Municipal Form of Government, 2001
Trends in Structure, Responsibility, and Composition

August 2001

Dear Municipal Clerk:

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) has conducted a Form of Government Survey for more than thirty years. This survey gathers the most comprehensive information available on form of government, election systems, provisions for referendum/recall, and term limits. In addition, information on characteristics of the local governing body is collected in this survey. A summary of the results will be available on ICMA's web site (http://icma.org) after the data have been tabulated.

Please contribute to this significant body of knowledge by completing the survey and returning it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope within three weeks. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

William H. Hansell, Jr.
Executive Director, ICMA
Definitions:
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* 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* of the local government may have the title of mayor, president, board chair, etc.

Q1. Indicate your current form of government as defined by your charter, ordinance, or state law. (Check only one.)
   1. a. Mayor-Council Elected council or board serves as the legislative body. The chief elected official is the head of government, with significant administrative authority, generally elected separately from the council.
   2. b. Council-Manager Elected council or board and chief elected official (e.g., mayor) are responsible for making policy. A professional administrator appointed by the board or council holds full responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the government.
   3. c. Commission Members of a board of elected commissioners serve as heads of specific departments and collectively sit as the legislative body of the government.
   4. d. Town Meeting Qualified voters convene to make basic policy and to choose a board of selectmen. The selectmen and elected officers carry out the policies established by the government.
   5. e. Representative Town Meeting Voters select citizens to represent them at the town meeting. All citizens may attend and participate in debate, but only representatives may vote.

Q2. How is your municipality’s structure or form of government established? (Check only one.)
   1. a. Charter
   2. b. State law
   3. c. Local ordinance
   4. d. Council resolution
   5. e. Other (Please specify.)

Q3. 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.) (☐ a. Yes ☐ b. No)
   ☐ a. Charter
   ☐ b. State law
   ☐ c. Local ordinance
   ☐ d. Council resolution
   ☐ e. Chief elected official created position
   ☐ f. Other (Please specify.)

Q3A. If your municipality does have 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.)
   ☐ a. Charter
   ☐ b. State law
   ☐ c. Local ordinance
   ☐ d. Council resolution
   ☐ e. Chief elected official created position
   ☐ f. Other (Please specify.)

Q3B. If your municipality does have the position of chief appointed official, who appoints the chief appointed official?
   ☐ a. Chief elected official
   ☐ b. Council
   ☐ c. Combination of chief elected official and council
   ☐ d. Other (Please specify.)

Q4. 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.)
   ☐ a. Chief elected official
   ☐ b. Chief appointed official
   ☐ c. Combination of chief elected official and chief appointed official
   ☐ d. Chief financial officer
   ☐ e. Other (Please specify.)

Q5. Are your department heads? (Check only one.)
   ☐ a. All elected
   ☐ b. All appointed
   ☐ c. Combination, some are elected and some appointed
   ☐ d. Council/board of selectmen
   ☐ e. Other (Please specify.)

5A. If any of your department heads are appointed, who appoints them?
   ☐ a. Chief elected official
   ☐ b. Chief appointed official
   ☐ c. Combination of chief elected official and chief appointed official
   ☐ d. Council/board of selectmen
   ☐ e. Other (Please specify.)
6. Does your municipality have a provision for

A. Initiative?  □ 1. Yes □ 2. No
   Initiative allows citizens to place charter, ordinance, or home rule changes on the ballot by collecting a required number of signatures on a petition.

1. 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 citizens 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 the citizens 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 citizens to place on the ballot a question for voter approval or rejection. The voter response is non-binding on the local government.

B. 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.

   If yes, which of the following items must be placed on the ballot for voter approval (Check all applicable.)

   □ a. Local bond measures □ b. Proposed charter amendments □ c. Proposed ordinances

   □ d. Proposed home rule charges □ e. Other

C. Popular referendum  □ 1. Yes □ 2. No
   Allows citizens 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.

D. Recall  □ 1. Yes □ 2. No
   Allows citizens 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.

7. Since January 1, 1996, have there been any attempts to change your municipality’s structure or form of government (e.g., change from at-large to ward or district elections or add or eliminate the position of chief appointed official, etc.)? □ a. Yes □ b. No

A. If yes, approximately how many attempts have been made to change your municipality’s structure or form of government since January 1, 1996?

