

## FINAL DELIVERABLE

<b>Title</b>	Youth Civic Engagement
<b>Completed By</b>	Claire English, Makenna Gregurek, Mary Jane McNary, Evie Niemuth, and Mackenzie Passwaters
<b>Date Completed</b>	December 2022
<b>UI Department</b>	Policy and Public Affairs
<b>Course Name</b>	Policy and Persuasion , <a href="#">PBAF:3560:0002</a>
<b>Instructor</b>	Carrie Schuettpelz
<b>Community Partners</b>	Clinton City Council

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Clinton City Council  
Clinton, IA 52732



**Date:** December 8th, 2022

**To:** Clinton City Council

**From:** Claire English, Makenna Gregurek, Mary Jane McNary, Evie Niemuth, and Mackenzie Passwaters

**Re:** Clinton Youth Civic Engagement Efforts

**Appendix:** Clinton High School Survey

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## SUMMARY

Young people that participate in civic life are less likely to smoke, abuse drugs and alcohol, and drop out of school.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, localities with civically engaged citizens have lower crime rates, as well as greater economic prosperity, better-educated youth, and more effective governments.<sup>2</sup> While there are civic engagement programs for young people in Clinton, they need improvement. Clinton could benefit substantially from both the redesign of current efforts and the introduction of new civic engagement programs within the community.

## BACKGROUND

Youth civic engagement can be broken down into four categories:

1. civic action (participation in activities such as volunteering or service-learning)
2. civic commitment (the willingness to make positive contributions to society)
3. civic skills (the ability to be involved in civil society, politics, and democracy)
4. social cohesion (a sense of reciprocity, trust, and bonding to others).<sup>3</sup>

Individual benefits of civic engagement include:

- improved academic performance
- increased social-emotional wellbeing
- economic mobility.<sup>4</sup>

Youth civic engagement is crucial to the continuation of a well-functioning community, however, Clinton has few opportunities for youth to be civically engaged. Moreover, like many small communities, Clinton has a lack of data surrounding the issue, making it difficult to quantify the exposure that youth have to civic engagement education and programs.

## CURRENT EFFORTS AND FUNDING

Extracurricular activities and classroom curriculum currently constitute the bulk of Clinton's youth civic engagement efforts. They include:

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<sup>1</sup> Pancer, S. Mark. *The Psychology of Citizenship and Civic Engagement*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Pancer, S. Mark. *The Psychology of Citizenship and Civic Engagement*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> "Civic Engagement." Civic Engagement | Youth.gov, <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/civic-engagement-and-volunteering#:~:text=Civic%20engagement%20has%20the%20potential,need%20to%20enter%20the%20workforce>.

<sup>4</sup> "Why Is Youth Civic Engagement Important?" CIRCLE, <https://circle.tufts.edu/understanding-youth-civic-engagement/why-it-important>.



Clinton City Council  
Clinton, IA 52732



**1. Mayors Youth Commission**

The MYC challenges students to learn about city functions by attending city council meetings and engaging with the community. Students must apply to become a member of the MYC, which currently has 11 members.

**2. Synergy Clinton**

Synergy is made up of students and faculty from Clinton High School who work on initiatives to improve their community. Synergy allows students to receive academic credit for Iowa Core Standards that are essential for graduating.<sup>5</sup>

**3. High School Curriculum**

Clinton High School has both required and elective curriculum that civically educates students. This includes required classes, such as American Government or AP American Government, as well as an optional class, Contemporary U.S. Issues.<sup>6</sup> While Contemporary U.S. Issues offers more information concerning civic engagement than the required courses, the course does not offer direct ways for students to engage with their community.

