

Municipal Governance Structure Research

The basics

Guides to local government

- [A listing of state guides from USA.gov](#)
- [Categories of local government from NLC](#)
- [A list of state municipal organizations from NLC](#)
- [Municipal governments by population in 2007 from NLC](#)
- State handbooks:
 - [California](#)
 - [New York](#)

City and county relationships

- [The process of city-county consolidations from NLC](#)
- [A list of consolidated city-county governments from NLC](#)
- [County authority state by state from NACO](#)

Local government structures

- [An explainer from ICMA](#)
- [Forms of local government from NLC](#)
- [Model city charter from NCL](#)
- [Political structures by the Strong Mayor Council](#)
- [An explainer from City Mayors](#)
- [Ballotpedia on Municipalities](#)
 - [Ballotpedia Explains Chartered Local Government](#)
 - Ballotpedia Explains [Mayor Council Government](#)
 - Ballotpedia Explains [Council Manager Government](#)
 - [Ballotpedia Transparency Checklist](#)

Explainers of general law and home rule structures

- [Home rule in the United States \(including a breakdown by state\) from Wikipedia](#)
- [Breaking down the layers of local government authority from NLC](#)
- [Municipal charters explainer from NLC](#)
- [A look at Dillon's Rule and growth management from Brookings](#)
 - [More resources are available from Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program](#)

Types of Municipal Policies

- **Ordinance:** A municipal ordinance is a rule, law or statute adopted by a municipal legislative body, which has the force and effect of a law. Although the method of enacting an ordinance will vary from municipality to municipality, they are generally passed by a legislative body (city council) and signed by a city executive, and subsequently enforced by local police and district attorneys. So it's a relatively strong legal means compared to others.

Reference: <ftp://ftp.ci.missoula.mt.us/Documents/Attorney/Opinions/062002.pdf>

- **Executive Order:** An executive order is an official directive or command from the Mayor to agencies in the executive branch. It may generally concern the implementation or enforcement of rules, policies and procedures which have the force of law.

Reference: <http://chicityclerk.com/legislation-records/journals-and-reports/executive-orders>

- **Resolution:** A resolution is a formal expression of the opinion or will of an official municipal body adopted by a vote. It denotes something less formal than ordinance, since it is mere expression of opinion or mind of council.

Reference: <ftp://ftp.ci.missoula.mt.us/Documents/Attorney/Opinions/062002.pdf>

- **Others:** There are other forms of open data policy other than the three listed above on municipal level, such as Internal Policy (Sacramento, 2013), City Manager Policy (Las Vegas, 2014), IT Policy (Charlotte, 2015), Management Policy (Mesa, 2015).

Local Government Law Libraries

- **American Legal:** <http://www.amlegal.com/code-library/>
- **Municode:** <https://www.municode.com/library/>
- **America Decoded:** <http://americadecoded.org/>

A few case studies

- **Alabama**
 - The state with the [longest Constitution](#) shows what can happen when local issues are handled at the state level - subjects as local as [water asset transfers](#) are settled with statewide votes
- **Illinois**
 - One bill that highlights the complexity of state and local relationships is [SB 3392](#), which would have amended the local records act to require local governments and school districts to post information on their websites such as budgets, notices of meetings, contracts with lobbying firms, a list of imposed taxes, steps for requesting public information, and more. The bill also would have limited

home rule powers by explicitly stating that "No home rule unit may adopt posting requirements that are less restrictive than this Section."

- **Nebraska**
 - Another bill highlighting how states and local governments can interact on transparency issues is [Legislative Bill 521](#), which would require cities and villages to create and maintain websites with ordinances and notices and agendas of meetings.

Finances and revenue sharing

- [City finances from NLC](#)
- [A look at local government finances from GAO](#)
- [Federal grants to state and local governments](#)
- [Intergovernmental revenue](#)