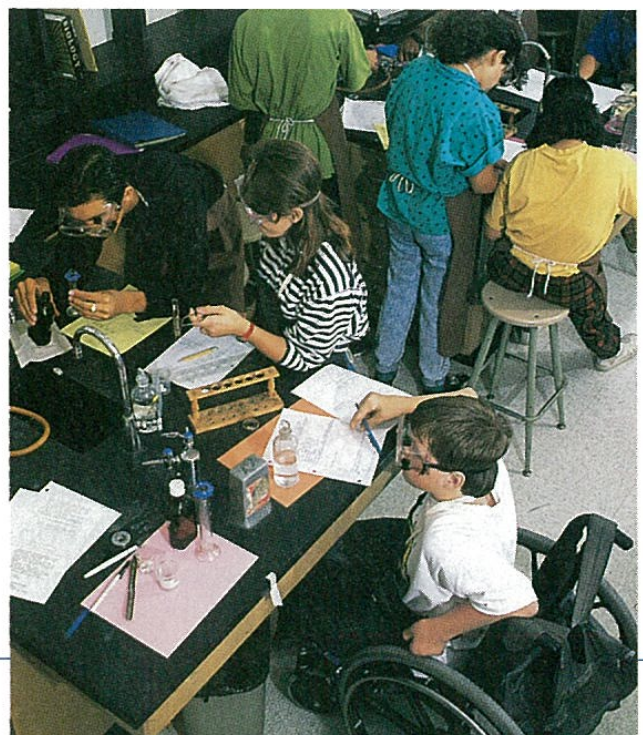
Cities are often portrayed as dirty, noisy, crowded, and dangerous places. The areas outside cities are portrayed as quiet, orderly, and clean. Such distinctions are becoming a thing of the past. As the populations of cities have spilled over into surrounding areas, urban troubles have followed. Changes in family structure, movement between different regions, and changes in the makeup of American society have also brought new challenges to many areas in the nation. People everywhere must now deal with issues such as crime, inadequate housing, and declining standards of education.

Education

In 1991 more than \$228 billion was spent on public education in United States elementary and secondary schools. Local governments supplied about 45 percent; the rest came from federal and state funds. Of all the services local governments provide, education is the most expensive.

Despite the money being spent, many Americans have become increasingly unhappy with the public education system. Students often feel that the subjects they study in school have little to do with their lives. Teachers, faced with students who seem uninterested in learning, are frustrated with their jobs and work for a salary that is low compared to salaries for many other jobs. Parents complain that their children are not learning basic skills and are not being taught values and ideas from their own cultural traditions. In addition, problems

Magnet School By focusing on special subjects in magnet schools, educators hope to improve public education. *Which level of government has the primary responsibility for education?*



American Profiles

Christine Todd Whitman

In 1994 Christine Todd Whitman became the fiftieth governor of New Jersey. Christie Whitman, as she is known, is the first woman ever elected to that office.

Political Background

Whitman's family was influential in the Republican party. After college she became active in Republican politics, and she later held a number of Republican staff jobs. In 1990 she ran for the United States Senate in New Jersey and almost upset Senator Bill Bradley.

In her campaign for governor, Whitman pledged to reduce

taxes, cut government spending, and make New Jersey's government smaller and more responsive to the people. As governor, she is working hard to keep her promises. She is already well on her way to cutting state income taxes. Conservative on financial issues, she is more moderate on social issues.

The Future

Whitman's victory and success so far have made her a rising star in the Republican party—perhaps even a future vice-presidential candidate. For Whitman, her priority now is New Jersey and the welfare of its citizens.



PROFILE REVIEW

- 1 What are some of her positions on political issues?
- 2 Why is Whitman a rising star in the Republican party?

such as high dropout rates, drug abuse, and crime plague many schools.

Some problems have worsened as families move from the cities to the suburbs. Rapidly expanding suburban communities are unable to build schools or hire teachers fast enough to handle the growing number of students. Back in the cities, lower-income families cannot af-

ford to maintain their school buildings or pay their teachers adequately.

Local governments have begun to tackle these problems in a variety of ways. To improve the quality of education, for example, some areas have begun experimenting with "magnet schools," which allow students to focus on particular fields, such as science or the arts.



Urban Renewal Community volunteers help fix up houses in need of repair.
What other steps are being taken to help homeless people?