Funding is somewhat scarce for civic engagement efforts within the community. Currently, civic organizations in Clinton receive money or can receive money through two main organizations: Clinton County 4-H Endowment Fund, a non-profit organization that works to provide financial resources for youth development through 4-H,<sup>7</sup> and the Clinton County Development Association, which provides financial assistance through their grant program for local educational, social, cultural, and environmental programs, as well as up to \$25,000 in scholarships for involved Clinton High School students.<sup>8</sup>

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Undergo Data Collection**

In order to quantify the experience and exposure that Clinton High School students have to civic engagement, we recommend administering a student survey. We have drafted two survey options, one online and one on paper. Responses will be anonymous, and will ask students a variety of questions to assess their experience with civic engagement and their desire to be civically engaged. The survey will be administered by Clinton High School teachers during homeroom time. This survey will address the need for critical data within the community. Furthermore, it will quantify the civic engagement issue by determining where students are civically engaged, as well as which components of civic engagement are most in need of improvement.

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<sup>5</sup> “Civics and Government (Essential Elements).” Civics and Government (Essential Elements) | Iowa Department of Education, <https://educateiowa.gov/standard/essential-elements/civics-and-government-essential-elements>.

<sup>6</sup> “Clinton High School 2022-2023 Course Catalog.” Clinton Community School District.

<sup>7</sup> “Clinton County.” Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/clinton/4h>.

<sup>8</sup> “Grants.” *Clinton County Development Association*, 2 June 2020, <https://clintoncountydevelopment.org/grants/>.



## 2. Redesign of the Mayor's Youth Council

There are several steps to this recommendation:

- Teachers should nominate students to the MYC to increase its size and diversity. Increasing the size of the MYC from 11 students to 20 would be ideal to represent diverse ideas and experiences. Through the nomination process, the goal would be to increase awareness of the program by encouraging participation by students who were not previously interested in applying, as well as those who were not nominated. The number of nominations is up to teacher discretion, but the goal should be to nominate a diverse group of students who will make the MYC representative of both the school and the community.
- Establish specific goals and bylaws for the program. Setting clear goals will help to measure success and visualize the outcomes of the MYC. Developing bylaws will help the organization solidify its purpose, as well as include practical, day-to-day details of how the MYC will run.
- Develop specialized committees for students within the MYC to serve on. Within these committees, students can focus on issues of importance to them and increase community awareness of these issues.
- Update the MYC Website. The Mayor's Youth Commission in Tacoma, Washington is a good example.<sup>9</sup> The website should introduce the members of the MYC, discuss its goals, provide a portfolio of past work, and simplify communication by providing a point of contact for the program. Along with a redesigned website, the MYC will also benefit from the creation of social media pages. Having an updated website would streamline this transition to social media and provide readily available content for the MYC to post. Hopefully this content will attract interest from the community.

## 3. Increase Volunteer Opportunities

Clinton should implement the following three steps to increase volunteering opportunities:

1. educate students on why civic engagement is vital to them and where they live
2. encourage students to utilize social media to share the importance of volunteering
3. organize projects for students to engage with.

Furthermore, Clinton could use Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a starting point for promoting volunteering since it is a day dedicated to service. Students cannot be mandated to volunteer on MLK day; however, both the MYC and Clinton High School could encourage students to do so by offering volunteer opportunities and reminding students why it is a day off.

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<sup>9</sup> Mayor's Youth Commission of Tacoma, City of Tacoma, [https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees\\_boards\\_commissions/mayor\\_s\\_youth\\_commission#:~:text=The%20Mayor%27s%20Youth%20Commission%20is,affect%20them%20and%20their%20community.](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/committees_boards_commissions/mayor_s_youth_commission#:~:text=The%20Mayor%27s%20Youth%20Commission%20is,affect%20them%20and%20their%20community.)