B. Check each item that describes the proposed change(s) and indicate whether the change(s) was approved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attempted change</th>
<th>A Change was proposed</th>
<th>B Not approved</th>
<th>C Approved</th>
<th>D Year approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Change from at-large to ward or district elections</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Change to a mixed system with some at-large and some ward or district elections</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<td>3. Change the mix between the number of council members elected at large and the number elected by ward or district</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Increase the number of council or board members</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<td>5. Decrease the number of council or board members</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Change the method of election of the chief elected official</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Increase in powers/authorities of the chief elected official</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Decrease in powers/authorities of the chief elected official</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<td>9. Add the position of chief appointed official (the appointed professional administrator)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<td>10. Eliminate the position of chief appointed official (the appointed professional administrator)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Change who appoints the chief appointed official from (enter the previous appointment authority) ________________ to ________________ (enter proposed)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Change the form of government</td>
<td>□ □ □ □</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
a. If a change in form of government was proposed, what was the proposed 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 proposed form.)

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

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

CHIEF ELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL/MAYOR/BOARD CHAIR

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

Q8. Is the position of chief elected official in your local government officially full-time or part-time? ☐ a. Full-time ☐ b. Part-time

Q9. How is your chief elected official selected? (Check only one.)

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

Q9-OTH

Q10. How long is the chief elected official’s term of office? (Important: If the chief elected official is a member of the council, specify the term for the position of chief elected official, not of council member.) (Check only one.)

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

Q10-OTH

Q11. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms allowed for the position of chief elected official?

☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No (go to question 12)

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

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

Q1A-OTH

B. If yes, when was the term limitation for the position of chief elected official enacted? (Please specify.) (year)

Q1B

C. 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.)

Q1C-OTH

Q12. Is the chief elected official a member of council, that is, does the chief elected official serve on the council? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

Q12A

A. If yes, does the chief elected official receive supplemental compensation for these additional duties? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

Q13. Under what circumstances does the chief elected official have the authority to vote in council meetings?

☐ a. On all issues ☐ b. Only to break a tie ☐ c. Never ☐ d. Other (Please specify.)

Q13-OTH

Q14. Does the chief elected official have the authority to veto council-passed measures? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

A. If yes, is a “super majority” vote of the council required to overturn the mayoral veto? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

Q14A

B. Assign council members to chair or serve on committees and make assignments to those committees

C. Appoint citizens to serve on advisory or quasi-judicial authorities, boards, or commissions

D. Receive the annual budget developed by the chief appointed official and present the budget with comments and suggestions to the council for consideration

E. Initiate the hiring and/or involuntary termination of the chief appointed official

F. Make an annual report to the council and citizens on the state of the community

Q16. Since 1996 have any recall initiatives been filed against the chief elected official? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

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

Q16A

Q17. 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.

Q18. Does the political party affiliation of council candidates appear on the ballot in a local general election? □ 1. Yes □ 2. No

Q19. What is the current filing fee for running for a seat on the council? (If there is no fee, enter zero.) $________

Q20. 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 12 should be "yes.")

Q21. Are all of these council positions filled? □ 1. Yes □ 2. No A. If no, how many council positions are filled? __________

Q22. How many current council members are (Total number of council members should equal the total in question 20 if all are filled. If all are not filled, this number should equal the total in 21A.)

a. Male __________
b. Female __________

Q23. How many current council members fall into the following age groups? (Total number of council members should equal the total in question 20 if all are filled. If all are not filled, this number should equal the total in 21A.)