Magnet schools bring together students from rich and poor communities, and they are supported by everyone in the area. By allowing students to concentrate on what they do best, magnet schools encourage students to work harder.

Another idea for improving education is to give parents publicly financed vouchers to help pay the cost of sending children to private schools. This “school choice” plan is being tried in a number of places around the nation. (See page 473.) Still another idea is to let private companies run public school districts. Supporters of this idea argue that it would improve education by making schools more competitive.

Housing

A critical issue in many communities is adequate, affordable housing. In many communities and city neighborhoods, rising real estate values have forced out lower-income families. Many move to less desirable areas, but some cannot find

any affordable housing at all. These people may join the growing number of homeless individuals and families who roam the nation’s streets.

Another aspect of the housing problem involves the decline of certain neighborhoods into slums. Many buildings in these areas are run-down and dangerous, and they often lack hot water and heat.

Urban Renewal

Cities have approached the housing problem in different ways. Some cities have tried to eliminate slums through urban renewal projects. **Urban renewal** means rebuilding old neighborhoods, often by tearing down old buildings and replacing them with new ones. In recent years the trend in urban renewal has been to convert old buildings into fashionable shops and living spaces. In many cities young, well-to-do professional people are buying slum buildings and turning them into attractive residences. While urban renewal may improve the

appearance of cities, it does not always solve the underlying problems. If poor neighborhoods become middle-class neighborhoods, poor families will have an even harder time finding housing.

Low-Income Housing

Many communities have tried to solve the housing problem by building low-income housing—blocks of houses and apartments set aside for low-income families. Unfortunately, most governments cannot afford to build enough housing units to satisfy the demand. Even after low-income housing has been built, it can be very expensive to maintain. Many communities, faced with shortages of funds, have had to cut back on repairs and upkeep of their low-income housing. The result is often a government-owned slum.

Crime

Crime is a serious problem in many communities. Crime rates are usually highest in cities, where poverty and crime often go hand-in-hand. For people who have struggled in poverty with dead-end, minimum-wage jobs, robbery or drug dealing may seem like a practical way to make a better living. For other people, employment may not even be an option. Many of the poorest inner-city residents—sometimes called the underclass—drop out of school early and spend much of their time on the streets. Crime is often the only way of life these people know.

Many cities have set up programs to try to help poor people improve their lives. These programs may include after-school tutoring and government-funded summer jobs for young people and job training and counseling for adults. Such

programs give people the skills they need to work their way out of poverty.

In recent years, with the increased use of illegal drugs, crime has become a major problem in suburbs and small towns as well as cities. Drug addicts often steal to get the money they need to buy drugs. Drug dealers often engage in violent crimes as they fight over territory.

Many communities are fighting drug-related crime through education. By teaching young people how to “say no” to drugs, they hope to put the drug dealers out of business.

When possible, communities have tried to expand their police forces. Often, however, there are simply no funds available for more law enforcement officers. In that case many communities have formed neighborhood watch programs, in which ordinary citizens are trained to spot and report any suspicious activity in their neighborhoods.

Job Training Some communities offer high school students and adults job-training classes. *What is the purpose of these classes?*





Cleanup Campaign Volunteers work in the “Adopt a Highway” program to keep a section of roadway free of litter. *Why do communities benefit from volunteer work?*

Outlook for the Future

Given enough money, local governments could go a long way toward solving their social problems. They could raise teachers’ salaries, build low-income housing, fix up decaying neighborhoods, hire additional police, and do much more. Unfortunately, as has been mentioned many times, money is in short supply. The challenge facing communities, therefore, is to find solutions to their problems without relying on higher taxes or federal funds.

Many communities are beginning to meet that challenge by taking advantage of their greatest resource—their citizens. If given enough encouragement, citizens are often willing to devote time and energy to helping their communities. **Voluntarism**, the tradition of unpaid

community service, has always been an important part of American life.

Community volunteers help their neighborhood schools by getting involved with parent-teacher organizations and by tutoring students. They help homeless people by opening shelters, running soup kitchens, and organizing clothing drives. They help fight crime by participating in neighborhood watch programs. They help poor families by giving money, clothing, and food to community service organizations.

Recent court decisions extending the “one person, one vote” rule have given some citizens—those from minority groups in particular—a greater voice in their local government. This increased participation has led to increased voluntarism as well. When people feel appreciated and valued as members of a community, they become more willing to devote themselves to that community.