## BEST PRACTICES

Similar steps have been taken in other communities that have proven to be effective in challenging youth to be civically engaged, showing that tangible change is possible for Clinton. Examples of successful civic engagement initiatives in other communities include:

1. Voter education programs, such as “Hawk the Vote” at the University of Iowa, which helps to assist college students with the voting process.<sup>10</sup>
2. Academic reward systems that would incentivize schools to civically educate students. The California Department of Education provides funding and awards to schools with high civic engagement rates.<sup>11</sup>
3. Individual empowerment programs that work to support minority communities and all students regardless of socio-economic background. Successful individual empowerment programs exist in Des Moines Public Schools, such as Al Éxito, which seeks to motivate and prepare Latinx students for post-high school education, economic security, and civic engagement.<sup>12</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Clinton has the potential to create a positive culture where youth are civically engaged. Through this comprehensive plan that incorporates data collection, redesigning the Mayor’s Youth Commission, and increased volunteer opportunities, civic engagement can become the norm for Clinton youth.

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<sup>10</sup> “About Us.” *Hawk the Vote*, The University of Iowa, <https://vote.uiowa.edu/about-us>.

<sup>11</sup> “Civic Learning Award for CA Public Schools.” *Civic Learning Award For CA Public Schools - Transforming Schools: Superintendent's Initiatives (CA Dept of Education)*, California Department of Education, 18 Nov. 2022, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/civiclearningaward.asp>.

<sup>12</sup> “Al Éxito.” *Al Éxito Iowa*, <https://www.alexitoiowa.org/>.





# APPENDIX



CCSD Civic Engagement for  
Clinton High School Students  
2022-2023 School Year

Student Grade:  
Date:

### Section I: Civic Engagement Programs

In the following table, please describe your experience with the following civic engagement programs to the best of your ability. Please indicate either a **1, 2, 3, or 4** to describe your involvement with the following programs.

- 1: I have heard of this program.
- 2: I have **not** heard of this program.
- 3: I **currently** participate in this program.
- 4: I have **previously** participated in this program.

The Mayor's Youth Commission	
Synergy Clinton	
Family Community Services	
Student Council	
Interact Club	
Leo's Club	
National Honor Society	

Within the past year, have you been instructed on how to register to vote?	
If you answered yes to the previous question, were you instructed by Clinton High School?	
Are you currently registered to vote?	
Do you plan to vote in a political election when you are eligible?	

### Section III: Volunteering

In the following table, please describe your experience with the following volunteer opportunities to the best of your ability. Please indicate either **yes or no** to describe your involvement with the following opportunities.

Have you ever volunteered in Clinton, IA?	
Has Clinton High School ever offered you volunteer opportunities?	
Would you be interested in volunteering in your community?	

If you have ever volunteered in Clinton, please list what organization you volunteered for.

In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge Clinton, IA faces?

