

Local Government Basics: Understanding the Policy Levers in Municipal Government

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PEPPERDINE | SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

DAVENPORT INSTITUTE
— FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIC LEADERSHIP —

Road Map

1. Introduction
2. California Government Structure
3. Government Responsibilities

Break

1. Forms of Local Government
2. Roles of Staff and Elected Officials
3. Importance of Community-Based Organizations
4. Where to Go and Who to Ask

**In the chat, type one word
that comes to mind when
you hear “government”**



• Introduction

Government(s) in California

Overview of California

58 Counties



482 Incorporated Cities



121 Charter Cities
(authority over municipal affairs)

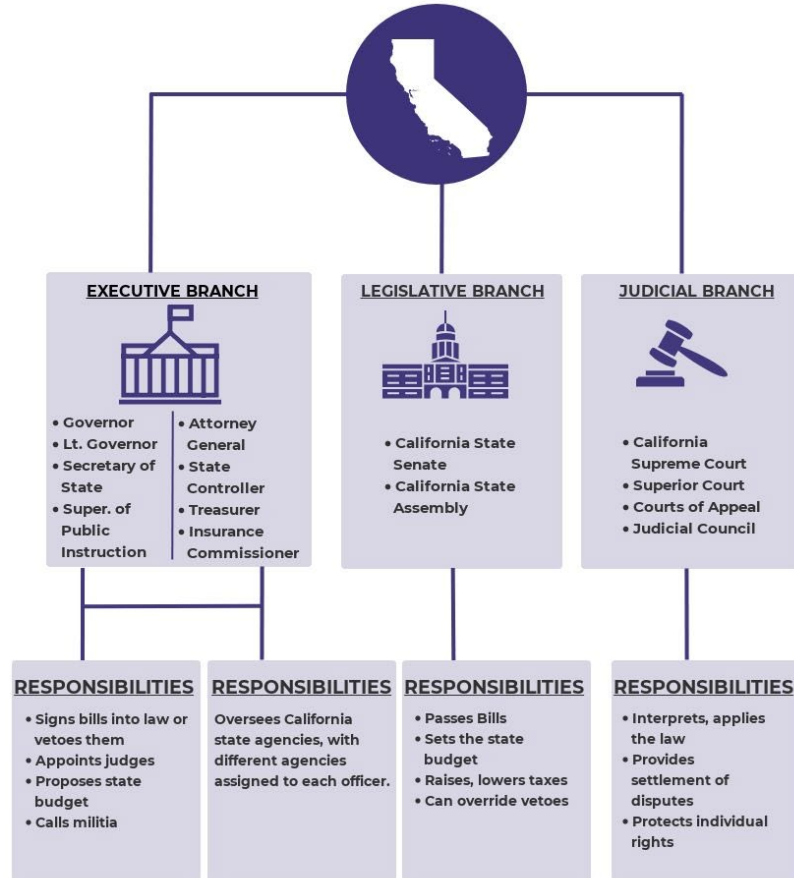


361 General Law Cities
(bound by state's general law)



• **Government Responsibilities**

HOW CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT WORKS



State Government

- State highways
- State prison system
- State courts
- Schools
 - Universities and K-12 funding
- Administrative oversight
 - Department of Water Resources, Department of Transportation, Labor and Workforce Development Agency, etc.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

What's the difference between state and county governments?

STATE GOVERNMENT

Governor

Legislature enacts laws

Fund state highways

Fund education including Cal Poly, Cuesta College and local schools

Provide money to counties for health & welfare services

State Public Health issues public health guidance & mandates for the entire state

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

County Board of Supervisors

Provide for residents of the County's health & welfare

58 counties in California

Receive Federal & State funding for health & welfare including homeless services & alcohol & drug services

Public Health Officer works for County & guides pandemic response

More info at elocity.org



County Governments

- Elections
- Police and Fire
 - Unincorporated areas and contracted with cities
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Development
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Health
- Justice System