★ SECTION 2 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define urban renewal, voluntarism.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What are two problems associated with the public education system?
- 2 What are two ways in which communities have tried to solve housing problems?
- 3 What are two ways in which communities are trying to solve the problem of crime?
- 4 What is the outlook for the future regarding the efforts of communities to solve their problems?



How to Use a Library

When you need information about a particular topic, the best place to look is in your local library.

Card Catalogs

Most libraries still have card catalogs that organize references to books according to subject, title, and author. Many libraries are now replacing these with computerized catalogs that allow you to get the same information faster.

Articles and Reference Sources

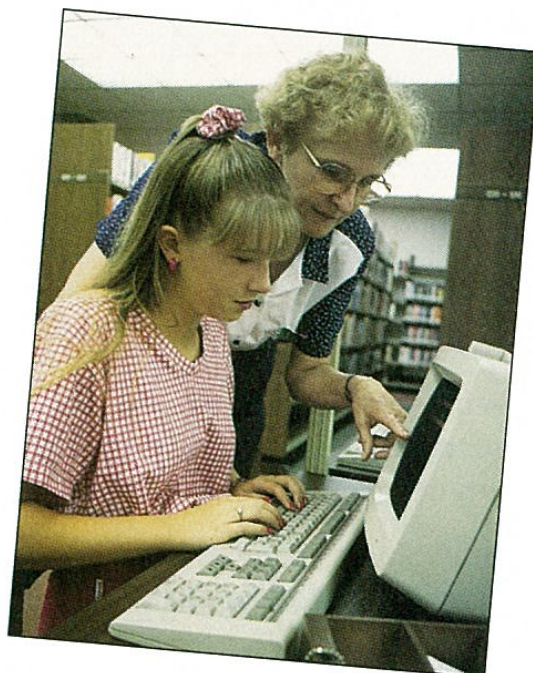
You can find references to magazine articles on a topic in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*. Some libraries also have a computer InfoTrak system that lists articles by subject or author.

The reference section of your library also has encyclopedias, almanacs, atlases, dictionaries, and other research aids in book form. Some libraries carry reference materials on CD-ROM, a computer disk that can hold an entire encyclopedia or other reference work. Libraries may also offer computer databases from which material can be printed.

Most libraries also have a news index or digest, such as *Facts on File*. This allows you to find references to newspaper articles on a topic.

The Librarian as a Resource

The librarian will help you locate the information you need. The librarian knows the library's resources and can direct you to useful collections.



Electronic card catalog

CITIZENSHIP IN ACTION

Practice your library skills by researching a community issue in which you are interested. Then complete the following tasks.

- 1 List the main topic and subtopics you will use to find information.
- 2 Write the author, title, and call number of a book about your topic.
- 3 Write the title of two newspaper articles and two magazine articles about your topic, and include the name and date of the newspaper(s) and magazine(s).
- 4 Locate these four articles and read them. Write short summaries of the main points.



Environmental Issues

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

landfill, recycling

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss the problem of **resource shortages**, and identify possible solutions to such shortages.
- Identify some of the sources of **air and water pollution**.
- Explain how some communities are dealing with the problem of **waste disposal**.
- Describe what communities are doing to resolve the issue of **land use**.
- Discuss the **outlook for the future** in regard to the solution of environmental problems.

When the oil tanker *Exxon Valdez* ran aground off the coast of Alaska in March 1989, it spilled 10 million gallons of oil in Prince William Sound. The oil killed countless fish, birds, otters, and other wild creatures and blackened hundreds of miles of coastline.

The *Valdez* oil spill reminded Americans of the high price we pay for living in an industrialized society. Every time we turn on a light, drive a car, or throw away trash, we harm our environment.

Often, that damage is small and easy to ignore. Sometimes, as in Prince William Sound, the damage is much greater.

Protecting the environment is a national, and worldwide, concern. Most often, however, the battles to protect the environment are fought at the local level. Nearly every town and city has its own environmental problems and is searching for ways to solve them.

Resource Shortages

As their populations grow, communities place greater demands on their energy and water resources. Many local areas are having trouble meeting this demand. Existing power plants often cannot produce enough electricity to meet people's needs, especially on hot summer days when air conditioners are running.

