LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

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CITY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

In Florida, a municipality is free to adopt any of the basic municipal forms outlined in this presentation, or any variation thereof

- Nothing is prescribed nor prohibited by State law

3 Primary Government Structures for American Cities:
- Mayor-Council Form
- Council-Manager Form
- Commission Form

MAYOR-COUNCIL FORM

- The Mayor-Council form is used in most large, industrial cities
  - Used by about 49% of all municipalities
  - Used by about 56% of those with populations over 250,000
  - Used by about 75% of those with populations over 1 million

- In the Mayor-Council form, both the Council and the Mayor are elected
  - Mayor may be elected by direct, popular vote or by council election

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MAYOR-COUNCIL FORM

Variations

- Strong Mayor Type
  - Distinct division of powers between the Council & Mayor
  - The Mayor is chief executive with substantial influence on policy making process & administration
  - Holds budgetary & appointing powers, including power to veto legislative actions of the council
  - Some large cities with a strong mayor also have a **chief administrative officer** (CAO)
    - A professionally trained CAO oversees the administrative operations of city government
    - Sometimes called the "Deputy Mayor"

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MAYOR-COUNCIL FORM

- Weak Mayor Type
  - Primary administrative control, including most appointments & development of the budget, is with the Council
  - Some control of functional areas may be delegated to boards & commissions
  - Mayor's authority is little, if any, greater than other Council members
  - Department heads report to the Council as a whole, or the Mayor in his/her capacity as spokesperson for the Council

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MAYOR-COUNCIL FORM

- Positives:
  - Adaptability
  - Responsiveness to community needs
  - Systems with a Chief Administrative Officer leave the mayor free to focus policy formation & ceremonial tasks

- Negatives:
  - Strong Mayor systems may concentrate power with a single representative

COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM

- The Council-Manager form is used most frequently in medium-sized cities
  - Used by 42% of all municipalities
  - Used by 60%+ of those with populations of 25,000 to 250,000
  - Most common form in Florida (about 270 of 411 FL cities have a position of "manager" or "administrator")
- Use of this form of govt. continues to increase
  - The number of council-manager adoptions outruns mayor-council adoptions by 3 to 1 over the past 20 years
  - In Florida, most recent changes of govt. form have been from some other form to council-manager form

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COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM

- In the Council-Manager form, the City Council, usually 5 to 7 people elected by direct popular vote, has responsibility for making policy

- Administrative responsibility lies with a full-time, professionally trained **City Manager**
  - Supervises & coordinates the departments; appoints & removes directors; prepares budget for council's consideration; makes reports & recommendations to council
  - Mayor has no involvement in day-to-day administration of city, ceremonial duties only
- The City Council makes policy, the City Manager carries it out

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COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM

Variations

- Classic Council-Manager
  - Council-Manager structure; appointed CAO; mayor is not independently elected at-large; mayor does not have veto & does not have a formal role in budget or appointments

- Council-Manager with At-Large Mayor
  - Council-Manager structure; appointed CAO; mayor is independently elected at-large; mayor does not have veto & does not have a formal role in budget or appointments

- Council-Manager with Empowered Mayor
  - Council-Manager structure; appointed CAO; mayor is independently elected at-large; mayor has veto & a formal role in budget & appointments, including the manager

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COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM

- Positives:
  - Insulates the management of city government from the vagaries of local politics (the focus is a strong, non-political executive/administrative office)
    - The City Manager is expected to abstain from political involvement
  - Emphasizes professional expertise & administrative accountability
- Negatives:
  - None

COMMISSION FORM

- The Commission form is used primarily in smaller rural communities
  - Used in a small number of cities, fading in usage

- In the Commission form, the people elect a set of commissioners & each acts as a council member
  - Each commissioner also serves as the Director of a particular City Department
  - No single chief executive

➤ *Note: Many Florida municipalities (including Gainesville) label their legislative bodies as "commissions" but do not employ the commission form of government.*

COMMISSION FORM

- Positives
  - Early advocates hoped the concentration of power in a few elected commissioners would make administration more effective & enhance accountability to the public
  - Offers more integration of policy & administration than other forms

- Negatives
  - Tends to provide inadequate coordination, insufficient internal control, & amateur direction of administration

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