

Government-in-Action *Program Description*

Politics is how America changes—good or bad. In a democracy citizens elect other citizens to decide on the society we will become. Basic questions like: Who pays taxes and how much? What is done with the funds? What kind of educational system do we have? Who gets access to medical care and how much? How do we ensure citizen safety? Who gets to live in a healthy environment? How do we end homelessness? and thousands of other questions big and small that affect (often unknowingly) the everyday lives of American citizens.

This opportunity pairs Black students with politicians of color to learn how and why they entered politics and what changes they see are important to build a better America. Students will also learn how the politicians interact with citizens, businesses, and other government agencies to turn ideas into law. Students will meet with the politicians/staff either in person or virtually for a total of 5-8 hours over several weeks to ask questions and observe the representative at work. If beneficial to the representative, the student may work on a piece of legislation or attend a legislative session.

The following locally elected officials have each agreed to offer a shadowing experience to a local student:

Monica Stonier, Representative to the Washington State legislature, 49th district
Diana Perez, Vancouver City Council member
Kim Harless, Vancouver City council member

There are a few steps to this opportunity: 1) Students will apply to the program by writing to the political affairs committee (politicalaffairs@naacpvancouverwa.org) stating in a few sentences (or more if they wish) their interest, age, and contact information; 2) After being accepted, they will choose one of the shadowing and report plans or a mutually agreed upon alternative. The student's school representative may add additional assignment specifications to the plan as appropriate. 3) Students will then fill out the form with the name and contact information of a trusted adult in their life (parent/guardian/relation) and school representative (teacher/coach/councilor), which is also a contract to say that they will do the work. THAT'S IT. We want students to be well supported in their endeavor and to be successful! A Political Affairs Committee member will also be available to the student throughout the program for questions/help.

At the end of the shadowing event, students will report back to the NAACP Chapter 1139 to receive a certificate of completion, a "Black Votes Change Lives" t-shirt, and a one-year free membership to the NAACP. They will be encouraged to include their experience on resumés, college and scholarship applications. For some students, this may be part of a senior project.

This is a pilot program, so we ask the students for their help and patience in developing this program to make it a success for future students.

Government-in-Action Student Application

Application deadlines: **October 1** for Fall semester

February 15 for Spring semester

Student:

_____ *first name – please print*

_____ *last name – please print*

I have been accepted into the Government-in-Action program of the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) of local NAACP chapter 1139. I have read and understand the expectations. I will seek consent from my parent/guardian/trusted adult and the teacher with whom I will work. I consent to and will complete the activities agreed for my project.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian:

_____ *first name – please print*

_____ *last name – please print*

I consent to my child's/student's participation in the Government-in-Action program of the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) of local NAACP chapter 1139. I have read and understand the expectations and will support the student in this endeavor.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

My child's/student's name: _____

His/her age: _____

Teacher:

_____ *first name – please print*

_____ *last name – please print*

I consent to participate, with my student, in the Government-in-Action program of the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) of local NAACP chapter 1139. I have read and understand the expectations. I will help determine and support my student's learning and activities for this project.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Course / Subject: _____

Government-in-Action Shadow Plans

| Shadow Plan 1 | Shadow Plan 2 | Shadow Plan 3 |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Individual</i> | <i>Pair</i> | <i>Team of 3</i> |
| <p>The student will follow the participating government official for a total of 5 hours or more, spread across at least 3 occasions, each at least 1½ hours long.</p> <p>Afterward, the student will prepare 5-8 questions for a conversational interview with the official lasting 20-30 minutes at the end of each observation or lasting 45-60 minutes at the end of all three observations.</p> | <p>Two students will individually shadow two officials as described in Plan 1.</p> <p>Afterward, the students will talk to each other about their experiences, and help each other prepare 5-8 questions for each official. Both students will attend a conversational interview with each official, the shadower asking the prepared questions and the partner taking notes.</p> | <p>Working as a team, three students will shadow three officials in rotation – that is, each student will follow each official at least once, as described in Plan 1.</p> <p>Afterward, the students will prepare 5-8 questions for each official, and the team will engage in a conversational interview with each official lasting 45-60 minutes.</p> |

With permission from both their teachers and the officials to be shadowed, students may mix-and-match Shadow Plans and Report Plans (see Report Plans) as follows:

- Shadow Plan 1 may be matched with Report Plans 1, 2, or 3.
- Shadow Plan 2 may be matched with Report Plans 1, 2, or 4.
- Shadow Plan may be matched with Report Plans 1, 2, or 4.