In many western states, where rainfall is limited, the demand for water is an even greater problem than the demand for electricity. As the populations of these

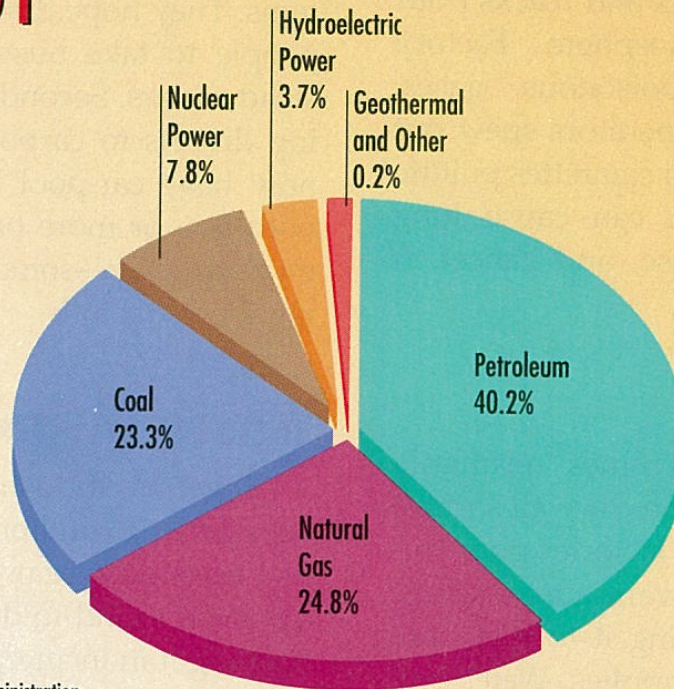
Oil Spill Workers try to clean oil off the shore after the *Exxon Valdez* spill. *Where and when did the Exxon Valdez run aground?*





GRAPH STUDY

Sources of Energy Most energy used in the United States comes from nonrenewable resources. *What is the largest single source of energy?*



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration.

states grow, housing developments are built in desert areas and the demand for water is greatly increased.

New Power Plants

Americans disagree about solutions to these problems. Some believe that the best answer is new power plants and reservoirs. This solution has many drawbacks, however. Coal- and oil-burning power plants pollute the air. Nuclear power plants can be dangerous. Reservoirs alter the landscape and destroy the habitats of many wild creatures. Moreover, building power plants and digging reservoirs are very expensive.

Conservation

Other people believe the best answer is conservation. People can conserve electricity by buying energy-efficient ap-

pliances and turning off unnecessary lights. They can conserve oil and natural gas by adjusting thermostats, installing more efficient furnaces, and insulating their homes. They can conserve water by putting weights in toilet tanks, taking shorter showers, and reducing or eliminating lawn watering. This solution has drawbacks as well, however. Conservation is very difficult to enforce. Except in times of emergency, most Americans resent actions that interfere in their personal lives. They do not want to be told how much water or power to use.

Scientists are working on a third solution—energy sources that do not harm the environment. In the future we may get much more of our electricity from sunlight, wind, water, or less harmful forms of nuclear energy. So far, however, none of these technologies is ready for large-scale use.

Air and Water Pollution

Pollution of our air and water is a nationwide problem. Cars and trucks pour fumes into the atmosphere. Factory smokestacks emit poisonous gases. Power plants and incinerators spew out ashes and smoke. Even cigarettes pollute the air. Air pollution can cause lung problems, heart disease, and cancer. It can also harm wildlife.

Polluted Water

Water pollution comes primarily from factories, which produce all sorts of chemical waste. Some factories pour this waste directly into rivers and streams. Others bury it, allowing it to seep into underground water supplies. Water pollution kills fish and other sea life. Eating fish from polluted waters can also cause severe illness in people. Drinking polluted water can be dangerous or even deadly.

Controlling Pollution

The federal government, through the Environmental Protection Agency, has done much to stop industrial pollution of air and water. Federal regulations strictly limit the amounts and kinds of waste that factories can discharge. Unfortunately, budget cutbacks in recent years have kept many of these regulations from being enforced. As a result state and local governments have had to take more responsibility for protecting the air and water.

