



mayors
innovation
project

INNOVATION SHOWCASE

Mayor Barbara Buffaloe
Columbia, MO

WINTER
2025

WIFI: LIUNA-GUEST
Password:
Unionworker1903\$

CITY OF COLUMBIA

CIVIC ACADEMY

The Need

Local government impacts residents lives every day, from road maintenance and utility infrastructure to public safety services and parks, but understanding and navigating your government can be confusing.

It was important for us to “demystify” local government. We aimed to increase resident understanding of their government and to increase opportunities for authentic engagement.



What is Civic Academy?

Civic Academy is a free, eight-week interactive program that allows residents to learn more about their local government.

Participants get the opportunity to hear from City leadership and learn about municipal services through facility tours, demonstrations, games, and other hands on activities.

Since starting the program in Fall 2022, over 70 community members have completed it.



The Benefits

- Opportunities to engage outside of a public hearing, issue, or formal meeting
- Positive feedback from both residents and staff
- Connections for residents with more opportunities to engage with the City through serving on a board/commission, volunteering, and increased civic participation



Testimonials

“Civic Academy is a wonderful opportunity for residents to learn about how CoMo, and cities in general, function. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and found myself telling people about the very useful and interesting information after each class.” - Eileen

“We learned so much from understanding how each area of the City worked and what the real challenges were. I'm proud of our City Staff as they gave in-depth answers to tough questions. It was also inspiring and going forward many of us will participate in a City Committee or as a volunteer to make our City better.”
- Tanya

“The knowledge I gained has definitely given me more insight into the daily operations of the different City departments, and I have used the info to help inform people I come into contact with.” - Molly

“This should be required for every citizen.” - Ken

