Civic virtues go hand in hand with Founding principles. They are habits that help us ensure we are acting in the best interest of the community. They also help guide us because the more we practice civic virtue, the more we uphold individual freedom and the common good. Examples include: humility, integrity, moderation, respect, and responsibility. More information about Founding principles and civic virtues can be found here: https://billofrightsinstitute.org/resources/principles-and-virtues.

Is there something in your community that you would like to change? Or would you like to provide a service currently missing from your community? Or would you like to work to get more support from your community for an organization or group that you belong to?

Think about the communities you might belong to: schools, religious organizations, charity groups, towns, states, or neighborhoods. All these groups require the work of individuals to support them so that they can do their essential work. By practicing civic virtue and using your talents, you can solve a problem you feel passionate about and create something that is beautiful and necessary in making your community better. Let us know how you can make a difference!
Use the following questions to help write your response to the prompt:

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<tr>
<th>Prompts</th>
<th>Supporting Questions</th>
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Students should also consider how at least one of the following principles and civic virtues in their response. We’ve enclosed a graphic organizer to help students get started on their essays.
I. FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

1. Natural/Inalienable Rights
   - **Definition**—Rights which belong to humans by nature which cannot be taken away. Examples are life, liberty, and property.
   - **Consider this**—Does your solution relate to injustices in your community? Are people being denied equality?
   - **Examples**—A project that secures or recognizes the fundamental rights of others in your community. This could be a project that works toward achieving greater equality or the securing of someone’s individual property.

2. Consent of the Governed
   - **Definition**—The power of government comes from the people.
   - **Consider this**—Will your solution need to get approval from your community?
   - **Examples**—Consulting with a local chamber of commerce to get input from the business community, meeting with a local neighborhood group to get their support for your idea, organizing fellow students or voters to make sure your idea is heard.

3. Rule of Law
   - **Definition**—Government and citizens all abide by the same laws regardless of political power. Those laws must be stable and justly applied.
   - **Consider this**—Will your solution be fair and equally applied in the community? Are there government processes you will need to follow?
   - **Examples**—Working with a local town council to change a city ordinance, working with a local parks department to change a policy, filing a formal petition, or following a formal government process.

4. Federalism
   - **Definition**—The national and state governments have a balance of separate and shared powers. The people delegate certain powers to the national government, while the states retain other powers; and the people retain all powers not delegated to the governing bodies.
   - **Consider this**—If you are working with the government, which level is most appropriate? The national government? The state? Your town or city?
   - **Examples**—Working with your state legislature to pass a law because your town does not have the authority, speaking to your local town officials about a city ordinance that impacts your community organization, working with a local court to increase awareness of a legal process.

5. Private Property
   - **Definition**—The natural right of all individuals to create, obtain, and control their possessions, beliefs, faculties, and opinions as well as the fruits of their labor.
   - **Consider this**—Will your solution require individuals to part with their property (like their money), or lend their property to the community (like by offering rental space)?
   - **Examples**—People will pay you for a service you plan to provide, people will need to donate their money to support your cause, Business or business leaders will need to donate time, money, or space to support your initiative.
II. CIVIC VIRTUES

1. **Humility**
   - **Definition**—A recognition that one’s ignorance is far greater than one’s knowledge. Putting others ahead of ourselves in thought, word, and deed.
   - **Consider this**—Will you need to listen to community members to find a solution?
   - **Examples**—Hold a listening session to hear from members of the community you are working with. Learn a skill or the history of the community that your solution will impact.

2. **Integrity**
   - **Definition**—To tell the truth, expose untruths, and keep one’s promises.
   - **Consider this**—How will you make sure to follow through on the solution you commit to?
   - **Examples**—Create a realistic schedule for completing your solution. Make a public statement or message that acts as a commitment for others to hold you accountable.

3. **Moderation**
   - **Definition**—The avoidance of excess or extremes.
   - **Consider this**—How can you ensure your goals are realistic and achievable?
   - **Examples**—Starting with a small solution that addresses a single problem while leaving room for it to grow. Make a set of goals you think you can reach within three to six months.

4. **Respect**
   - **Definition**—Regard for and defending the equal rights and inherent dignity of all human beings, including oneself.
   - **Consider this**—How will your solution support individuals and work well with other people in the community?
   - **Examples**—Telling the stories of your community members with your project. Highlight how your contribution is part of a longer history of contributions by others. Be grateful for the help others give you or the knowledge they share.

5. **Responsibility**

6. **Consider this**—Why do you think your solution is necessary? Why is it important that YOU are the one that works towards this solution?

7. **Examples**—Make clear how you have benefited from your community and why you wish to give back. Highlight what inspired you to act and why.

**Essays will be evaluated by a panel of judges based on how well the students:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of civics
- Acknowledge and address opposing points of view
- Acknowledge and address at least one Founding Principle and one Civic Virtue
- Use primary sources, like newspapers, data, historical documents, images, or other documents that relate to your idea.
- Clearly describe an idea that is innovative or new to them
ESSAY WRITING GUIDANCE

Ideal responses will:
• Address the question asked in a thoughtful and meaningful manner
• Use cited facts and arguments when appropriate to support your answers
• Are expressed in cohesive sentences and are free of distracting spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors
• Address diverse viewpoints in a respectful manner
• Organize your answer in a manner that flows logically and reads clearly

While you are writing:
• Stay focused and minimize distractions.
• Write however you feel most comfortable—using a pen and paper, or a computer.
• Let your topic guide your structure. Consider including an introductory paragraph, three supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion.
• Stay on track: if you find yourself getting off the topic, go back and revise.
• Remember all writing is re-writing.

After you write, ask yourself:
Have I answered all aspects of the question?
• Is it clear what I am discussing?
• Have I stated an opinion when asked for one?
• Have I provided examples where asked?
• Have I said what I wanted to say?

Is my essay well-written?
• Have I used paragraphs?
• Do all my paragraphs have a topic sentence?
• Do I fully develop one idea per paragraph?

Is my writing correct?
• Have I checked for spelling errors myself, without relying on spell-check?
• Have I checked for grammar errors without relying on a grammar checker?
• Have I checked my facts: dates, document titles, names, etc.?

Other ideas:
• Try reading your essay aloud to a family member. Does it sound like it flows easily? Can your audience member summarize your essay back to you in one or two sentences? (If they can’t, try going back and clarifying your ideas.)
• Try putting your essay down for a day or two and coming back to it and re-reading it. Do you notice anything you’d like to change or add?
Student Graphic Organizer
Preparing for Your Essay

Directions - Use the following questions to help write your response to the prompt:

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<th>My Notes</th>
</tr>
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Thinking About Principles

Directions: Review the principles listed in your student guide. Think about the definitions, questions, and examples provided for each and how it might work with the idea you have to address your community challenge. Write 1-2 sentences about how it relates, or doesn’t relate, to your idea. Then rank the principles from 1 (only relates a little bit) to 5 (relates a lot) to help choose at least one principle to include in your essay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>How does this principle relate to your idea?</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Rule of Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separation of Powers</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Private Property</td>
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</table>
Directions: Now repeat the process above, but this time with Civic Virtues.

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