

Dear County Clerk:

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) has conducted a *Form of Government Survey* for almost thirty years. This survey provides the association 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 covered in this survey. A summary of the survey results will be available on the Internet after the data have been tabulated.

Please contribute to this significant body of knowledge by completing the survey and returning it as soon as possible. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Definitions:

The term *commission*, as used throughout the survey, refers to an elected body whose members are called commissioners, supervisors, council members, board members, or the like.

The term *presiding officer*, as used throughout the survey, refers to the elected head of the county government called the executive, chairman, judge, or the like.

- Q1 1. Please indicate which of the following best describes your current legal form of government, as defined by your charter, ordinance, or by state law. (Please read all definitions first and check only one.)
- 1 ☐ a. Each elected commissioner or board member serves as director of one or more functional departments (e.g. Public Works Director or Director of Health and Human Services) in addition to his/her policymaking role. The presiding officer may be chosen from the board or elected directly (e.g., county judge). This is popularly known as the *commission* form of government.
- 2 ☐ b. An elected board sets policy, adopts legislation, and approves the budget. The commission appoints an administrator to conduct the day-to-day county business, to prepare the budget, to oversee department heads, and to recommend policy to the board. This is popularly known as the *council-administrator* (manager) form.
- 3 ☐ c. The elected board is responsible for making policy. The executive, elected at-large, implements county board policies, prepares the budget, and acts as county spokesperson. The executive often has veto power, which can be overridden. This form fully separates the legislative and executive powers and is popularly known as the *council-elected executive* form.
- Q2 2. Does your county have the position of CAO?
- Q2A a. No ☒ b. Yes
- Q3 A. If yes, by which of the following methods was the position established? (Check only one.)
- ☐ 1. Charter ☐ 2. State law ☐ 3. Ordinance ☐ 4. Other (Please specify.) Q2A-OTH
- Q3 3. How is your presiding officer selected? (Check only one.)
- ☐ a. Voters elect directly
- 2 ☐ b. Commission selects from among its members
- 3 ☐ c. The commission member receiving the most votes in the general election becomes the presiding officer
- 4 ☐ d. Commission members rotate into the position of presiding officer
- 5 ☐ e. Other (Please specify.) Q3-OTHER
4. How long is the presiding officer's term of office? (Important: If the presiding officer is a member of the commission, specify the term for the position of presiding officer, not of commission member.) (Check only one.)
- 1 ☐ a. 1 year ☐ 2 b. 2 years ☐ 3 c. 4 years
- 4 ☐ d. Other (Please specify.) _____
- Q5 5. Is the presiding officer a member of commission?
- 1 ☐ a. No ☒ b. Yes
- Q6 6. Does the presiding officer have the authority to veto commission-passed measures? ☐ a. No ☒ b. Yes
- A. If yes, in what cases may the presiding officer exercise veto power? (Check all applicable.)
- GA-1 ☐ 1. Over ordinances
- GA-2 ☐ 2. Over specific sections of ordinances
- GA-3 ☐ 3. Over resolutions
- GA-4 ☐ 4. Over appropriations
- GA-5 ☐ 5. Over specific items of appropriations
- GA-6 ☐ 6. Other (Please specify.) Q6A-OTHER
- Q7 7. Since 1991, have any recall initiatives been filed against the presiding officer? ☐ a. No ☒ b. Yes
- Q7A A. If yes, were any successful?
- ☐ 1. No ☐ 2. Yes
- Q8 8. How many members sit on your commission? _____
9. What is the gender of the commission members?
(Total number of commission members should equal the total in question 8)
- GA a. Male ☒ b. Female _____
10. Does your county have a provision for any of the following? (Check all applicable.)
- 10A ☐ a. Initiative Permits citizens to place charter, ordinance, or home rule changes directly on a ballot for approval or disapproval by the voters.
- 10B ☐ b. Binding referendum Allows voters to determine the outcome on public issues by binding the governing body to act on voters' opinions.
- 10C ☐ c. Non-binding referendum Allows voters to express an opinion on a specific topic without binding the governing body to act on voters' opinions.
- 10D ☐ d. Recall A vote by the citizens to remove an elected official from office before the expiration of that official's term.
- 10E ☐ e. Petition or Protest Referendum Allows voters to delay enactment of local ordinance or bylaw until a referendum is held.
11. Indicate the number of commission members selected by each of the following methods.
- 11A _____ a. Elected at large 11B _____ b. Elected by ward or district
- Q12 12. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms a commission member may serve? ☐ a. No ☒ b. Yes
- Q12A If yes, what is the maximum number of terms allowed by law? _____
- Q12B B. When was the term limitation enacted? _____
- Q12C C. By what authority is the number of terms limited? (Check only one.)
- ☐ 1. Ordinance ☐ 2. Charter ☐ 3. State law ☐ 4. Other (Please specify.) Q12C-OTHER
- Q13 13. How many incumbents ran for reelection to commission in the last general election? _____
- Q13A A. How many of those incumbents were reelected? _____
14. How is a commission member's seat filled if it is vacated before the term has expired? (Check only one.)
- 1 ☐ a. Special election
- 2 ☐ b. Appointed by commission
- 3 ☐ c. Method depends on length of term remaining
- 4 ☐ d. Appointed by presiding officer
- 5 ☐ e. Position left vacant until next regular election
- 6 ☐ f. Other (Please specify.) Q14-OTHER
- Q15 15. When does your fiscal year begin (i.e., 07/96)?
- Month _____ Year _____
- Q15M Q15Y
- Name: _____
- Title: _____
- Office telephone number: _____
- Please return the survey to
Lisa A. Huffman
ICMA
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002-4201