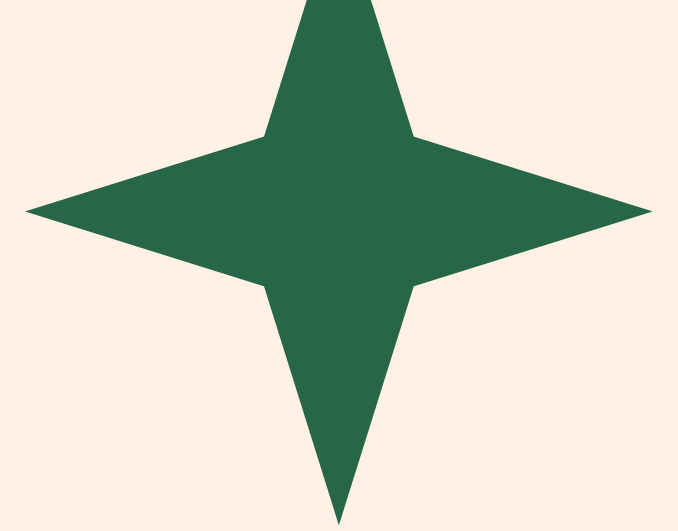
Public Policy and Persuasion | 2022

**Claire English, Makenna Gregurek,  
MaryJane McNary, Evie Niemuth, and  
Mackenzie Passwaters**

# *Youth Civic Engagement*

**In Clinton, Iowa**



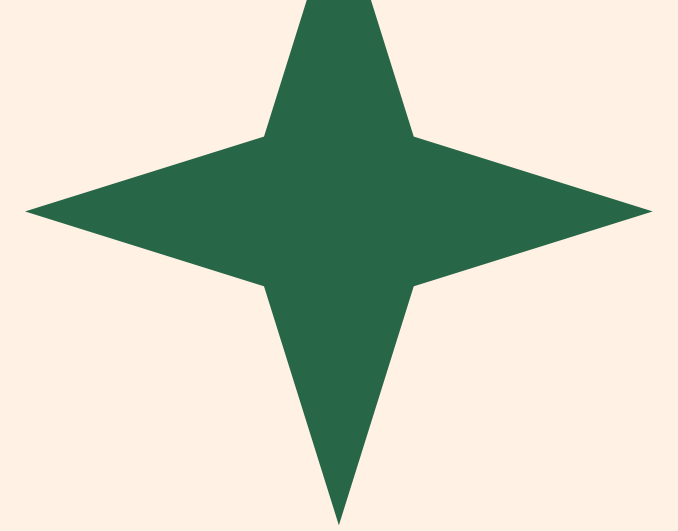


# *Introduction*

Civic engagement is crucial to inspire the next generation of leaders.



Photo: ScoreStream



# *Introduction*

Civic engagement is crucial to inspire the next generation of leaders.

Civic engagement programs for high schoolers within Clinton, IA are **few** and **far between**. Those that do exist are in dire need of improvements.



Photo: ScoreStream

# *What's That?*

**Four constructs of civic engagement:**

## **1. Civic Action**

# *What's That?*

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**2. Civic Commitment**

# *What's That?*

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**3. Civic Skills**

# *What's That?*

## Four constructs of civic engagement:

**1. Civic Action**

**2. Civic Commitment**

**3. Civic Skills**

**4. Social Cohesion**



# *What's That?*

## Four constructs of civic engagement:

**1. Civic Action**

Increased academic performance

**2. Civic Commitment**

Increased social-emotional wellbeing

**3. Civic Skills**

Economic mobility

**4. Social Cohesion**

Reduced unemployment

## Mayor's Youth Commission

- Learn about city functions
- Attend City Council meetings
- Application-based
- Eleven members



*Current  
Efforts*

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- Learn about city functions
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## Civic Organizations

- Synergy Clinton
- Family Community Services
- Student Council
- Interact Club
- Leo's Club
- National Honor Society



# Current Efforts

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- Attend City Council meetings
- Application-based
- Eleven members



## Civic Organizations

- Synergy Clinton
- Family Community Services
- Student Council
- Interact Club
- Leo's Club
- National Honor Society



## Curriculum

- American Government
- AP American Government
- Contemporary US Issues



# Current Efforts



## **Collect Data**

1

**Collect Data**

2

**Redesign Mayor's Youth Commission**



**1**

**Collect Data**

**2**

**Redesign Mayor's Youth Commission**

**3**

**Increase Volunteer Opportunities**

# *Recommendation #1: Data*

## **Why?**

- Lack of data in Clinton, IA
- Survey Clinton High School students

## **How?**

- Online & paper options
- Anonymous responses
- Yes/no, ranking, and free response questions
- Given to students in class
- Required for CHS students

## **Who?**

- Addresses need for critical data
- Help gauge students' civic engagement experience

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2022-2023 School Year

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The Mayor's Youth Commission	
Synergy Clinton	
Family Community Services	
Student Council	
Interact Club	
Leo's Club	
National Honor Society	



**Section II: Voting**

In the following table, please describe your experience with the following election opportunities to the best of your ability. Please indicate either **yes or no** to describe your involvement with the following opportunities.