Pollution factories produce can be regulated much more easily than pollution individuals produce. In many cities, cars and trucks are the primary source of air pollution. The only way to ease this problem is to persuade people to drive

less. Local governments are trying to do this in two ways. First, they are building or improving public transportation systems. They hope that this will encourage people to take buses and subways instead of cars. Second, they are encouraging drivers to carpool. Many highways now have car-pool lanes in which cars with two or more passengers can travel more quickly—sometimes without paying the usual tolls.

Waste Disposal

Together, industries and private citizens produce millions of tons of garbage and trash each year. No satisfactory way has been found to dispose of this waste. Burning it in incinerators creates dangerous air pollution. Dumping it in the ocean does not work, as New Jersey residents discovered when hospital debris washed up on their beaches in 1988. Much waste in recent years has been

CHART STUDY

City Garbage Cities now produce almost twice as much waste as they did in 1970. *How much did the amount of material recovered increase between 1970 and 1994?*

Garbage (in millions of tons)	1970	1980	1990	1994
Total waste produced	120.5	142.6	195.7	209.1
Materials recovered	8.0	13.4	33.4	49.3
Processed for energy recovery	0.4	2.7	29.7	31.2
Net waste disposed of	112.1	126.5	132.6	128.6

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1994*;
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

buried at huge sites called **landfills**. Existing landfills are nearly full, however, and few Americans are willing to have new ones opened.

Recycling

Recycling has become an increasingly popular way to dispose of some waste. In **recycling**, old materials are reused to make new ones. For example, used paper and paper products can be shredded, bleached, and processed to make new paper. One new, innovative recycled paper product is mulch, which landscapers use on newly seeded lawns. Many towns and cities now have voluntary recycling programs, and some have passed laws requiring recycling. The federal government is doing the same by requiring federal agencies to use more recycled paper. It hopes that this will stimulate investment in more recycling plants. Unfortunately, only a few kinds of waste are suitable for recycling. Glass, aluminum, paper, and certain kinds of plastic can be recycled successfully. Other common kinds of waste—such as plastic foam—cannot be recycled.

Precycling

Once again, the best solution seems to be conservation. Many communities with active recycling programs are now encouraging *precycling*—using only products that can be recycled. Consumers may be asked to buy peanut butter in glass jars instead of plastic ones. Some stores encourage consumers to return bags by offering a rebate. Businesses are encouraged—and sometimes required by law—to eliminate unnecessary packaging. In Berkeley, California, for example, businesses are not allowed to sell products in plastic foam. Many record-

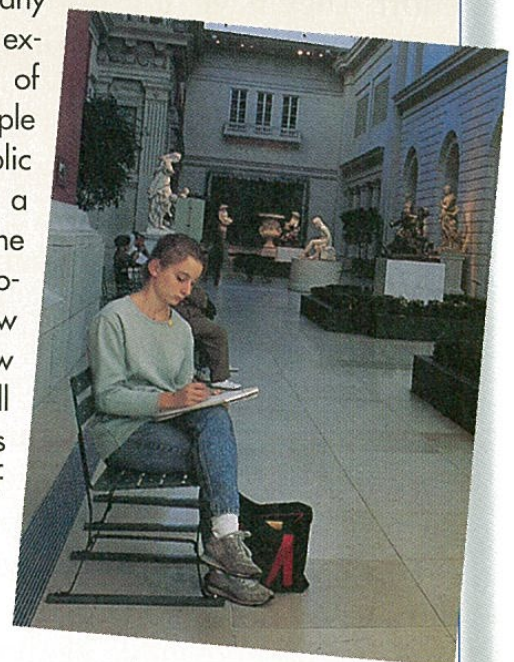
ing companies have reduced the amount of packaging on compact discs. In some communities, high school students have taken the initiative in the conservation

DID YOU KNOW?

