

Municipal Form of Government 2018

March 2018

Dear Municipal Clerk:

Your assistance is needed in updated an important national database on local government. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is conducting a new version of its Municipal Form of Government Survey, which has been distributed for more than 40 years. This survey gathers the most comprehensive information available on form of government, election systems, provisions for referendum/recall, and term limits. A summary report of aggregated survey results will be published in various ICMA publications and on the ICMA website. Please ensure the success of this survey by completing it by **April 25, 2018**.

For fastest completion, we encourage you to complete the survey online at www.icma.org/fog2018survey. If you prefer to complete this hard copy, a postage-paid envelope is included for your convenience.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Please contact surveyresearch@icma.org with any questions.

Thank you in advance for your time.



Marc A. Ott
Executive Director, ICMA

Definitions for the survey that follows:

The term **municipality** refers to cities, towns, townships, villages, and boroughs.

The term **council** refers to an elected body whose members may be called council members, aldermen, selectmen, freeholders, trustees, commissioners, or a similar title.

The **chief appointed official (CAO)** of the local government is often referred to as city manager, chief executive officer, city administrator, chief administrative officer, town administrator, village manager, or a similar title.

The **chief elected official (CEO)** of the local government may have the title of mayor, president, board chair, etc.

1. Indicate your municipality's current form of government as defined by your charter, ordinance, or state law. *(Check only one.)*
- ☐ a. **Mayor-Council.** Elected council or board serves as the legislative body. The chief elected official (e.g., mayor) is the head of government, with significant administrative authority, and generally elected separately from the council.
- ☐ b. **Council-Manager.** Elected council or board and chief elected official are responsible for making policy with advice of the chief appointed official (e.g., administrator/manager). A professional administrator appointed by the board or council has full responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the government.
- ☐ c. **Commission.** Members of a board of elected commissioners serve as heads of specific departments while also collectively sitting as the legislative body of the government.
- ☐ d. **Town Meeting.** Qualified voters convene and act as a legislative body that makes basic policy, votes on the budget, and chooses a board. These elected officials may carry out the policies established by town meeting or may delegate the day-to-day management of the municipality to an appointed manager/administrator.
- ☐ e. **Representative Town Meeting.** Similar to town meeting except that voters select residents to represent them at the town meeting. All residents may attend and participate in debate, but only the selected representatives may vote.

2. How is your municipality's *structure or form of government* established? *(Check only one.)*

- ☐ a. Charter ☐ c. Ordinance ☐ e. By-law ☐ g. Other (Please specify): _____
- ☐ b. State law ☐ d. Resolution ☐ f. Special election/referendum _____

3. Does your municipality have the position of chief appointed official? *(The chief appointed official of the local government is referred to as city manager, chief executive officer, city administrator, chief administrative officer, town administrator, village manager, or a similar title.)* ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

A. If your municipality has the position of chief appointed official, what action established the position? *(This question refers only to the establishment of the position, not to the person or group that does the hiring.) (Check only one.)*

- ☐ a. Charter ☐ f. Elected council/board created/voted on position
- ☐ b. State law ☐ g. Referendum
- ☐ c. Ordinance ☐ h. Town meeting
- ☐ d. Resolution ☐ i. Other (Please specify): _____
- ☐ e. Chief elected official created position

B. If your municipality has the position of chief appointed official, who *appoints* that position? *(Check only one.)*

- ☐ a. Appointed by chief elected official alone ☐ d. Nominated by chief elected official; approved by council/board
- ☐ b. Appointed by council alone ☐ e. Nominated by council/board; approved by chief elected official
- ☐ c. Appointed by combination of chief elected official & council/board ☐ f. Other (Please specify): _____

4. Does your municipality have residency requirements for any of your employees? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

A. If yes, which employees have residency requirements? *(Check all applicable.)*

- ☐ a. All municipal employees ☐ c. Public safety employees
- ☐ b. Chief appointed official ☐ d. Other employees (Please specify): _____

5. Who has the independent authority to develop and make recommendations for the budget submitted to the council? *(The term "develop" means that the person has responsibility for content of the budget.) (Check only one.)*

- ☐ a. Chief elected official ☐ d. Chief financial officer
- ☐ b. Chief appointed official ☐ e. Other (Please specify): _____
- ☐ c. Combination of chief elected official and chief appointed official

