

# Governmental Involvement

The United States Junior Chamber has a long history of impacting the nation through projects specifically directed at action and involvement with local, state, and national government agencies. From the original Get Out the Vote campaign in 1923 to working to ensure statehood for Alaska and Hawaii in 1959. In 1962 Jaycees also urged adoption of Uniform Vehicle Code, with emphasis on state action resulting in adoption nationally. Jaycees have also used the skills and contacts made through Governmental Involvement projects to run for various elected offices including President of the United States. (Bill Clinton, Arkansas Jaycee and past honoree of the Ten Outstanding Young Americans) Listed below are three ways in which your chapter can impact your community through involvement in your government.

## Citizens Corps

On April 4, 2002, President Bush created the Citizen Corps to help coordinate volunteer activities that will make our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to any emergency situation. He asked cities and counties across the country to create Citizen Corps Councils of their own design, bringing together first responders, volunteer organizations, law enforcement agencies, and community-serving institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and houses of worship, to assist in this common effort.

Because we believe service to humanity is the best work of life. Throughout our history we have stepped up when our communities needed help. From building parks and playgrounds to disaster relief, the Jaycees have been there. Today, with the challenges that confront our nation, it is time to lead the way again.

The first step is to find out if a Citizen Corps Council already exists in your community. You can go online ([www.citizencorps.gov/councils/](http://www.citizencorps.gov/councils/)) or simply pick up the phone and call the mayor, city manager, or county commissioner's office and ask if they have, or are planning, a Citizen Corps Council. Find out the contact person; call them and ask how the Jaycees can help.

## Get Out The Vote

The United States Junior Chamber and chapters across the nation encourage Americans to "Get Out the Vote." Americans are given the freedom of choice - to choose which candidate to elect or whether to vote at all. An alarming number of citizens are choosing the second option, leaving only a handful of people to decide who will run our country. Through the exciting Get Out the Vote program, Jaycee chapters throughout the country will combine efforts in their communities to educate and encourage people not only to register, but also to cast their vote on election day.

Projects include candidate forums, voter registration campaigns, town hall meetings, and other projects designed to inform and educate the local electorate and encourage an increased participation in the process of democracy. [Click here to download a copy of the most recent Get Out the Vote Manual.](#)

## Social Security Reform

The United States Social Security program is on a path to economic insolvency. A recent poll shows that only 25

percent of young adults believe Social Security will exist when they retire.

As America's largest grassroots organization for young people, The U.S. Junior Chamber is committed to a search for realistic solutions to the growing problems with Social Security. Local Jaycee chapters are encouraged to spearhead town hall meetings to stimulate the debate, develop solutions, and gather additional input.

### Governmental Affairs Leadership Seminar (GALS)

Since being welcomed to the first Governmental Affairs Leadership Seminar (GALS) in 1962 by then-Representative Gerald Ford, the leaders of The United States Junior Chamber of Commerce have met annually in the nation's capital to hear from White House officials, Cabinet secretaries, and Members of Congress about issues of importance to America's young people.

GALS is designed to offer Junior Chamber leaders the opportunity to meet with the women and men responsible for making public policies that guide the nation's course of action. Special briefing sessions have also been held with Junior Chamber members. In the past, these sessions have focused on such issues as the Panama Canal, former President Jimmy Carter's budget proposal, the 1980 energy crisis, the downing of Korean Airlines 007, and U.S. - Japan trade relations. Special interest seminars have been designed to help Junior Chamber members understand complex issues regarding international trade, American business policy, and foreign and defense matters. Practical tips regarding lobbying elected officials and conducting election-year activities have also been featured.

As a result of information gathered at GALS, the Junior Chamber's National Board of Directors has adopted several external policies concerning such issues as a balanced federal budget, the presidential veto, term limitations for elected officials, and volunteer liability legislation.

To get involved, contact:  
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