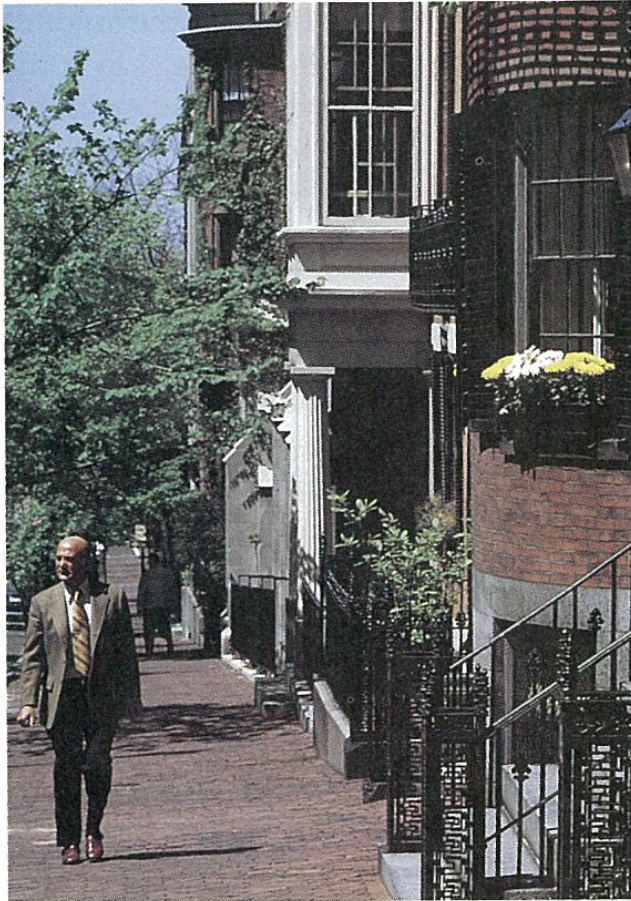
Fighting Age Discrimination in New York City

Before December 1993 many businesses in New York City, including retail stores, museums, hospitals, restaurants, and even movie theaters, barred access to teenagers or younger children. Business owners claimed that these young people were mainly responsible for the shoplifting, property destruction, and disruptive behavior that hurt their establishments. In response, they simply barred teenagers from entering.

Complaints by young people and their parents led the city's Commission on Human Rights to issue new regulations that prohibit age discrimination. Although the new regulations still allow some restrictions, such as limiting access to bars or R-rated movies, they prohibit any sweeping exclusion of young people from public places. As a result the young people of New York now enjoy full benefits as citizens of their community.



Teen in New York City



Historic District The Beacon Hill section of Boston is now an historic district, part of the city's efforts to preserve its past. *Why are land-use policies controversial?*

effort. They have, for example, led campaigns to ban the use of plastic foam in school cafeterias.

Land Use

Land is a scarce resource; we have only a fixed amount of it. Every time farmland is paved over for a shopping center or a housing development replaces a forest, we lose a valuable part of the environment. Many communities have learned this lesson too late, after productive farmland and scenic areas have been destroyed.

Communities have begun to protect their land in several different ways.

Many communities now set aside land for parks or wildlife refuges and restrict the use of certain types of land. For example, a hotel built on beachfront property may be required to allow public access to the beach.

Preservation

Many communities try to hold on to their history as well as their land. To protect important historical sites, some communities set up historic districts in which no changes can be made without special approval. Individual buildings can be protected in a similar way by being declared landmarks.

The planning process described earlier in this chapter also helps preserve land and buildings. Planning commissions and zoning boards can help keep expansion under control. They can prevent developers from building houses or shopping centers in places where they would do more harm than good.

Conflicting Interests

Not everyone agrees that limiting growth is a good idea, however. Many people object to restrictions that prevent businesses from bringing money into the community. There is always controversy when a piece of land is set aside as a park or a historic district. The controversy becomes especially strong when that land is known to contain an important resource, such as oil or minerals. In this time of energy shortages, many people feel that access to resources is more important than history or beauty.

Nevertheless, communities now tend to be more cautious in deciding land use issues. Too many farms, forests, marshes, and beaches have already been lost.



Auto-Emissions Testing Many communities require testing of auto emissions to control pollution. *In what other ways are states trying to reduce auto emissions?*

Outlook for the Future

Solving environmental problems is difficult and expensive. Especially in these days of limited funds, state and local governments cannot do the job by themselves. Communities have had to find new ways to think about these issues and work on solutions.

One positive development is the increase in cooperation between governments. In Chapter 14, you read about special districts and metropolitan governments. Environmental issues have recently led to cooperation on an even larger scale. For example, the governors of 12 northeastern states joined together to ask the Environmental Protection Agency to impose a strict program to reduce auto emissions in their region. The plan would require all new cars to run on alternative fuels or electricity or to be fitted with emissions-control equipment.

Similarly, the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia have joined forces with the city of Washington, D.C., to fight water pollution in the Chesapeake Bay.