6. Are your department heads: ☐ a. Only elected ☐ b. Only appointed ☐ c. Combination; some are elected, some are appointed

7. Please indicate how the following positions in your jurisdiction are selected. *(Check only one option per position.)*

	Position			
	Police Chief	Fire Chief	City Attorney	City Clerk
a. Elected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Appointed by the Chief Elected Official (CEO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Appointed by the Chief Appointed Official (CAO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Appointed by the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Appointed by a combination of CAO & CEO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Appointed by a combination of CAO & Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Appointed by the CAO with Council's advice & consent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Appointed by a combination of CAO & CEO & Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Appointed by the CEO with Council's approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you chose 'Other' above, please specify: _____

8. Does your municipality have a provision for **Initiative**? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

Initiative allows residents to place charter, ordinance, or home rule changes on the ballot by collecting a required number of signatures on a petition.

A. If yes, which of the following initiative processes does your municipality provide? (Check all applicable.)

- ☐ a. **Indirect:** Requires that *before* any charter, ordinance, or home rule change proposed by residents through a petition process is placed on the ballot for vote, the council must consider it. Vote results are binding on the local government.
- ☐ b. **Direct:** Requires that any charter, ordinance, or home rule change proposed by residents through a petition process must be placed directly on the ballot for a vote. Vote results are binding on the local government.
- ☐ c. **Non-binding initiative:** Allows residents to place on the ballot a question for voter approval or rejection. The voter response is non-binding on the local government.

9. Does your municipality have a provision for **Legislative Referendum**? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

Legislative Referendum allows the council to place any question on the ballot for voter approval or rejection. The results may be binding or non-binding.

A. If yes, what type of items must the council place on the ballot for voter approval? (Check all applicable.)

- ☐ a. Local bond measures ☐ d. Proposed home rule changes
- ☐ b. Proposed charter amendments ☐ e. Other _____
- ☐ c. Proposed ordinances

10. Does your municipality have a provision for **Popular Referendum**? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

Popular Referendum allows residents to collect signatures on a petition to place on the ballot any charter, ordinance, or home rule change that has been adopted by the local government before the change can take effect.

11. Does your municipality have a provision for **Recall**? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

Recall allows residents to collect signatures on a petition to place on the ballot a question of whether an elected official should be removed from office before the expiration of his/her term.

12. Please indicate whether there have been any *proposals* to change your municipality's structure or form of government **since January 1, 2011**. If yes, also indicate whether the change was *approved*.

	Type of Change Proposed	Change was <i>proposed</i>		Change was <i>approved</i>	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Structure	a. Change in the form of government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Change from at-large to ward/district elections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. Change from ward/district to at-large elections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	d. Change to a mixed system with some at-large and some ward/district elections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	e. Add the position of chief appointed official (the appointed manager or administrator)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	f. Eliminate the position of chief appointed official (the appointed manager or administrator)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Powers/Authorities	g. Increase in powers/authorities of the chief elected official	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	h. Decrease in powers/authorities of the chief elected official	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	i. Change who appoints the chief appointed official	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elections	j. Change the mix between the number of council members elected at large and the number elected by ward/district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	k. Change the method of election of the chief elected official	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council/Board	l. Increase the number of council or board members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	m. Decrease the number of council or board members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A. If a change in form of government was approved, what was the approved change? (Place a check in the box in the "From" column that indicates the original form and a check in the box in the "To" column that indicates the approved form.)

From

- ☐ 1. Mayor-council
- ☐ 2. Council-manager
- ☐ 3. Commission
- ☐ 4. Town meeting
- ☐ 5. Representative town meeting

To

- ☐ 6. Mayor-council
- ☐ 7. Council-manager
- ☐ 8. Commission
- ☐ 9. Town meeting
- ☐ 10. Representative town meeting

CHIEF ELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL/MAYOR/BOARD CHAIR (CEO)

The chief elected official of the local government may have the title of mayor, president, board chair, etc.

