



“If I Were Mayor...” Essay Contest Tip Sheet

When you are writing your essay, consider some of the things that mayors can and cannot do. For example:

Mayors CAN:

- Work with the city council to decide where businesses should go in the city/town and where housing should go;
- Apply for grants (money from state or federal government) to help make parks nicer, roads wider and sidewalks safer;
- Work with the city council to decide how the city should spend its money (salaries of employees, street paving and repair, parks, recycling, etc.);
- Make laws called “ordinances” to help keep the citizens safe;
- Recommend hiring city employees like police officers, fire fighters and building inspectors.

Mayors CANNOT:

- Build theme parks;
- Make law that parents cannot make kids go to bed early;
- Give everyone money, mansions or cars;
- Make everything free in their community.

We encourage you to contact your Mayor and ask him/her to speak to your class about their duties. Attend a council meeting and observe what the mayor’s responsibilities are at the meeting.

Some places to learn about what cities & towns do:

- Oklahoma Municipal League website: www.oml.org
- Oklahoma State Court Network: www.oscn.net This website has all Oklahoma State laws. Most of the laws pertaining to cities & towns of Oklahoma can be found under Title 11.
- Your local newspaper. This is also a good place to learn about the current events in your community.
- For information about Oklahoma State Government: www.state.ok.us