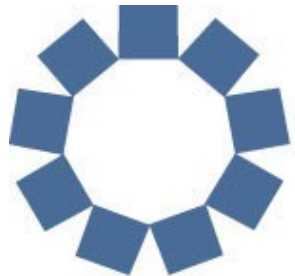
City Governments

- Water
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Development
- Police
- Fire
- Parks and Recreation



Regional Governments

- Knowledge and Resource Sharing
- Strategic Cooperation
- Shared Vision
 - Economic Development
 - Sustainability
 - Transportation



Association of Bay Area Governments

Special Districts

- Over 3,000 special districts across California
- Provide specialized services in areas like:
 - Water
 - Sewage
 - Fire Protection
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Ports



ALPINE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

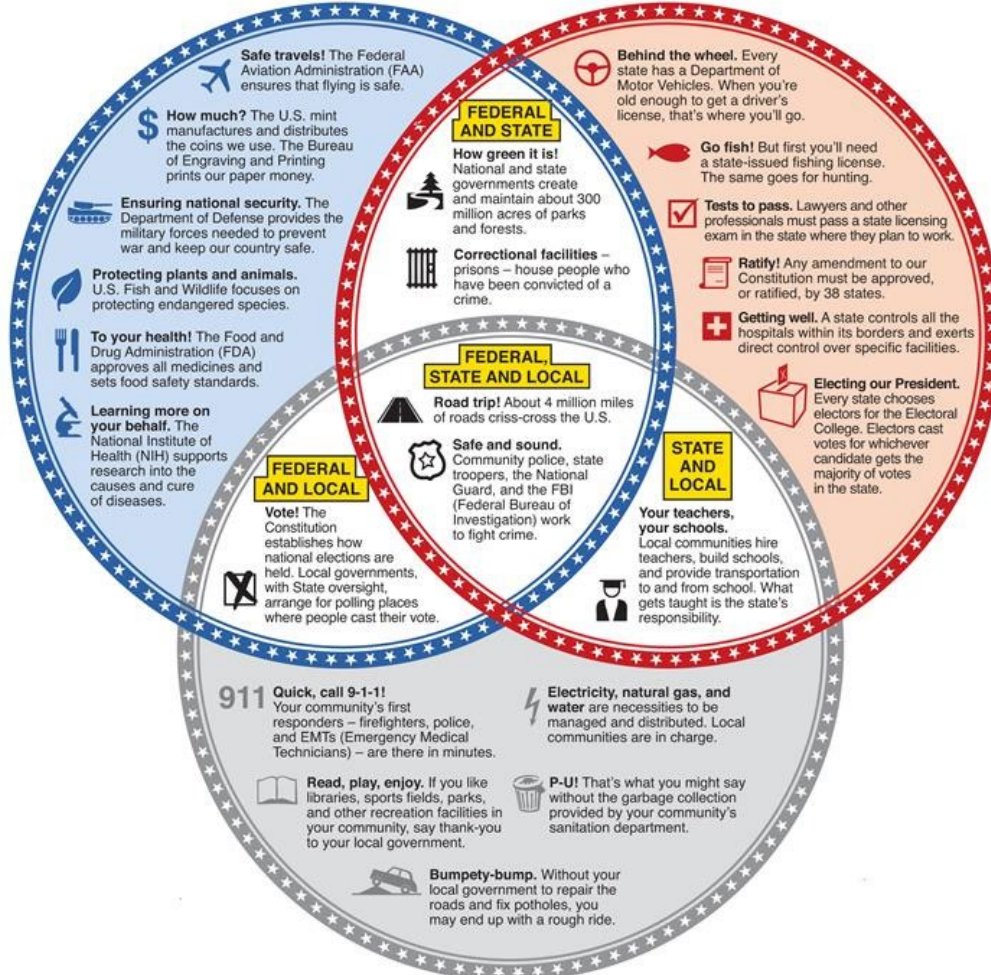
Government of Schools

- University Systems
 - University of California (UC)
 - California State University (CSU)
- California Department of Education
 - Oversees K-12 public schools statewide
- County Boards of Education
 - Operates under authority of state with jurisdiction over local schools
 - Elected superintendent of schools
- Local School Districts
 - Most direct control over the day-to-day operations of public schools
 - Elected school board members



FEDERAL

STATE



LOCAL

Questions?