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Government-in-Action Report Plans

| Report Plan 1 | Report Plan 2 | Report Plan 3 | Report Plan 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Visual Presentation</i> | <i>Written Presentation</i> | <i>Oral Presentation</i> | <i>Panel Presentation</i> |
| <p>The student/s create a poster including photograph/s <i>or</i> a video of 5-10 minutes to share what they experienced and learned.</p> <p>The poster or video is to be exhibited or shown at an NAACP monthly meeting, at the student's school, and then offered for viewing by the participating government official/s.</p> | <p>An individual or a pair of students prepare a written report of 2-4 double-spaced pages (500-1,000 words) to submit to teacher/s with copies to the PAC and to the official/s shadowed.</p> <p>Student papers will be posted on the local NAACP website. With the consent of those shadowed, student/s are encouraged to submit their papers for publication in school newspapers.</p> | <p>The student/s prepare a 15-20 minute talk to the school/s, sharing what they experienced and learned, including personal impact (e.g., new realizations, career info), followed by a brief question-and-answer period.</p> <p>The oral report is to be presented at an NAACP monthly meeting and at the student/s school/s. The official/s is/are to be invited to attend either presentation.</p> | <p>A pair or team of 3 students prepare a panel presentation, each student taking about 10 minutes to describe what s/he experienced and learned, followed by a brief question-and-answer period.</p> <p>The student panel is to present at an NAACP monthly meeting, inviting their teachers and the public officials shadowed. (Zoom attendance or a videotape can be made available for officials and teachers who cannot attend.)</p> |

Teachers may add additional assignment specifications to the Report Plans as appropriate to their classes. For example:

- Senior Project teachers may expand reporting for Report Plans to align to state, district, and school expectations.
- Art teachers, for Report Plan 1, may add additional or more specific criteria for posters or videos.
- English teachers, for Report Plan 2, may require different length limits, style expectations, or specify the type of writing (i.e., expository, descriptive, narrative, persuasive).
- Journalism teachers, for Report Plan 2, may require adherence to the length and style used in school newspapers and/or submission to *The Columbian* newspaper.
- Speech or Debate teachers, for Report Plans 3-4, may adjust length limits, may require formal introductions of guests, and may add audio-visual requirements.
- Civics or US History teachers, for Report Plans 2-4, may require descriptions of the shadowed official's job expectations or his/her stance on a controversial issue.

Government-in-Action Project Contract

Government-in-Action is a program sponsored by the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) the Vancouver NAACP chapter 1139. Its purpose is to introduce emerging adults to the workings and potential careers in the government sector. Toward this end, interested students who have applied and been accepted into the program are to shadow local government officials and report what they learn from their experience. This contract specifies the details of the student's project and the agreement of all involved.

Student's printed name and signature: _____

Student's selection: Shadow Plan 1 Shadow Plan 2 Shadow Plan 3
 Report Plan 1 Report Plan 2 Report Plan 3 Report Plan 4

- This project will be completed individually by the student.
- This project will involve these team member/s (provide name/s):

Date of local NAACP meeting where the student will present and/or receive a certificate, t-shirt, and one-year free NAACP membership:

Date: _____ *Time:* _____

Location: Bridgeview Resource Center
505 Omaha Way
Vancouver, WA 98661

Official to be shadowed, name: _____

His/her government position: _____

When and where **shadowing** will occur (3 times minimum):

Day and date:

Time: (1½ hour min. each)

Location:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

- Student may need transportation assistance.

Reporting -- when and where it will occur: _____

What will be submitted to the PAC: _____

What will be submitted to your teacher: _____

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Government-in-Action **Student Aid & Suggestions**

Congratulations on your interest and acceptance into the Government-in-Action program. The NAACP Political Affairs Committee (PAC) wishes you an interesting and rewarding experience. Here are some ideas you may choose to use or adapt. Please let us or your teacher know if you need assistance.

Shadowing

- Arrive on time, introduce yourself, and be polite.
- Take notes about your curiosities or questions you may want to ask later.
- Ask for help when leaving the building, directions to a restroom, etc., as needed.

Conversational Interviewing

You need to prepare questions in advance to help obtain the information of interest to you and your project. If you are unsure what to ask, consider the following, adjusting the wording for relevance to your shadowing experience and your own ways of communicating.

Suggestion: Bring a copy of your questions as a guide during the conversation and a second copy to offer the government official you shadowed.

- What interested you in this position?
How long have you held it?
- Were there things you hoped to accomplish?
How have they worked out?
- Is there a goal or special project you are currently working on?
How is it going?
- Which of your accomplishments are you most pleased about?
Which activities are most challenging or difficult?
- What has been the public reaction to the work you have done?
How have you responded?
- What aspects of your position were unexpected?
What have you learned along the way?
- What advice would you offer to someone interested in your position some day?
What preparation would you recommend?
- *Useful follow-up questions if you need more explanation:*
 - Can you tell me more about that?
 - Can you help me understand that better?
 - Can you give an example?
 - How does that work?