

Council-Manager Form of Government



What is the council-manager form of government?

The council-manager form is the system of local government that combines the strong political leadership of elected officials in the form of a council or other governing body, with the strong managerial experience of an appointed local government manager. The form establishes a representative system where all power is concentrated in the elected council and where the council hires a professionally trained manager to oversee the delivery of public services.

What is the city manager's function?

The city manager is hired to serve the Mayor and Council and the community and to bring to the local government the benefits of training and experience in administering local government projects and programs on behalf of the governing body. The manager prepares a budget for the Mayor and Council's consideration; recruits, hires, and supervises the government's staff; and carries out the Mayor and Council's policies.

What is the Mayor and Council's function?

The Mayor and Council is the legislative body; its members are the community's decision makers. Power is centralized in the elected Mayor and Council, which approves the budget, for example. The Mayor and Council also focus on the community's goals, major projects, and such long-term considerations as community growth, land use development, capital improvement plans, capital financing, and strategic planning. The Mayor and Council hire a professional manager to carry out the administrative responsibilities and supervise the manager's performance.

Does the city manager participate in policy determination?

The city manager makes policy recommendations to the Mayor and Council, but the Mayor and Council may or may not adopt them and may modify the recommendations. The city manager is bound by whatever action the Mayor and Council takes.

Is this form of government used only in certain kinds of cities?

No, this form of government is not restricted to cities. It is used by towns and counties too. More than 3,400 cities operate under this form, and more than 371 counties operate under the council-administrator form. They vary greatly in size and characteristics.

How many Americans live in communities that operate under council-manager government?

More than 89 million Americans live in council-manager cities!

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