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Municipal Form of Government, 1996

The 1996 *Municipal Form of Government* surveys were mailed in summer and fall 1996 to the Municipal Clerks in municipalities with populations 2,500 and over and to those municipalities under 2,500 in population that are in ICMA's database. Of the 7,331 municipalities that received surveys, 4,552 responded (62.1%).

For more information on the ICMA's *Municipal Form of Government* survey, please contact [Survey Research](#).



[Click here to buy the complete dataset from bookstore.icma.org.](#)

Following is the survey text with the aggregate results shown in bold next to each answer. Each answer represents the percentage reporting for that question, except where noted.

1. Your current form of government as defined by your charter, ordinance, or state law

31.9	Mayor Council	.5	Representative Town Meeting
51.9	Council Manager	.2	Not sure
1.4	Commission	9.4	Did not respond
4.7	Town Meeting		

2. Does your municipality have the position of CAO?

22.5	No	77.5	Yes
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2a. If yes, by which of the following methods was the position established?

44.5	Charter
10.6	State law
40.6	Ordinance
4.3	Other

3. Who has overall responsibility for developing the budget?

12.9	Chief elected official
64.2	CAO
6.0	Combination of CEO and CAO
4.2	Finance Department
12.6	Other

4. Department heads are:

1.0	Elected	90.9	Appointed	8.1	Both
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4a. Department heads are appointed by:

20.2	Mayor
39.3	CAO
16.6	Combination of CEO and CAO
24.0	Other

5. Does municipality have a provision for the following?

58.1 Initiative
41.6 Binding Referendum
39.8 Non-Binding Referendum
68.5 Recall
35.7 Petition or Protest Referendum

6. Have there been attempts to change the structure or form of government since January 1, 1991?

85.4 No **14.6** Yes

6a. If yes, approximate number of attempts have been made to change municipality's form of government?

Average **1**

6b. Items that describe changes in form of government

	Not Approved	Approved	Year Approved (Average)
1. Change from at large to ward or district elections	32.1	52..9	1993
2. Change to a mixed system with some at large and some ward or district elections	23.2	60.7	1994
3. Change the mix between the number of council members elected at large and the number elected by or district	36.7	46.7	1994
4. Increase the number of members of the council or board	30.8	59.0	1994
5. Decrease the number of members of the council or board	33.3	58.8	1994
6. Change the method of election of the chief elected official	20.0	60.0	1993
7. Add the position of CAO	17.2	77.9	1994
8. Eliminate the position of CAO	50.8	36.9	1993
9. Change who appoints the CAO	58.3	33.3	1994
10. Change in form of government	35.6	49.1	1994

7. Is the position of chief elected official officially full time or part time?

15.1 Full-time **84.9** Part-time

8. How is your chief elected official selected?

73.7 Voters elect directly
23.3 Council selects from among its members
.4 Council member receiving most votes
1.9 Council members rotate into position
.8 Other

9. What is the length of the chief elected official's term of office?
14.9 1 year **42.9** 4 years
36.7 2 years **5.5** Other
10. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms allowed for CEO?
90.3 No **9.7** Yes
- 10a. What is the maximum number of terms allowed by law?
2.6 1 term **7.7** 4 terms
62.3 2 terms **2.0** More than 4 terms
25.4 3 terms
- 10b. Average year the term limitation was enacted? **1987** (Average)
- 10c. By what authority is the number of terms limited?
13.3 Ordinance **18.4** State law
65.0 Charter **3.3** Other
11. Is the chief elected official a member of the council?
35.0 No **65.0** Yes
12. What circumstances does the chief elected official have the authority to vote in council meetings?
54.6 On all issues **7.4** Never
35.9 Only to break a tie **2.1** Other
13. Does CEO have authority to veto council-passed measures?
71.9 No **28.1** Yes
- 13a. If yes, in what cases may the chief elected official exercise veto power?
92.8 Over ordinances **43.5** Over appropriations
25.5 Over specific sections of ordinances **25.6** Over specific items of appropriations
61.8 Over resolutions **9.1** Other
14. Does CEO received supplemental compensation?
36.5 No **34.0** Yes **29.4** Not applicable
15. Has the CEO involvement changed in areas of:

