

For Immediate Release

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## High School Students Explore Variety of Career Opportunities



SPRINGFIELD --- High school freshmen and sophomores from Puerto Rico, Chicago, and Metro East St. Louis areas visited Springfield on June 26 to learn more about local and state government and focus on careers that serve the community. During the visit, they met with representatives of the Partnership for Local Government Education which includes the Illinois Association of County Board Members and Commissioners (IACBMC), Township Officials of Illinois, and the Illinois Municipal League (IML).

The youth were part of a program sponsored by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) developed for under-served and economically disadvantaged students. RAP I-C is an intensive two-week career exploration and academic enrichment experience which focuses on awareness of careers related to children, families, education, and communication.

Students eligible for RAP-I-C must rank in the top 25%; have a B average; display curiosity, cooperation, and work ethic in their references; and display an interest in learning about careers related to families, education, and communities.

Learning activities developed by staff in the Department of Human and Community Development at the University of Illinois help participants gain an understanding of the various careers paths associated with areas of interest related to families and community.

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Staff from University of Illinois Extension introduced the students to the curriculum, Tomorrow's Leaders: Understanding Local Government. According to Ruth Ann Vokac, University of Illinois Extension Educator in 4-H and Youth, "This is a great group, lots of fun to work with. One of our activities was the Budget Game, and the young people expressed their frustration with making the budget balance while providing the services people need." One young woman said, "Now I understand that local officials have to work really hard and make hard decisions."

Bryan Smith and Jerry Crabtree of TOI spoke to the students on the three main functions of townships: help to the needy, property assessment for tax purposes, and the construction and maintenance of rural roads and bridges. Smith, who was once the youngest local official in the state, talked about how he ran for office, his experiences in campaigning, and how he learned to do the job of his elected position.

Gary Koch of IML discussed services municipalities provide to citizens such as maintaining sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and water and sewer infrastructures. "Many cities and villages offer parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, ballparks, and other recreational areas," said Koch. "You may not believe today that you would be a local official, but we hope you will consider it someday."

Kelly Murray and Taylor Anderson of IACBMC discussed the variety of careers involved with local government, such as engineering, law, accounting, education, health services, and community development. "There are so many opportunities for careers in local government – some elected, some appointed," said Murray. Anderson talked with the young people about how to get involved politically. "I was stuffing envelopes and knocking on doors at the age of five."

After the visit with TOI, IML, and IACBMC, the students toured the Illinois State Capitol and concluded the day with visiting the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

**The Illinois Association of County Board Members and Commissioners is the official statewide organization of Illinois' major county governments and their governing officials. IACBMC is devoted exclusively to enhancing the stature, role and responsiveness of county government in the State of Illinois.**

**The Partnership for Local Government Education is a collaboration formed to increase interest and involvement in local government in Illinois. The Partnership for Local Government Education is composed of the Illinois Association of County Board Members and Commissioners, Illinois Municipal League, Township Officials of Illinois, and University of Illinois Extension.**