Communities are also beginning to depend more on private businesses and citizens. In many towns and cities, privately owned companies provide free recycling services to local residents. These companies make money by selling the bottles, cans, and stacks of paper to other companies that can recycle them.

Similarly, energy and water use in many communities is being reduced significantly through the efforts of individuals. As conservation becomes a way of life for more Americans, the nation may come closer to solving its environmental problems.

★ SECTION 3 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define landfill, recycling.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Why are resource shortages a problem, and what are two possible solutions to such shortages?
- 2 What are some of the sources of air and water pollution?
- 3 How are some communities dealing with the problem of waste disposal?
- 4 What are communities doing to resolve the issue of land use?
- 5 Why has the outlook for the future improved in regard to the solution of environmental problems?

Identifying Key Terms

Choose the vocabulary term that best completes each of the sentences below. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

priorities urban renewal
resources bonds infrastructure
zoning board

1. The goal of the city's _____ project was to rebuild old neighborhoods.
2. In setting its _____, a community must balance its goals and its resources.
3. The planning board turned down a proposal to build a recreation center because the town lacked the _____ required.
4. The _____ ruled that only residential buildings could be built in that particular part of the town.
5. To pay for the new school, the community issued _____.
6. Much of the city's _____ was badly in need of repair.

Reviewing the Main Ideas

SECTION 1

1. What is the role of a planning commission?
2. Identify and explain two nontax sources of local revenue.

SECTION 2

3. What have local governments done to try to improve their systems of public education?
4. What is the effect of rising real estate values on the housing problem?
5. Identify three voluntary activities that can help solve a community's social problems.

SECTION 3

6. Identify four environmental issues communities face.
7. What are some ways in which communities have attempted to solve their waste problems?

Critical Thinking

SECTION 1

1. **Identifying Alternatives** Which do you think is more important, long-term or short-term planning? Why?

SECTION 2

2. **Analyzing Information** How do you think communities should try to deal with the problem of crime?

SECTION 3

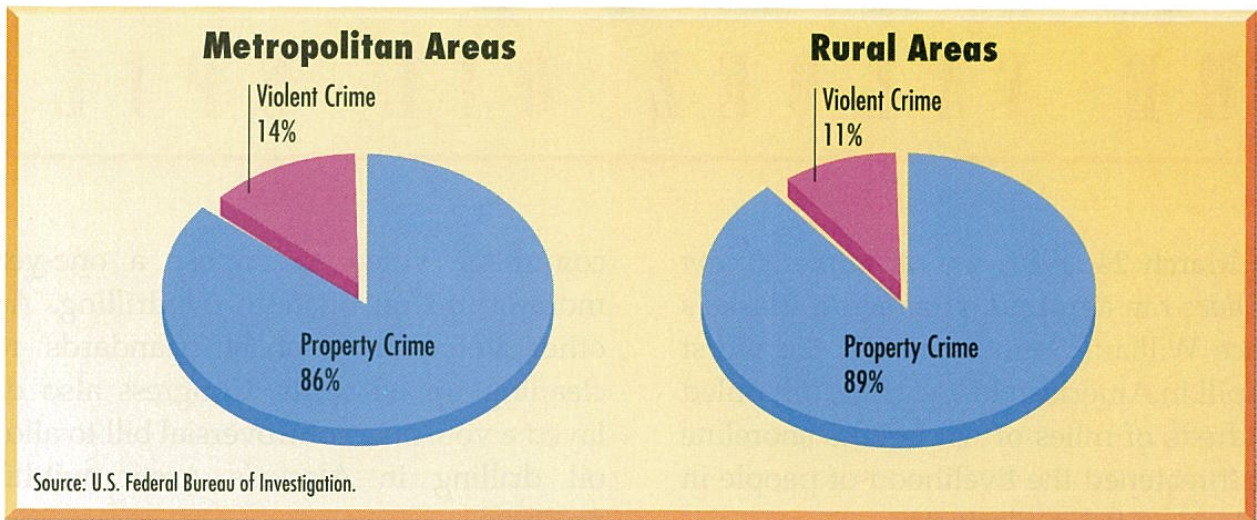
3. **Evaluating Information** Which of the environmental issues discussed do you think is most critical today? Explain.