Have you ever voted in a political election?	
Within the past year, have you been instructed on how to register to vote?	
If you answered yes to the previous question, were you instructed by Clinton High School?	
Are you currently registered to vote?	
Do you plan to vote in a political election when you are eligible?	

**Section III: Volunteering**

In the following table, please describe your experience with the following volunteer opportunities to the best of your ability. Please indicate either **yes or no** to describe your involvement with the following opportunities.

Have you ever volunteered in Clinton, IA?	
Has Clinton High School ever offered you volunteer opportunities?	
Would you be interested in volunteering in your community?	

If you have ever volunteered in Clinton, please list what organization you volunteered for.

In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge Clinton, IA faces?

# *Recommendation #2: Redesign Mayor's Youth Commission*

**01**

**02**

**03**

**04**

**05**



# *Recommendation #2: Redesign Mayor's Youth Commission*

**01**

Students  
nominated  
by teachers.

**02**

**03**

**04**

**05**

# *Recommendation #2: Redesign Mayor's Youth Commission*

**01**

Students  
nominated  
by teachers.

**02**

Create  
specific  
goals.

**03**

**04**

**05**

# *Recommendation #2: Redesign Mayor's Youth Commission*

**01**

Students  
nominated  
by teachers.

**02**

Create  
specific  
goals.

**03**

Develop  
specialized  
committees.

**04**

**05**

# *Recommendation #2: Redesign Mayor's Youth Commission*

**01**

Students  
nominated  
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**02**

Create  
specific  
goals.

**03**

Develop  
specialized  
committees.

**04**

Update  
website.

**05**

# *Recommendation #2: Redesign Mayor's Youth Commission*

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Create  
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goals.

**03**

Develop  
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**04**

Update  
website.

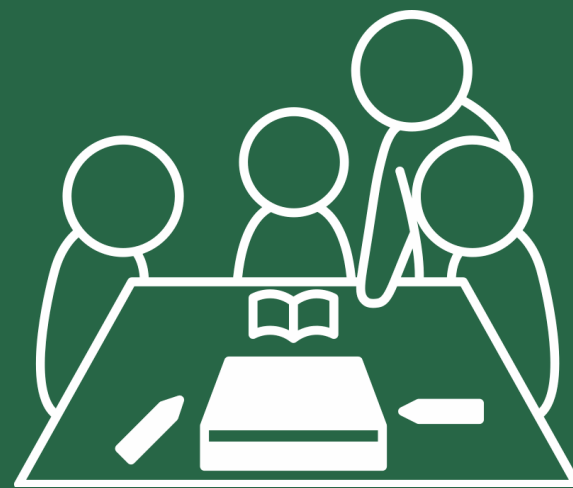
**05**

Create  
bylaws.

## *Recommendation #3: Increase Volunteer Opportunities*

Students don't have to be old enough to vote to engage with their community.

Offer alternative ways to get involved.



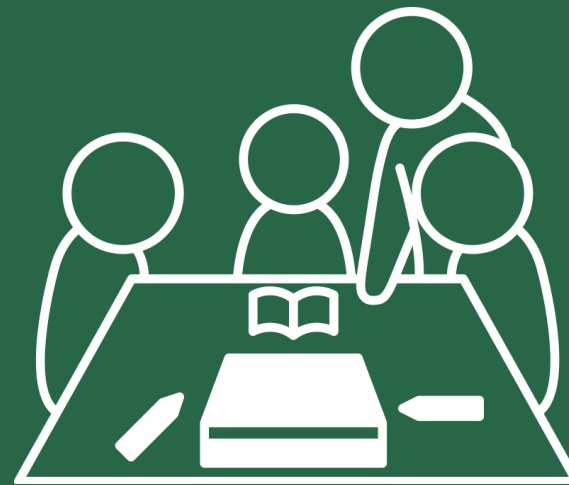
## *Recommendation #3: Increase Volunteer Opportunities*

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### **Where to Start**

- Use MLK Day to promote volunteering opportunities



# Recommendation #3: Increase Volunteer Opportunities

Students don't have to be old enough to vote to engage with their community.