	Significantly increased	Somewhat increased	Remained the same	Somewhat decreased	Significantly decreased
a. Policy making	9.1	11.8	76.3	1.9	.9
b. Budget development	7.0	8.5	78.4	3.5	2.6
c. Negotiation with the private sector	9.1	14.8	71.8	2.7	7.7
d. With citizen groups/the public	12.9	17.4	67.0	1.8	.9

16. Have any recall initiatives been filed against the mayor
95.5 No **4.5** Yes

16a. If yes, were any successfully?
78.1 No **21.9** Yes

17. Does the political party affiliations of candidates for board or council appear on the ballot?
75.9 No **24.1** Yes

18. What is the present filling fee for running for city council? **\$16 Average**

19. How many members serve on your council? **6 Average**

20. Number of present council members' age categories:

	Under 22	22-99	30-39	40-49	50-69	60 and over
Average	1	1	2	2	2	2

21. How many of your present council members are: Average
5 Male **2** Female

22. How many of your present council members are:

Average	American Indian	Hispanic	Asian	White	Black
	3	2	1	6	2

23. How many council members are in following occupational categories:

	Average
a. Lawyers	1
b. Other professionals	1
c. Business executives/managers	2
d. Business/industry employees	2
e. Service industry employees	2
f. Farmers or ranchers	1
g. Homemakers	1
h. Teachers and other educational personnel	1
i. Clergy	1
j. Retired persons	2
k. Other	2

24. The number of council members selected by: **Average**
5 elected at large **5** elected by ward and/or district

25. Length of term for council members:

	2 years	3 years	4 years	Other
a. elected at large	23.6	14.2	58.5	3.6
b. elected by ward and/or district	33.2	4.9	61.7	.2

26. Terms in office are:

82.6 Staggered **17.4** Concurrent

27. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms a council member may serve?

91.4 No **8.6** Yes

27a. If yes, what is the maximum number terms allowed by law?

1.2 1 term
65.5 2 terms
25.1 3 terms
6.8 4 terms
1.5 more than 4 terms

27b. When was the term limitation enacted? **1986** **Average**

27c. By what authority is the number of terms limited?

12.6 Ordinance
66.4 Charter
18.3 State law
2.7 Other

28. How many incumbents ran for re-elections to council in the last general elections? **3** **Average**

28a. How many of those incumbents were re-elected? **3** **Average**

29. Have any recall initiatives been filed against council members?

94.9 No **5.1** Yes

29a. If yes, were any successful?

68.9 No **31.1** Yes

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

9.8 Special election **11.2** Appointed by CEO
52.4 Appointed by council **1.1** Position left vacant until next election
17.3 Method depends on term **8.2** Other

31. Are any council members paid for any their services (excluding CEO)?

11.6 No **88.4** Yes

31a. If yes, what type of compensation does the council members receive?

	Annual salary	Stipend
a. Full-time council members	79.2	21.9

b. Part-time council members	79.2	22.0
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32. How often does the council meet in formal session?

.6	More than once a week	69.1	Twice a month
6.5	Once a week	20.4	Once a month
3.4	Three times a week	0.0	Less than once a month

33. Does the council have standing council committees?

46.8	No	53.2	Yes
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33a. If yes, how many standing committees did the council have as of January, 1996?

15.7	1-2 standing committees
41.8	3-5 standing committees
34.9	6-10 standing committees
4.8	11-15 standing committees
2.8	more than 15 standing committees

34. Does the council use citizen boards/commissions?

8.3	No	91.7	Yes
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34a. If yes, are the members?

.4	Elected	99.6	Appointed
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34b. If yes, in what capacity do they serve?

87.6	Advisory	12.4	Decision/policy making
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34c. If yes, in which areas are they used?

73.4	Parks and recreation	59.7	Neighborhood planning
20.7	Community police relations	27.8	Environmental issues
52.6	Economic development	20.1	Transportation
22.8	Growth	40.0	Other

35. How many staff are employed by the council to work exclusively on council business?

	Full-time staff	Part-time staff
Average	3	2

36. How many personal staff work directly for the CEO?

	Full-time staff	Part-time staff
Average	4	3

37. The next fiscal year begins? **July**