• **10 Minute Break!**

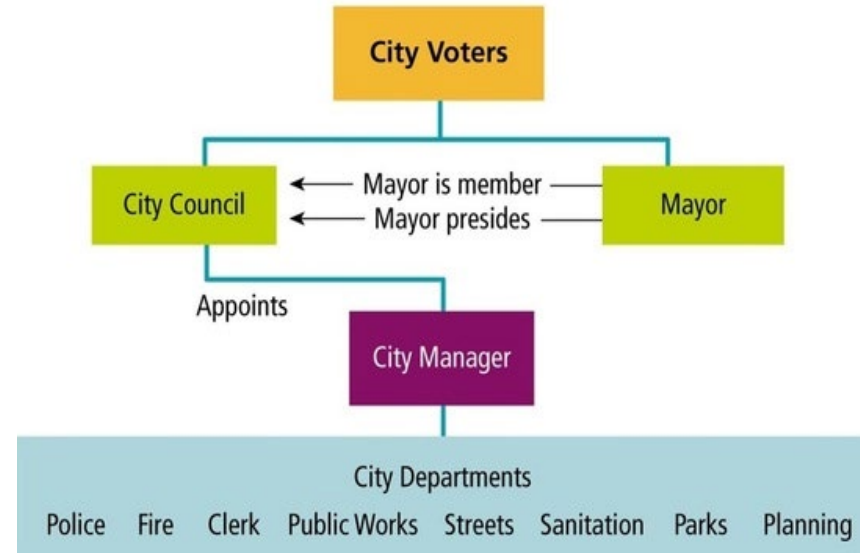
Stretch & Hydrate

• **Forms of Local Government**

Council-Manager

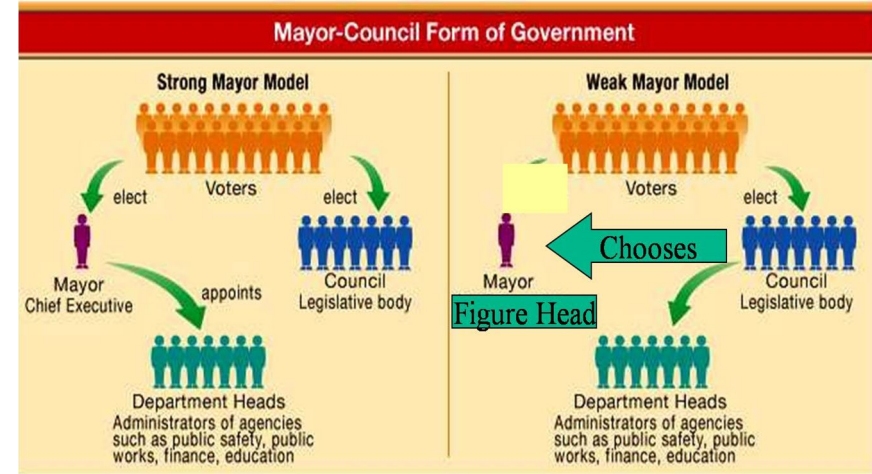
- Most common form of local government
- City council oversees the general administration, budget, policy, and vision
- Council appoints a professional city manager to carry out day-to-day operations
 - Serves as chief administrator and manages city departments
- Mayor is often chosen from the council on a rotating basis, but can also be elected directly

