

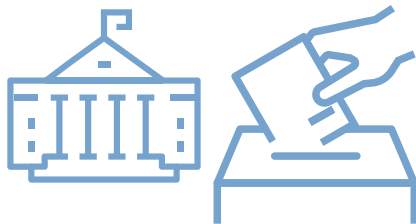
# 2018 MUNICIPAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT SURVEY

ICMA's Municipal Form of Government Survey has been conducted nine times since 1974 and is the most comprehensive resource available on the structure of local government in the United States.

This survey was distributed by mail, with an option for online completion, between April and September 2018. The sample included all municipalities with a population of 2,500 or greater, and all municipalities under 2,500 in ICMA's database. It was sent to 12,817 municipal clerks, and 4,109 responded for a 32.1% response rate.

## Chief Elected Officials

Mayors are the most common chief elected official across all forms of government. In council-manager governments, the mayor is most often a member of the council with largely equal powers. In mayor-council governments, the mayor is more likely to operate independent of the council with additional authority.

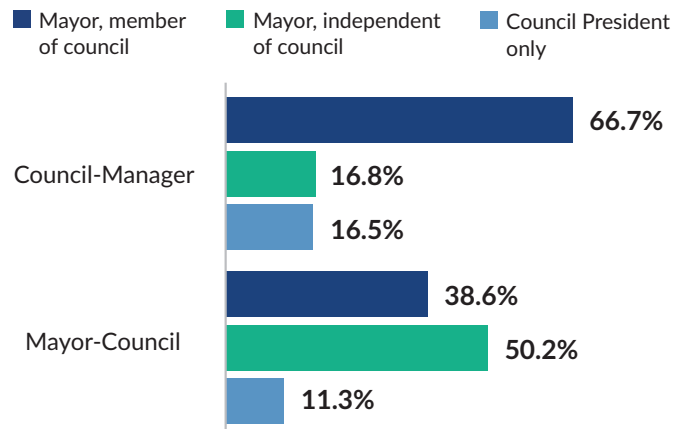


## Compensation of Elected Officials

85.9% of municipalities pay their elected officials through salary, per diem, or other methods. Full-time and part-time elected positions have a wide disparity in compensation levels. Form of government also influences how elected officials are compensated for their service.



## Chief Elected Official Structure by Form of Government



## Elected Official Median Annual Compensation by Form of Government

Form of Government	Status	Chief Elected Official	Council Member
Mayor-Council	Full-time	\$69,322	*
	Part-time	\$7,200	\$3,600
Council-Manager	Full-time	\$6,876	*
	Part-time	\$5,400	\$3,500
Other	Full-time	\$60,500	*
	Part-time	\$5,000	\$3,000

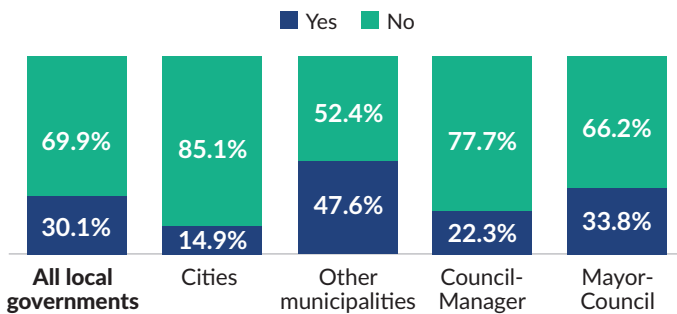
\*Insufficient data

## Election of Council Members

### Political Affiliation

The majority of municipal general elections are nonpartisan with no political affiliation listed for council candidates. This is especially true in cities and for council-manager governments. Townships are a notable exception, where partisan elections are the norm.

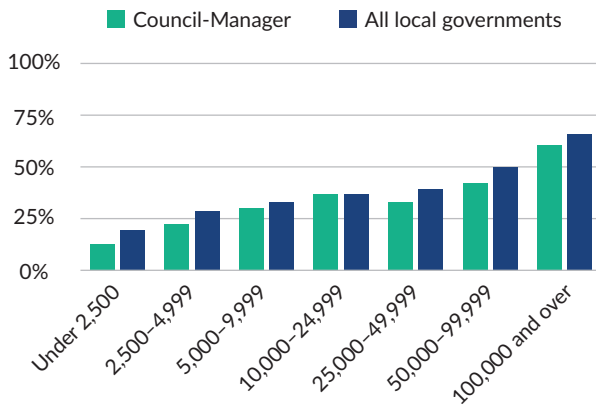
**Does the political party affiliation of council candidates appear on the ballot in a local general election?**



### Use of Wards/Districts

32.0% of municipalities elect some or all of their council members by ward/district rather than at large, with council-manager governments doing so slightly less frequently. Larger municipalities are more likely to use wards to select council members.

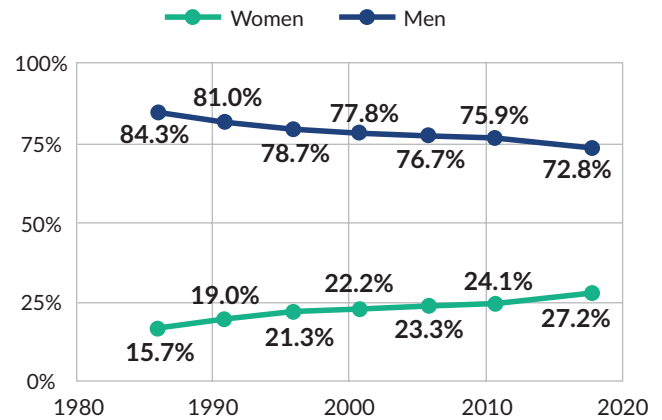
**Percent of Municipalities with Council Wards/Districts by Population**



## Gender Composition of Municipal Councils

The percentage of council seats filled by women has steadily increased since 1985, though as of 2018 women still occupy 1 seat to nearly every 3 held by men.

**Share of U.S. Municipal Council Positions Filled by Women, Men**



## Local Government Staffing

### Council Support

Overall, just **16.4%** of responding local governments employ staff to work exclusively on council business.

For council-manager governments, the share drops to **11.8%**. Among those, the most common staffing scenario is one full-time employee working directly on council business.

### Residency Requirements

**41.3%** of responding local governments have some form of residency requirements for local government employees. Some states, such as Wisconsin, California, and Colorado, prohibit or place limits on the residency requirements municipalities may impose.

Of those that have residency requirements, **51.7%** apply these requirements to the chief administrative officer, and **16.2%** apply them to all employees. Public safety employees are subject to residency requirements in **17.6%** of municipalities.

To learn more, visit [icma.org/research](http://icma.org/research) or contact [surveyresearch@icma.org](mailto:surveyresearch@icma.org).  
To download the full summary of the 2018 Municipal Form of Government Survey, visit [icma.org/2018-municipal-fog-survey](http://icma.org/2018-municipal-fog-survey).