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

Q24. How many current council members are (Total number of council members should equal the total in question 20 if all are filled. If all are not filled, this number should equal the total in 21A.)

a. Native American __________
b. Hispanic __________
c. Asian or Pacific Islander __________
d. White, not of Hispanic origin __________
e. Black, not of Hispanic origin __________

Q25. How many current council members are in each of these 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. Total number of council members should equal the total in question 20 if all are filled. If all are not filled, this number should equal the total in 21A.)

a. Lawyers __________
b. Other professionals (medicine, engineering, etc.) __________
c. Business executives/managers __________
d. Business/industry employees __________
e. Service industry employees __________
f. Farmers or ranchers __________
g. Homemakers __________
h. Teachers and other educational personnel __________
i. Clergy __________
j. Retired persons __________
k. Other (Please specify.) __________

Q26. How many council members are selected by the following methods. (If none are elected by one of the methods, indicate zero.) (Number should equal the total in question 20.)

a. Elected at large __________
b. Elected by ward or district __________

Q27. Indicate the length of term for council members. (Even if the chief elected official is a member of council, specify the length of term for other council members, not for the chief elected official.)

A. Council members elected at large
   □ a. 2 years □ b. 3 years □ c. 4 years □ d. 6 years □ e. Other __________

B. Council members elected by ward or district
   □ a. 2 years □ b. 3 years □ c. 4 years □ d. 6 years □ e. Other __________

Q28. Terms of office are (Check only one.) □ a. Staggered □ b. Concurrent

Q29. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms a council member may serve? □ a. Yes □ b. No

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

B. When was the term limitation enacted? __________ (year)

C. By what authority is the number of terms limited? (Check only one.)

Q30. How many incumbents ran for reelection to council in the last general election? __________

30A. How many of those incumbents were reelected? (If none, enter zero.) __________
31. 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
   □ b. Special election
   □ c. Appointed by council
   □ d. Appointed by chief elected official
   □ e. Position left vacant until next regular election
   □ f. Other (Please specify.)

32. Since 1996, have any recall initiatives been filed against council members? □ 1. Yes □ 2. No
   A. If yes, were any successful? □ a. Yes □ b. No

33. 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 $33A.1  2. Part-time council member $33A.2

34. How often does the council meet in formal session? (Check only one.)
   □ a. More than once a week
   □ b. Once a week
   □ c. Three times a month
   □ d. Twice a month
   □ e. Once a month
   □ f. Less than once a month
   □ g. Other (Please specify.)

35. Does the council have standing committees (permanent bodies with set memberships and regularly scheduled meeting times) that consider specific policy matters? □ 1. Yes □ 2. No
   A. If yes, approximately how many standing committees did the council have as of January 2001?
      □ 1. 1-2 standing committees
      □ 2. 3-5 standing committees
      □ 3. 6-10 standing committees
      □ 4. 11-15 standing committees
      □ 5. More than 15 standing committees

36. Does the council use citizen authorities, boards, or commissions? □ 1. Yes □ 2. No
   A. If yes, are members □ 1. Elected □ 2. Appointed (Check all applicable.)
   B. If yes, in what capacity do they serve? (Check all applicable.)
   C. If yes, in which areas are they used? (Check all applicable in the list below.)
      □ 1. Civil service □ 2. Libraries
      □ 3. Housing □ 4. Community-police relations
      □ 5. Economic development □ 6. Planning
      □ 7. Environmental issues □ 8. Historic preservation
      □ 11. Parks and recreation □ 12. Ethics
      □ 13. Charter review commissions □ 14. Other (Please specify.)

37. How many staff are employed by the council to work exclusively on council business?
   □ a. Full-time staff 34A □ b. Part-time staff 34B

38. When does your next fiscal year begin (i.e., 07/2001)? Month 38_MO Year 38_YR

Name: PERSON Title: TITLE/POSITION
Telephone number: PHONE Email: E-MAIL

Thank you for completing the survey. Please return to:
Evelina Moulder, Director of Survey Research, ICMA
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 500, Washington DC 20002-4201.
January 18, 2008

2001 Municipal Form of Government (FOG) Survey

Variable Recode-New Variables

q1  0  Did not respond
q5a  6  CAO and Council
     7  CEO and Council
     8  Appointed by CEO and approved by Council
     9  CAO or Council
    10  CAO with advise and consent of council
    11  CEO, CAO and council
q6b_f  Tax related changes
q13  5  Break a tie and other reasons
q31  7  Special election or appointed by council