



## Teens learn p's of polling

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IOWA CITY -- A group of Chicago high school students learned the three P's of telephone polling at the University of Iowa this week.

It's all about patience, politeness and persuasion, the students found, after calling more than 500 residents of Washington, Iowa, for a survey about their town.

The students ran into hangups and "leave me alones" from some people they called.

But they also found many receptive Washington residents eager to share opinions about their city.

"Most of them were happy to talk to somebody. They had so much to say," said Edward Ward, a 16-year-old junior from Chicago. "This is allowing their voices to be heard through us."

The 28 students at the university were from the Mikva Challenge, a program that engages low-income Chicago youth in politics to develop future civic leaders.

The partnership was hatched after a UI political science graduate mentioned the program to UI professors Tom Rice and David Redlawsk. The faculty visited the Chicago program and were impressed. They invited students to campus to learn the ins and outs of scientific polling.

Washington city officials, with about 7,000 residents 30 miles south of Iowa City, jumped at the chance to have a scientific poll conducted, said Rice, chairman of the UI political science department.

"I knew many smaller communities would like to do a poll, but they can't afford it," he said. "What the students did, the city can use it to better understand and serve the citizens."

During the week of July 6, the students helped design, execute and analyze the public opinion poll of residents.

The students presented their findings Thursday to the city council.

The most frequent responses about improving quality of life were resolving the long struggle for a new high school; attracting more jobs, businesses and industry; having better shopping and restaurants; and road repair.

Chicago sophomore Theresa Waters, 15, was surprised by how familiar the concerns are to her neighborhood back home.

"What I didn't expect was for it to be so much like Chicago," she said.