

Agenda to Establish Municipal Government in the U.S. Virgin Islands

Implementing ACT No. 6828 Bill No. 26-0037 to bring government closer to the people, allowing government to be more transparent, accountable, efficient, streamlining the territory's government to be more effective to improve the standard of living, quality of life and grow the economy. Exhibit document http://sedivision.com/uploads/Act_6828.pdf

The Virgin Islands is a territory of the United States of America. In 1917, America purchased the islands (St. Thomas, St. John, & St. Croix) from Denmark for \$25M in gold. Ten years later all citizens of the territory became American citizens in 1927. The United States Navy administrated the territory from 1917 to 1932. The Department of Interior took over administrative control from the Navy and set up municipal government with the local authorities. In 1970 Virgin Islands were able to elect their own government (Governor, Senators & Congressional Representative to the U.S. House of Representative). The US Virgin Islands is in the process of planning and preparing for the 2017 Centennial event, hallmarking the US Virgin Islands purchase and transfer between Denmark and the United States.

United States Virgin Islands: Government and society

The government is organized under the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands, passed by the U.S. Congress in 1936 and amended in 1954 and subsequently. The government has three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. The governor, elected by universal adult (18 years and older) suffrage to a maximum of two consecutive four-year terms, appoints heads of the executive branches.

Virgin Islands: Settlement and history of the U.S. Virgin Islands

The Organic Act of 1936, enacted by the U.S. Congress for the establishment of congressional government, provided for two municipal councils, one for St. Thomas and St. John, the other for St. Croix, and a council for the whole territory. A Revised Organic Act adopted in 1954 created a central government and abolished the independent municipal councils.

What are the different types of local government?

As a dual sovereignty system, the US has a definition of local government as does each state. They do not entirely agree with each other. In some states, counties are divided into townships. There are several different types of jurisdictions at the municipal level, including the city, town, borough, and village.

What are the three main forms of municipal government in the United States?

Large municipalities have three basic types of government. These are mayor-council, council-manager, and commission. The mayor-council type of government is the most popular form for running a city.

What are the powers of the state government?

State Government. Under the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, all powers not granted to the federal government are reserved for the states and the people. All state governments are modeled after the federal government and consist of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial.

Who is the head of the executive branch of the state government?

In every state, the executive branch is headed by a governor who is directly elected by the people. In most states, the other leaders in the executive branch are also directly elected, including the lieutenant governor, the attorney general, the secretary of state, and auditors and commissioners.

Local Government

Local governments generally include two tiers: counties, also known as boroughs in Alaska and parishes in Louisiana, and municipalities, or cities/towns. In some states, counties are divided into townships. Municipalities can be structured in many ways, as defined by state constitutions, and are called, variously, townships, villages, boroughs, cities, or towns. Various kinds of districts also provide functions in local government outside county or municipal boundaries, such as school districts or fire protection districts.

Municipal governments — those defined as cities, towns, boroughs (except in Alaska), villages, and townships — are generally organized around a population center and in most cases correspond to the geographical designations used by the United States Census Bureau for reporting of housing and population statistics. Municipalities vary greatly in size, from the millions of residents of New York City and Los Angeles to the 287 people who live in Jenkins, Minnesota.

Municipalities generally take responsibility for parks and recreation services, police and fire departments, housing services, emergency medical services, municipal courts, transportation services (including public transportation), and public works (streets, sewers, snow removal, signage, and so forth).

Whereas the federal government and state governments share power in countless ways, a local government must be granted power by the state. In general, mayors, city councils, and other governing bodies are directly elected by the people.

https://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/publications/Local_Government_Handbook.pdf

State & local Government on the Net <http://www.statelocalgov.net/>

Why can't state and local governments run deficits in the US?

As part of the rebalancing of the US government during the Constitutional Convention, the Founders made the decision to consolidate the states' governments into a Federal government. As a result of this consolidation, States were forbidden to print money--a right formerly available to them as sovereign states--since that would create competition to federal dollars and create a patchwork of places where MA dollars would and wouldn't be accepted or NJ dollars and so on. Additionally, with communications lag, farmers in one state had little idea about whether or not paper money was actually backed by real specie. (see: Continental currency)

States are allowed to sell debt/issue bonds, but deficits proper in the extreme would require printing money to bring the gap down. As a result, states are forbidden by the Constitution to run deficits. This has trickled down in turn to local governments, which otherwise might require the state to bail them out.

<https://www.quora.com/Why-cant-state-and-local-governments-run-deficits-in-the-US>

Census Bureau Reports There Are 89,004 Local Governments in the United States

The U.S. Census Bureau today released preliminary counts of local governments as the first component of the [2012 Census of Governments](#).

In 2012, 89,004 local governments existed in the United States, down from 89,476 in the last census of governments conducted in 2007. Local governments included 3,031 counties (down from 3,033 in 2007), 19,522 municipalities (up from 19,492 in 2007), 16,364 townships (down from 16,519 in 2007), 37,203 special districts (down from 37,381 in 2007) and 12,884 independent school districts (down from 13,051 in 2007).

Conducted every five years (for years ending in "2" and "7"), the census of governments provides the only uniform source of statistics for all of the nation's state and local governments. These statistics allow for in-depth trend analysis of all individual governments and provide a complete, comprehensive and authoritative benchmark of state and local government activity.

The census of governments measures three components: organization, employment and finance. These components provide statistics on the number of governments that exist, the services they provide, the number of their employees and their financial activity. In addition to the information provided for states, cities, counties and townships, the census of governments also provides information on special districts and school districts.