Council-Manager Form of Government



Mayor-Council

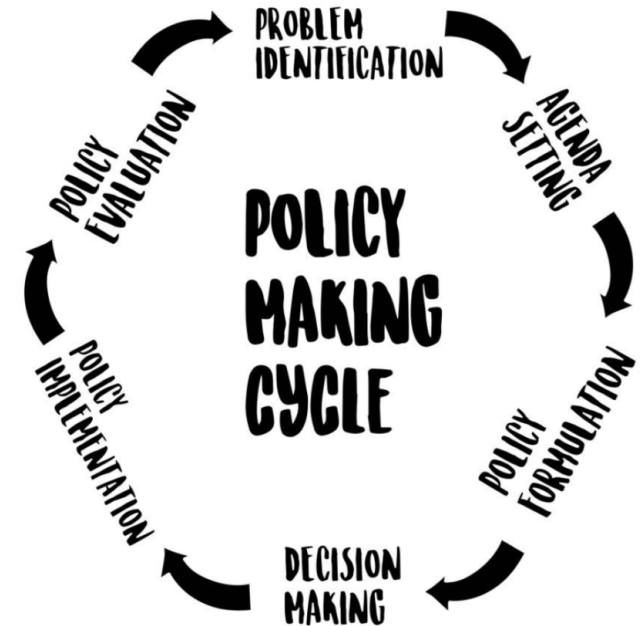
- Second most common form of local government
- Includes “strong mayor” and “weak mayor” models, with strong mayors have much more authority over appointments, budgets, vetoes, enforcement, etc.
- Mayor is elected separately from the council
 - Often full-time and paid as such, with significant administrative and budgetary authority
- Council is elected and maintains legislative powers
- Some cities appoint a professional manager who reports directly to mayor



Roles of Staff and Elected Officials

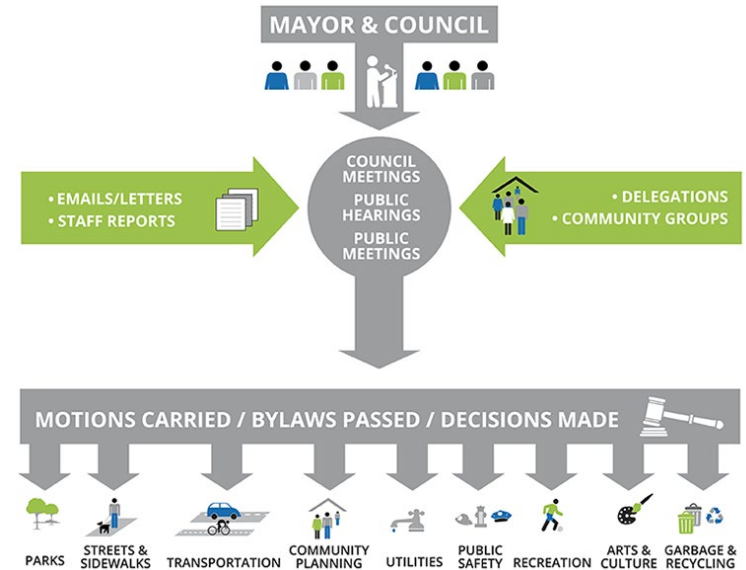
Role of Elected Officials

- Establishes priorities, goals, mission, and vision for the city
- Serves as the policy-making body responsible for all legislative decisions
- Appoints city manager, city attorney, and city commissions
- Adopts budget, enacts ordinances, and approves major contracts



Role of Staff

- Implements the policy decisions made by the city council
- Drafts reports and policy recommendations for council's consideration
- Serves the community most directly in responding to questions, concerns, emergencies, etc.
- Staff are the backbone of the city — they “make it happen”





Community-Based Organizations

**In the chat, name a
community-based
organization(s) you are
involved with**

Community-Based Organizations

- These are highly engaged organizations that represent much of the community and help bring residents' concerns to the attention of the city
- Inform and shape city policy decisions in a variety of ways
- Include neighborhood associations, chambers of commerce, religious institutions, nonprofits, service clubs, unions, local media outlets, etc.



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OF CENTRAL ORANGE COAST
Costa Mesa | Irvine | Newport Beach | Orange | Santa Ana

• **Where to Go and Who to Ask**

Where to Go and Who to Ask

- You have an issue, concern, or question and want to know who can help
- The policy/problem will help determine where it is a federal, state, or local issue
- If local, then the form of city government will also instruct the proper institutional level
- City and county departments are usually better positioned to respond to direct needs
 - Identify which department most closely aligns with your problem: housing, crime, road repair, utilities, etc.
- Formal policy changes fall on the legislative body in the municipality
 - Community-based organizations can help bring greater attention to the issue



Questions?