THINGS TO KNOW:
LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

CITY COUNCIL

1. The total number of council members in your city (both district representatives who represent a specific area) and at-large members (who represent the entire city).
2. The qualifications for being a council member.
3. The term of office for council members.
4. The average number of people each council member represents (divide the city’s population by the number of council districts).
5. What council district am I in and what is the name of my council member? (Use a map with the geographic boundaries of city council districts marked.)
6. What are the opinions of my city council member on some local issues? What does he/she indicate as areas of interest or expertise? What ordinances has he/she introduced?
7. List all council members full contact information (city website – use a separate sheet).
8. Create brief profiles of each member, if possible, including their education, profession, number of children (sometimes available from city website – use a separate sheet).

THE MAYOR

1. The mayor’s name.
2. Is the mayor a member of council?
3. Does the mayor have a veto over council decisions?
4. The term of office for the mayor (how long they hold office before the next election).
5. What are the opinions of the mayor on some local issues? What does he/she indicate as areas of interest or expertise? What ordinances has he/she introduced?
PROCESSES

1. Where and when does your council meet?
2. How do you get a proposal on the agenda?
3. The procedures for being able to register as a speaker at a public hearing.
4. What are the steps to getting a proposed ordinance adopted in this city?

ELECTIONS

1. Date of city elections (usually something like “first Tuesday in April”).
2. The specific date of the next elections in your city.
3. What are some of the election/voting rules in your city?

OTHER CITY OFFICIALS

1. The name of the city manager.
2. The responsibilities of the city manager (briefly).
3. What other city officials are elected (i.e., auditor, treasurer, sheriff, clerk, etc.)?
4. The names of other city officials who run for election.
5. Their terms of office.