

BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SERVANT

Presenter: Allison Silberberg, Vice Mayor, Alexandria, Virginia

Public Management

Lesson Description

After being elected to public office, how does one ensure the needs of the community are being met? In this video, Allison Silberberg, vice mayor of the city of Alexandria, Virginia, shares her best practices for being an effective government leader: engaging with her constituents and working toward the “common good and the long-term interests” of her city.

Learning Objectives

1. Reaching out to community leaders and constituents for advice and feedback.
2. Ensuring voter representation and effective leadership.
3. Forming strategies for engaging constituents.

Discussion Questions

1. The video mentions several ways in which an elected leader may hear from the citizens he or she represents. What have been some of the ways in which leaders and government representatives have engaged with your communities? What means have been the most effective and how can one measure their success?
2. Identify those whom you think are the most effective leaders and public servants. What are the traits you think make them effective?

Developmental Actions

1. As a leader in your community, develop a plan for regularly engaging with your constituents or fellow citizens. Be sure to think about the optimum time, space and frequency of these engagements.

About the Video Presenter

Allison Silberberg, the vice mayor of Alexandria, Virginia, is a writer and lifelong advocate for social justice issues. Elected to the Alexandria City Council in 2012, Silberberg has over 20 years of experience in community leadership and public service. Her writing focuses extensively on the role of the individual in creating social change. She is the author of *Visionaries In Our Midst: Ordinary People Who Are Changing Our World*, a book that profiles individuals who are making a difference in the U.S. Her writing has appeared in the *Washington Post*, the *Dallas Morning News*, and on PBS.org. Originally from Dallas, Silberberg has a B.A. in international relations and history from American University and an M.F.A. in playwriting from the School of Theater, Film and Television at the University of California, Los Angeles.

