City of Smyrna

Citizens’ Academy Implementation Plan

Cindy Steinmann
Citizens Academy

“Citizens academies are educational programs conducted by cities and counties aiming to create better informed and engaged citizens”

- UNC School of Government 

https://www.sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/citizens-academies
City of Smyrna

“Smyrna will achieve the highest levels of community attachment and commitment by:

• Providing academic excellence for our children
• Fully involving our citizens in all aspects of the community
• Creating leadership opportunities for all residents
• Establishing high expectations for our quality of life and place
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**Program Goal**

• Give residents the opportunity to become civically engaged by building positive relationships with city government officials, while furthering their education on the city’s daily processes.

• Gain feedback from citizens

• Recruit ambassadors

• Inspire municipal leaders
Research

- City of Gainesville, Georgia
- City of Decatur, Georgia
- Gwinnett County, Georgia
- City of Snoqualmie, Washington
- City of Dallas, Oregon
- Many, many, many more!
  - UNC School of Government
    - 103 Entries across the United States
Citizens Academies

About Citizens Academies

A citizens academy (also known as a city/county 101 program or neighborhood college) is, usually, a seven-to-eight week program where 20-25 residents are given the opportunity to work with various local government staff and elected leaders and gain insight into local government services and operations.

There is variation from this typical model; each section within the Component Guide page profiles some differences.

Unlike citizen police and fire academies, the citizens academy looks comprehensively at the role and structure of local government in the community, which may include public safety.

Alumni often become informal ambassadors for the local government, share information with their neighborhoods, and often go on to serve on advisory boards. Some even run for elected office.

Program Goals

Reasons for creating and sustaining a citizens academy vary from community to community. However, three broad goals are present in most programs.

1. Knowledge: Improving citizens' understanding of local government while learning more about community issues and concerns.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>City/town</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>First Year Offered</th>
<th>Total Times Offered</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50,111</td>
<td>City of Casa Grande</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cassgrandeco.gov/web/guest/leadership-academy">Website</a></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>72,864</td>
<td>City of Goodyear</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ci.goodyear.az.us/index.jsp?NID=566">Website</a></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>87,650</td>
<td>City of Fort Smith</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fortsmithar.gov/CitizensAcademy/default.aspx">Website</a></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Twice per year</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>256,780</td>
<td>City of Chula Vista</td>
<td>California</td>
<td><a href="http://www.chulavistaca.gov/City_Services/Mayor_Council/Mayor/CitizensLeadershipAcademy.aspx">Website</a></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Twice per year</td>
<td>Staffing shortages/restrictions; Mayor ran program and her administration ended in December 2014</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>509,924</td>
<td>City of Fresno</td>
<td>California</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fresno.gov/Government/MayorsOffice/CitizensAcademy/default.htm">Website</a></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Three to four times per year</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>406,259</td>
<td>City of Oakland</td>
<td>California</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cityofoakland.org/Government/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/PartnershipAcademy.aspx">Website</a></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>80,872</td>
<td>Redwood City</td>
<td>California</td>
<td><a href="http://www.redwoodcity.org/manager/initiatives/pact.html">Website</a></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>Budget cuts/restrictions</td>
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<tr>
<td>66,900</td>
<td>City of Walnut Creek</td>
<td>California</td>
<td><a href="http://www.walnutcreek.org/institute">Website</a></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Tasks

- Identify personnel/implementation team responsible to oversee the program.
- Identify funding
- Identify department availability
- Advertise & application release
- Acquire promotional items/gifts
Major Tasks

• Acquire presentation material from host departments
• Identify site facilities to be toured/utilized
• Select applicants
• Set agenda
• Prepare site facilities for implementation
Task Schedule – For Spring Academy

- December 11, 2017: Identify personnel or implementation team
- December 18, 2017: Identify funding
- January 8, 2018: Identify department availability
- January 12, 2018: Begin presentation and activity preparation
- January 15, 2018: Advertise and begin accepting applications
- January 22, 2018: Acquire promotional items
- February 12, 2018: Completion and approval of presentation and activity preparation
- February 16, 2018: Identify site facilities
- February 19, 2018: Select applicants
- February 21, 2018: Set Agenda
- February 26, 2018: Prepare site facilities
- March 1, 2018: First session
Implementation Plan

• Budget: $2,000
  • Advertisements
  • Paper/Printing Information Packets
  • Refreshments
  • Transportation
  • Promotional Items/Gifts
  • Overtime

• Location
  • Central meeting place with projector capabilities
  • Facilities available for tours
Implementation Plan

• Timeframe
  • 8 Weeks
  • March 1, 2018 – April 19, 2018
  • Thursday Evenings 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
  • Consider alternate schedules, if needed

• Attendees
  • Target: Diverse professional adults
  • Approximately 25 applicants
    • First Come, First Served
    • Waiting List

• Fees
  • No fee recommended
  • Maximum of $25 per applicant
Hosting Departments

- Administration
- Human Resources
- Finance
- Community Development
- Public Works
- Parks and Recreation
- Keep Smyrna Beautiful
- Public Safety
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Activity Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| March 1, 2018 | Administration                    | City Administrator  
Mayor  
City Council  
Legal Counsel | Introductions and Info Packets  
Meet and Greet  
Mock City Council Meeting |
| March 8, 2018 | Finance & HR                      | Budgeting  
Purchasing  
Taxes  
Utilities | Budget using Fake Money or Pennies  
Purchase using Fake Money or Pennies  
Recruitment Exercise for HR |
| March 15, 2018 | Community Development            | Economic Development  
Zoning  
Business Licenses  
Code Enforcement  
Building Inspections | Business Recruitment Activity  
Trading Game for Site Development  
Jeopardy with Code Violation Pictures |
| March 22, 2018 | Public Works                     | City Engineering  
Capital Projects  
Sanitation  
Sewer and Storm Water  
Streets and Buildings  
Building Inspections | Tour Facilities  
Demonstrate Sewer Treatment  
Demonstrate Sanitation Activities |
| March 29, 2018 | Parks and Recreation & Keep Smyrna Beautiful | Tour Facilities  
Present Master Plan/Future Expansions  
Play Simple Recreation Game |
| April 5, 2018 | Public Safety                     | Police Department | Tour Facilities (Jail, Range, etc.)  
Role Play  
Demonstrate K9  
Demonstrate Vehicles and Equipment |
| April 12, 2018 | Public Safety                     | Fire Department | Tour Facilities  
Role Play  
Allow participants to use hose  
Demonstrate “Jaws of Life” |
| April 19, 2018 | Graduation                        | All Departments Present | Presentation of Certificates  
Presentation of Gifts (pins, cups, t-shirts, etc.)  
Take Photo for Newspaper and Social Media |
Other Important Considerations

• Must monitor and document performance and outcomes
• Evaluations

• Challenges:
  • Developing a curriculum that allows enough time
  • Maintaining Interest
  • Risk and Liabilities
    • Waiver
  • Potential Budgetary Loss
  • Staff Availability
Questions?