

Community Focus Statement F: Increase community involvement in community beautification and social cohesion.

**Action Statement F.3: Encourage citizen involvement in county government and the state legislature.**

F3

**Benchmark:** Residents of Phelan Piñon Hills participate at the county or state level, in committees or elected positions.

**Champion:** Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community

**Estimated Cost:** variable depending on proposed projects.



Local government meeting in action. Photo source: Calwatch

Citizen involvement in government is an essential part of democracy. Phelan Piñon Hills community involvement in county government and the state legislature should be encouraged because such involvement increases government legitimacy, efficiency, and accountability. It also provides residents the opportunity to know that their issues and concerns are being heard by their local government (such as the Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District) and regional government (such as the County of San Bernardino or the State of California).

Residents may not be involved with local government issues because they simply do not know how or where to get involved. Studies show that low-income residents and residents under the age of 35 are less likely to participate in

local government affairs. Individuals living in a community for over 10 years are more likely to attend public meetings or contact elected officials. These residents constitute a key group that could be involved in outreach, encouraging neighbors and community members to participate in local government affairs.

Information about community meetings, public hearings, or other important events that involve citizen participation should be widely marketed to all community members in Phelan Piñon Hills. Residents should be encouraged to participate in local government affairs and to weigh in on all issues instead of just the issues that negatively affect them.

For larger-scale issues, Phelan Piñon Hills may desire to engage the state legislature. A community with a strong presence in San Bernardino County government would be able to more easily organize and mobilize to actively engage the state legislature.



Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Contact residents and community leaders to organize a citizen action committee to stay active in regional and statewide politics.	Champion	Month 1	20 <sup>th</sup> Senate District, California State Legislature <a href="http://sd20.senate.ca.gov/">http://sd20.senate.ca.gov/</a>
2. Identify community concerns that could be brought to the regional and state government, and rank them in levels of importance. The committee chair can assign group representatives to be key contacts on important issues.	Citizen action committee	Months 3 – 4	47 <sup>th</sup> Assembly District, California State Legislature <a href="http://asmdc.org/members/a47/">http://asmdc.org/members/a47/</a>  San Bernardino County 5 <sup>th</sup> District <a href="http://www.sbcounty.gov/bosd5/Default.aspx">http://www.sbcounty.gov/bosd5/Default.aspx</a>  US Congress, District #8 <a href="http://cook.house.gov/">http://cook.house.gov/</a>
3. Attend commission meetings, office hours, and other events where elected officials may be present. Work on relationship building with these individuals to advocate on the community's behalf.	Citizen action committee	On-going	US Senate <a href="http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/">http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/</a>  US Senate <a href="https://www.harris.senate.gov/">https://www.harris.senate.gov/</a>  ICMA International <a href="http://icma.org/en/international/services/expertise/citizen_involvement?mobile=false">http://icma.org/en/international/services/expertise/citizen_involvement?mobile=false</a>  Governing The States and Localities <a href="http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-national-survey-shows-citizens-most-vocal-active-in-local-government.html">http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-national-survey-shows-citizens-most-vocal-active-in-local-government.html</a>