Other Key Findings

Among the key findings in the 2012 Census of Governments preliminary counts:

- Illinois leads the nation with 6,968 local governments — approximately 2,000 more than second-place Pennsylvania.
- Hawaii has 21 local governments, the fewest of any state.
- Texas remains first in the nation with the most independent school districts at 1,079. Closely behind is California, with 1,025 independent school districts.
- Seventeen states had more special districts compared with 2007, and 29 had fewer. Five states (including the District of Columbia) had no change.
- Ten states had fewer townships because of mergers and consolidations. Kansas decreased the most, moving from 1,353 in 2007 to 1,268 in 2012, a decrease of 85.

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/governments/cb12-161.html>

Forms of Municipal Government

A municipal charter is the legal document that defines the organization, powers, functions, and essential procedures of the city government. The charter also details the form of municipal government, of which there are historically five forms: council-manager, mayor-council, commission, town meeting and representative town meeting.

Council-Manager

Characteristics include:

- City council oversees the general administration, makes policy, sets budget
- Council appoints a professional city manager to carry out day-to-day administrative operations
- Often the mayor is chosen from among the council on a rotating basis

This is the most common form of government. According to surveys by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), this form of government has grown from 48% usage in 1996 to 55% usage in 2006. It is most popular in cities with populations over 10,000, mainly in the Southeast and Pacific coast areas. Some examples are Phoenix, Arizona; Topeka, Kansas; Salt Lake City, Utah and Rockville, Maryland.

Mayor-Council

Characteristics include:

- Mayor is elected separately from the council, is often full-time and paid, with significant administrative and budgetary authority

- Depending on the [municipal charter](#), the mayor could have [weak or strong powers](#)
- Council is elected and maintains legislative powers
- Some cities appoint a professional manager who maintains limited administrative authority

Occuring in 34% of cities surveyed by International City/County Management Association (ICMA), this is the second most common form of government. It is found mostly in older, larger cities, or in very small cities, and is most popular in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest. Cities with variations in the mayor-council form of government are New York, New York; Houston, Texas; and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Commission

Characteristics include:

- Voters elect individual commissioners to a small governing board
- Each commissioner is responsible for one specific aspect, such as fire, police, public works, health, finance
- One commissioner is designated as chairman or mayor, who presides over meetings
- The commission has both legislative and executive functions

The commission form of city government is the oldest form of government in the U.S., but exists today in less than 1% of cities. It typically occurs in cities with populations below 100,000, such as Sunrise, Florida and Fairview, Tennessee.

Town Meeting

Characteristics include:

- All voters meet to decide basic policy and elect officials to carry out those policies

Although the town meeting form of government is generally viewed as the purest form of democracy, because it allows all eligible voters a voice in local policy decisions, it is practiced in only 5% of municipalities.

Town meeting government is found in Marblehead, Massachusetts.

Representative Town Meeting

Characteristics include:

- Voters select a large number of citizens to represent them at town meetings, where only they can vote

- Each town meeting must be announced with a warrant that provides the date, time and location of the meeting and specifies the items to be discussed
- The selectmen are responsible for implementing policy

This form of government is found in fewer than 1% of cities, almost exclusively in small, New England municipalities, such as Bowdoin, Maine and Lexington, Massachusetts.

Current Trends

Recent examinations of government structure indicate that these forms of government are less distinct than they once were. This is due, in part, to the common practice of incorporating structural features from other forms into one's current form. This mixing is also attributed to local responses to socioeconomic, demographic, and political changes. The most common mixing occurs across the two most prevalent forms, mayor-council and the council-manager. Among all cities proposing a change to their structure of government, the most common proposal was to add the position of [chief administration officer/city manager](#). This professionalization of government administration also had the highest percentage of voter approval. Among other proposed changes, 50% or more respondents of ICMA's 2006 survey reported voter approval to increase or decrease the number of council members, to modify the method of electing the mayor and to decrease the power or authority of the mayor.

<http://www.nlc.org/build-skills-and-networks/resources/cities-101/city-structures/forms-of-municipal-government>

The Form of Government in the Thirty Most Populous Cities

Listed below is the form of government for the thirty most populous cities in the United States, based on the 2010 U.S. Census figures. The forms of government are informed by the member database at the National League of Cities.

Rank	City Name	State	Form Of Government
1	New York	NY	Mayor-Council
2	Los Angeles	CA	Mayor-Council
3	Chicago	IL	Mayor-Council
4	Houston	TX	Mayor-Council
5	Philadelphia	PA	Mayor-Council
6	Phoenix	AZ	Council-Manager
7	San Antonio	TX	Council-Manager
8	San Diego	CA	Mayor-Council
9	Dallas	TX	Council-Manager
10	San Jose	CA	Council-Manager
11	Indianapolis	IN	Mayor-Council
12	Jacksonville	FL	Mayor-Council

13	San Francisco	CA	Mayor-Council
14	Austin	TX	Council-Manager
15	Columbus	OH	Mayor-Council
16	Fort Worth	TX	Council-Manager
17	Louisville-Jefferson County	KY	Mayor-Council
18	Charlotte	NC	Council-Manager
19	Detroit	MI	Mayor-Council
20	El Paso	TX	Council-Manager
21	Memphis	TN	Mayor-Council
22	Nashville-Davidson	TN	Mayor-Council
23	Baltimore	MD	Mayor-Council
24	Boston	MA	Mayor-Council
25	Seattle	WA	Mayor-Council
26	Washington	DC	Mayor-Council
27	Denver	CO	Mayor-Council
28	Milwaukee	WI	Mayor-Council
29	Portland	OR	Commission
30	Las Vegas	NV	Council-Manager