Offer alternative ways to get involved.

## Where to Start

- Use MLK Day to promote volunteering opportunities



## Ways to Volunteer

1. WHY civic engagement is vital
2. Utilize social media
3. DIY projects



# *MLK day and Volunteering*

- MLK Day dedicated to civic engagement
- Remind students WHY it is a national holiday
- Offer ways to engage
- Encourage (not mandate) volunteering



# 3 Ways Students Can Volunteer

## Civic Circle

- Interactive graphic
- Shows ways to engage
- Encourage students to engage with it



## Social Media

- Provide social media posts for students
- Social media is just a starting point



## DIY Projects

- At home: write to a local politician
- Through MYC & school: host a food drive



# 3 Ways Students Can Volunteer

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# Why Share the Civic Circle?

- Ways to be civically engaged
- Interactive, accessible page
- Civic engagement beyond voting





# Example Social Media Graphics



#MLKDay Monday, Jan. 16, 2023

### I Will Serve

How will you honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy on MLK Day 2023? Join us, @AmeriCorps, and @TheKingCenter to unite as a nation in service to others! Share this badge if you're in and tag your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors to take action with you. Follow @AmeriCorps for all things MLK Day from volunteer opportunities to service project planning resources, and everything in between.

#UnitedWeServe #BelovedCommunity #MLKDay #MLKDayofService #TakeAction #IWillServe

Download



#MLKDay Monday, Jan. 16, 2023

### I Served

Did you #DoGood this #MLKDay? We want to hear from you! Post this badge and what inspired you to serve. Follow @AmeriCorps for other ways to share your MLK Day stories and reflections plus opportunities to step up and show up for your community, year-round.

#UnitedWeServe #BelovedCommunity #MLKDay #MLKDayofService #TakeAction #IServed

Download



#MLKDay



### Save the Date

Save the Date #MLKDay is on Monday, Jan. 16.

Let's act with urgency and deliver on the promise of Dr. King's example. Together, we can build a more united America by doing good. Follow @AmeriCorps and use the #LinkInBio to start planning your MLK Day of Service today.

#MLKDayofService #UnitedWeServe #TakeAction #BelovedCommunity #AmeriCorps #TheKingCenter

Download

## What's next?

- Share via email & school social media
- Encourage students to share pictures of themselves volunteering



# *Current Funding*

## **The Clinton County 4-H Endowment Fund**

- Non-profit organization
- Encourages youth development and involvement

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## **The Clinton County 4-H Endowment Fund**

- Non-profit organization
- Encourages youth development and involvement

## **Clinton County Development Association**

- Financial assistance to local causes & organizations
- Scholarships for Clinton students



# Best Practices

1

Voter Education Programs



2

Rewards



3

Individual Empowerment Programs



# Next Steps

**01**

- Teachers give survey to CHS students in class.

# Next Steps

**01**

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**02**

- Teachers nominate students for MYC.
- At least 20 students.
- Implement policy changes.

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**01**

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**03**

- Implement internal MYC changes.
- Increased involvement at city council meetings.

# Next Steps

**01**

- Teachers give survey to CHS students in class.

**02**

- Teachers nominate students for MYC.
- At least 20 students.
- Implement policy changes.

**03**

- Implement internal MYC changes.
- Increased involvement at city council meetings.

**04**

- MYC review survey data.
- Determine necessary civic engagement efforts.
- Plan MLK day of service.

# Conclusion

Clinton has the potential to create a positive culture of civically engaged youth.



Photo: The Clinton Herald, 2022

# Conclusion

Clinton has the potential to create a positive culture of civically engaged youth.

Data collection  
+  
Redesigning MYC  
+  
Volunteer opportunities  
=  
Civically engaged youth!



Photo: The Clinton Herald, 2022

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*Thank  
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**Any questions?**