13. Does your municipality have a (*Check only one.*): ☐ a. Mayor ☐ b. Council President/Board Chair ☐ c. Both

*If you answered **mayor** or **both**, answer questions 13 - 21 for the position of **mayor**.*

*If you answered **council president/board chair**; answer questions 13 - 21 for the position of **council president/board chair**.*

14. Is the position of chief elected official in your local government officially full-time or part-time? ☐ a. Full-time ☐ b. Part-time

15. Is the chief elected official a member of council? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

16. Does the chief elected official (CEO) receive an annual salary or stipend for any of his/her services? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

A. If yes, please indicate the approximate annual dollar amount that your CEO receives: _____

17. How is your chief elected official selected? (*Check only one.*)

- ☐ a. Voters elect directly ☐ d. Council members rotate into the position of chief elected official
☐ b. Council selects from among its members
☐ c. The council member receiving the most votes in the general election becomes the chief elected official ☐ e. Other (Please specify): _____

18. How long is the chief elected official's term of office by law? (**Important:** *If the CEO is a member of the council, specify the term for the position of CEO, not for council members.*) (*Check only one.*)

- ☐ a. 1 year ☐ b. 2 years ☐ c. 3 years ☐ d. 4 years ☐ e. Other (Please specify): _____

19. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms allowed for the position of chief elected official? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

A. If yes, what is the maximum number of terms allowed by law? (*Check only one.*)

- ☐ a. 1 term ☐ b. 2 terms ☐ c. 3 terms ☐ d. 4 terms ☐ e. Other (Please specify): _____

B. If yes, what authority limits the number of terms for the position of chief elected official? (*Check only one.*)

- ☐ a. Ordinance ☐ b. Charter ☐ c. State law ☐ d. Other (Please specify): _____

20. Does the chief elected official (CEO) have the authority to do any of the following? (*Check all applicable.*)

- ☐ a. Vote during council meetings
☐ b. Nominate the chief appointed official without council review or approval
☐ c. Appoint the chief appointed official without council review or approval
☐ d. Remove the chief appointed official without council review or approval.
☐ e. Veto council-passed measures
☐ f. Assign council members to chair or serve on committees and make assignments to those committees
☐ g. Appoint residents to serve on advisory or quasi-judicial authorities, boards, or commissions
☐ h. Receive the annual budget developed by the chief appointed official and present the budget with comments and suggestions to the council for consideration
☐ i. Prepare the annual budget
☐ j. Make an annual report to the council and residents on the state of the community

- A. Under what circumstances does the CEO have the authority to vote in council meetings? (*Check only one*)

- ☐ a. On all issues ☐ d. Never
☐ b. Only to break a tie ☐ e. Other (Please specify): _____
☐ c. Only to make a quorum

- B. If the CEO has the authority to veto council-passed measures, is a "super majority" vote of the council required to overturn the CEO's veto? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

21. Since 2011 have any recall initiatives been filed against the chief elected official? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

If yes, were any successful? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

22. How many staff work directly for the chief elected official? a. Full-time staff _____ b. Part-time staff _____

COUNCIL/BOARD OF SELECTMEN/TRUSTEES

The term **council** refers to the elected governing body of the local government. The elected body may be called the board of selectmen, trustees, aldermen, etc.

23. Does the political party affiliation of council candidates appear on the ballot in a local general election? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

24. What is the current filing fee for running for a seat on the council? (If there is no fee, enter zero.) \$_____

25. How many council positions are there on your council? _____ (Include the chief elected official if that position serves on the council. If the chief elected official is a member of the council, your answer to question 15 should be "yes.")

26. How are your council members selected? (Check only one.)

- ☐ a. All at large ☐ b. All by ward/district ☐ c. Combination of at large and by ward/district.

A. If you selected c above, please indicate the number of council members elected by each method:

- a. At large _____ b. By ward/district _____

27. Are council members full-time or part-time? (Excluding the chief elected official) (Check only one.)

- ☐ a. All full-time ☐ b. All part-time ☐ c. Combination of full-time and part-time

28. Please indicate the length of term for council members. (Please exclude the chief elected official and specify the length of term for other council members.) (Check only one per each row.)

	2 years	3 years	4 years	6 years	Other
Council members elected at large	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council members elected by ward/district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you chose "Other" above, please specify: _____

A. Are the terms of office for council members staggered or concurrent? (Check only one.)

- ☐ a. Staggered ☐ b. Concurrent

29. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms a council member may serve? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

A. If yes, what is the maximum number of terms allowed by law? _____

B. If yes, by what authority is the number of terms limited? (Check only one.)

- ☐ a. Ordinance ☐ b. Charter ☐ c. State law ☐ d. Other (Please specify): _____

30. How is a council member's seat filled if it is vacated before the term has expired? (Check only one.)

- ☐ a. Method depends on length of term remaining ☐ d. Appointed by chief elected official
☐ b. Special election ☐ e. Position left vacant until next regular election
☐ c. Appointed by council ☐ f. Other (Please specify): _____

31. Since 2011, have any recall initiatives been filed against council members? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

A. If yes, were any successful? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

32. Are any council members (excluding the chief elected official) paid an annual salary or stipend for any of their services?

- ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

A. If yes, please indicate the approximate annual dollar amount that your council members receive.

1. Full-time council member \$_____ 2. Part-time council member \$_____

33. How many of your current council members are: a. Male _____ b. Female _____

34. What is the age breakdown of your current council members? (Include the chief elected official if that position serves on the council. Numbers should add up to the total number indicated in question 25.)

- a. Under 22 _____ c. 30-39 _____ e. 50-59 _____
b. 22-29 _____ d. 40-49 _____ f. 60 and over _____

35. What is the ethnic/racial breakdown of your current council members? (Include the chief elected official if that position serves on the council. Numbers should add up to the total number indicated in question 25.)

- a. American Indian or Alaska Native _____ e. Black or African American _____
b. Hispanic or Latino _____ f. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander _____
c. Asian or Pacific Islander _____ g. Middle Eastern or North African _____
d. White, not of Hispanic origin _____ h. Some other race, ethnicity, or origin _____

36. How many current council members are in each of the following occupational categories? (**Count members only once.** If any member has more than one occupation, include that person in the category where he or she spends the greatest amount of time.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. Legal services _____ | h. Law enforcement _____ |
| b. Business executives/managers _____ | i. Teachers or other educational personnel _____ |
| c. Manufacturing _____ | j. Clergy _____ |
| d. Service and sales employees _____ | k. Other professionals (health, engineering, etc.) _____ |
| e. Finance, insurance, real estate _____ | l. Retiree _____ |
| f. Agriculture, forestry, fishing _____ | m. Other (Please specify the occupation below): _____ |
| g. Construction _____ | |

37. How often does the council formally meet, excluding work sessions? (*Check only one.*)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. More than once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Less than once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Three times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> g. Other (Please specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Twice a month | |

38. Does the council employ staff to work exclusively on council business? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

A. If yes, how many are: a. Full-time staff _____ b. Part-time staff _____

Resident Commissions, Boards, and Authorities

39. Does your municipality have standing committees (*permanent bodies with set memberships and regularly scheduled meeting times*) that consider specific policy matters? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

40. Does your municipality have resident authorities, boards, or commissions? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

A. If yes, are members (*Check only one.*):

- ☐ a. All elected ☐ b. All appointed ☐ c. Combination of elected and appointed

B. If yes, in what capacity do they serve? (*Check all applicable.*)

- ☐ a. Advisory ☐ b. Decision/policy making ☐ c. Quasi-judicial

C. If yes, on which areas do they focus? (*Check all applicable.*)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Growth | <input type="checkbox"/> j. Libraries | <input type="checkbox"/> s. Parks and recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> k. Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> t. Ethics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Zoning | <input type="checkbox"/> l. Community-police relations | <input type="checkbox"/> u. Charter review commissions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> m. Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> v. Education/Schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> e. Airports | <input type="checkbox"/> n. Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> w. Cemeteries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> f. Art | <input type="checkbox"/> o. Environmental issues | <input type="checkbox"/> x. Other (Please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> g. Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> p. Historic preservation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> h. Cable TV | <input type="checkbox"/> q. Architectural review | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> i. Civil service | <input type="checkbox"/> r. Code enforcement | |

41. Please provide your city's most recent bond ratings next to the name of the rating agency. If the agency listed did not rate your municipality, check "N/A."

- A. Bond rating by Moody's _____ ☐ N/A
- B. Bond rating by Standard & Poor's _____ ☐ N/A
- C. Bond rating by Fitch _____ ☐ N/A

42. Please provide the information requested below, so that we can contact you if we need any clarification. (Optional)

Name _____ Title _____

Phone number _____ E-mail _____

Thank you for completing this survey!

Please return the survey to:
ICMA Survey Research
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 500, Washington DC 20002-4201.

You may scan and email your survey to survevresearch@icma.org