

Module 10: State and Local Government

Topic 1 Content: Local Government

Introduction



Glover Mint: Welcome to WUSG News. There are three different types of local government that Virginia's General Assembly has the power to create. These are counties, cities, and towns. My cohost, Demi Tracy, will be discussing these different types of local government.

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Types of Local Government



Demi Tracy: As Glover said, the three types of local government in Virginia are counties, independent cities, and incorporated towns. Let's take a look at each of these.

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County Governments

County Governments

- Consist of an elected board of supervisors
- Board of supervisors serves legislative and executive functions
- Set local tax rates and fees
- Decide how to spend revenue earned
- Counties divided into districts which elect members to the board of supervisors



Demi Tracy: Virginia is divided into 95 separate counties. Typically, county governments consist of an elected board of supervisors, which is responsible for the legislative and executive functions of the county. These responsibilities include things like setting the local tax rates and fees, as well as deciding how to spend the revenue generated by those same taxes and fees. Counties are generally divided into districts and each district elects a member to the board of supervisors.

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Independent Cities

Independent Cities

- Not subject to the authority or taxation of any counties
- Use elected councils as a legislative body
- Council oversees the budget, sets taxes, licenses businesses, passes ordinances
- **Mayor-council system:** mayor is elected to serve as chief executive
- **Council-manager system:** the city's elected council appoints a manager as the chief executive

Demi Tracy: Cities are independent governmental entities that are not subject to the authority or taxation of any counties they may be located within. Because of this administrative independence, these cities are often called "independent cities." Cities use elected councils as a legislative body, which are tasked with overseeing the budget, setting the tax rate, licensing businesses, and passing ordinances, or local laws. Some of Virginia's 38 independent cities elect a mayor to serve as the chief executive for the local government. Mayors are responsible for enacting the ordinances passed by the city council and, depending on the city's charter, may have the power to veto them. This system is known as a mayor-council system. Another common type of city government in Virginia is the council-manager system. In this system, the elected city council appoints a city manager to serve as the chief executive.

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Incorporated Towns

Incorporated Towns

- Not independent of county governments
- Subject to authority and taxation of county in which they are located
- Require at least 1,000 people and a petition to the General Assembly
- Mirror city government structure
- Use town council as a legislative body
- Use mayor or manager as chief executive

Demi Tracy: Unlike cities, towns in Virginia are not independent of the authority and taxation of county governments. These towns are as much a part of the county they are located in as they are a part of the state of Virginia. When the population of an area reaches at least 1,000 people, that area may petition the General Assembly to become an incorporated town. The structure of the local government must be outlined, and must also follow the General Assembly's established guidelines for incorporation. Town governments usually mirror the organization of independent city governments, with a town council serving as the legislative body, and a town manager or mayor handling administrative duties. As of 2015, there are 191 incorporated towns in Virginia.

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Conclusion



Demi Tracy: Many important services are provided by local governments, including things like police departments, fire departments, public health services, parks and recreation, public libraries, public utilities, and public schools. Public schools, for example, are run by the county, city, or town school board. This school board may be elected by the citizens of an area or appointed by the representatives of the area's local government.

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Ending of Episode



Glover Mint: Nice job, Demi. That's it for this episode. We hope you enjoyed learning about the different types of local government.