Reinforcing Citizenship Skills

Select a community issue you might want to research, such as landfills or recycling. Visit your local library and find at least three resources for your topic, such as a magazine article, a book, and a computer database. Write down the titles and authors of these resources and note other information needed to locate them in the library. Share your findings with the class.

Cooperative Learning

With a group of two other students, decide what your position is on this statement: The country's need for re-



sources is more important than environmental concerns. Research information that will help you support your position. Prepare an argument for a debate with other groups in your class. Then discuss the results with your class.

consider most important in your community. Gather information about the issue, including various proposals or programs for dealing with the issue. Then use a word processor to prepare a report for the class.

Focusing on Your Community

What are the most important environmental problems in your community? Research their causes, and find out what local government, businesses, and individuals are doing to solve the problems. How successful have these efforts been? What can you, as an individual, do? Prepare a short oral report for the class.

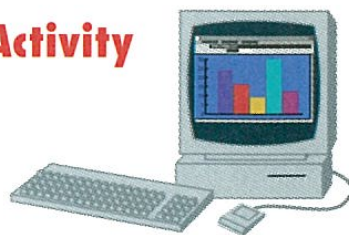
Analyzing Visuals

Many people are concerned about violent crime—murder, rape, robbery, and assault—in their communities. However, property crime, including burglary and motor vehicle theft, are also a problem. Look at the two circle graphs above. Then answer the questions.

Technology Activity

Using a Word Processor

Review the community issues you listed in your civics journal. Choose the issue you



1. What do the two areas have in common?
2. In which area is property crime a greater percentage of all crimes committed?
3. In which area are more violent crimes committed?
4. In what ways are these percentages different from what you thought they might be?

CLOSEUP

THE VALDEZ OIL SPILL

On March 24, 1989, the oil tanker *Exxon Valdez* ran aground on a reef in Alaska's Prince William Sound, causing the worst oil spill in American history. The oil fouled hundreds of miles of wilderness shoreline and threatened the livelihood of people in the Alaskan fishing industry.

Responsibility for the Spill

The spill focused attention on the question of responsibility—for preventing such catastrophes, punishing violators, and supervising cleanup. Under federal law, whoever causes an oil spill—in this case, the Exxon Oil Company—must clean it up. The United States Coast Guard, however, is responsible for supervising any cleanup in ocean waters.

The state was responsible for regulating the Alaskan oil industry, both to prevent spills and to plan for cleanup operations. The state failed in these duties by allowing the oil industry to reduce its emergency response measures.

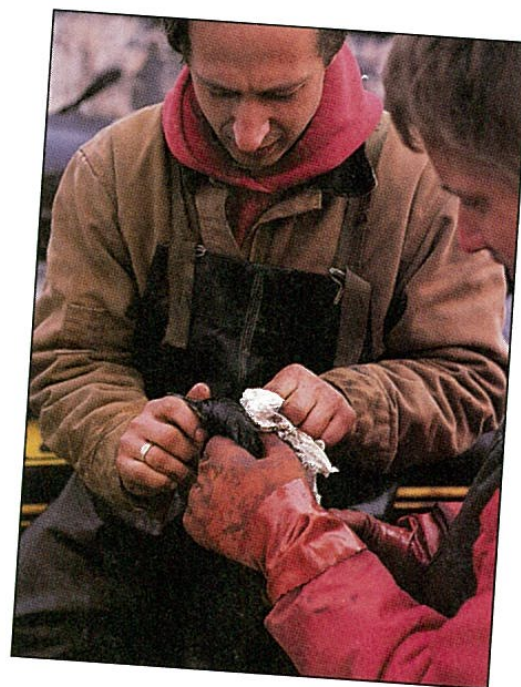
After the Spill

After the accident both the state and federal governments asserted their authority. Alaska charged the tanker's captain with several violations of state law. The state legislature cancelled a long-standing tax break for two large oil fields.

At the federal level, congressional committees held hearings on the spill. One

committee voted to impose a one-year moratorium on offshore oil drilling. Another voted to establish standards for cleaning up oil spills. Congress also delayed a vote on a controversial bill to allow oil drilling in Alaska's Arctic wildlife preserve.

Victim of the oil spill



CLOSEUP REVIEW

- 1 What were the responsibilities of the federal and state governments in the *Valdez* oil spill and cleanup?
- 2 Why do you think Congress postponed a vote on oil drilling in the Arctic wildlife preserve?