

Council-Manager Form of Government

League of California Cities/Orange County
Elected Officials Boot Camp
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Outline for Today

- What is the Council/Manager form of government
- Roles of Council
- Roles of City Manager
- Tips for effectiveness
- Questions/Discussion

Creating Great Communities

The future is not someplace we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.

John Sharr
Loyalty in America

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Genesis of Council-Manager Form of Government

- Born out of a government reform movement in the early 1920s
- Designed to combat corruption in local government by promoting professional management within a transparent, responsive, and accountable structure
- Is now the most popular structure of local government in the United States



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Vast Majority of California Cities are Council - Manager Form of Government

Form of Government	Number of Cities
Council-Manager	470 ¹ (97%)
Other	15
Total	485²

¹ Source: League of CA Cities City Manager database: www.cacities.org/cm

² Source: CA Department of Finance City/County Population Estimate Report



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City Council: Board of Directors

- Legislative and policy-making body
- Approves budgets, fees, financial policies
- Employer
- Establishes goals, strategic plans and major projects
- Makes land use decisions
- Advocates for the community



Source: Council-Manager Form of Government - FAQ; ICMA

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City Manager: Chief Executive Officer



- Appointed by the council
- Provides professional advice to the Council
- Takes direction from the Council as a body
- Manages day-to-day operations of the city
- Recruits, hires, terminates, supervises staff
- Carries out council policies
- Prepares budgets for council's consideration
- Adheres to a Code of Ethics

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The Value of the Council/Manager System for Councilmembers

- Allows the Council to focus on the big things – the goals that will help the community thrive
- Ensures the collective will of the Council will be implemented
- Provides a means for all Councilmembers to receive the same information
- Provides for professional management and expertise for the various disciplines of city government



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What is Professional Management?



- Hiring competent staff and contractors
- Ensuring accountability for performance and ethics
- Exercising stewardship over public dollars – best value for the dollars
- Continuously improving service delivery and practices
- Training employees for the values desired
- Providing recommendations based on analysis and expertise

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Discussion Questions About Roles

- How do the roles of the City Council and City Manager compliment each other?
- What roles are not as clear and why?



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How to Get Things Done

1. Don't try to do it alone
2. Learn to compromise
3. Respect others; no surprises
4. Take the long view



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How to Get Things Done

5. Be prepared
6. Communicate regularly through the city manager
7. Learn something new everyday
8. Give the council a tune-up



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How to Get Things Done



- 9. Have Fun
- 10. Remember why you ran for office in the first place

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Council – Manager Team: It's a Partnership



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Discussion Questions About Council/Manager Practices

- How does your City set goals?
- How do Councilmembers keep each other and the City Manager informed?
- How does the City Manager keep the Council informed?

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**Great plans without good
government are
irrelevant.**

Jim Collins,
Good to Great

Governing Requires Thoughtful Action and Strong Teamwork

Questions and Comments?

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Thank You

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