

Civics and Economics

CE.7 Study Guide

STANDARD CE.7A

-- STATE GOVERNMENT

The structure and powers of the state government.

The form of government of the Commonwealth of Virginia is established by the Virginia Constitution.

Legislative, executive, and judicial powers are separated at the state level of government.

The Virginia Constitution distributes power among the **legislative, executive, and judicial branches** of the state government.

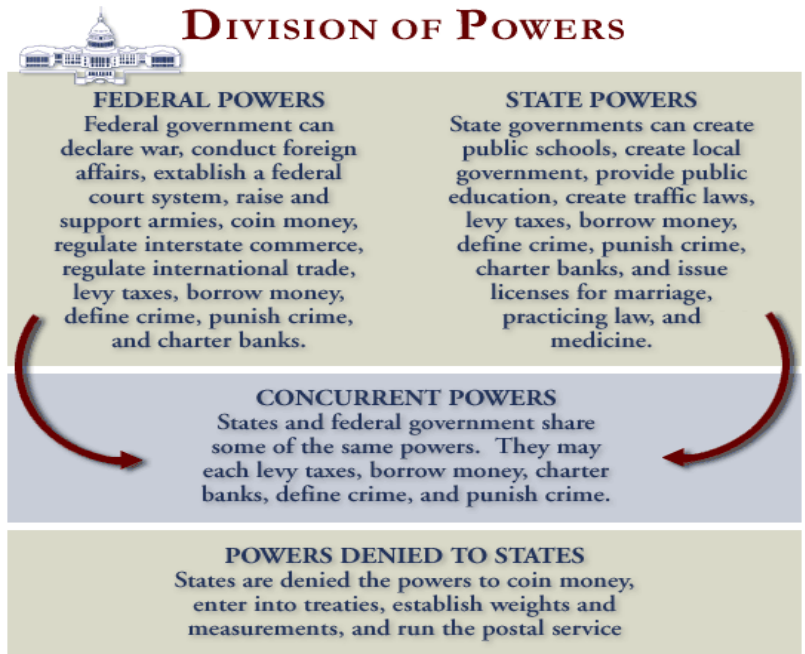
The legislative branch is the **General Assembly**, a **bicameral legislature**—the **House of Delegates** and the **Virginia Senate**—that meets annually for a fixed number of days.

The executive power is exercised by the **governor**, who is elected for a **four-year term** of office. The governor appoints members of the cabinet, who oversee specific functions of government.

The **lieutenant governor** and the **attorney general** are executive branch officers who are elected for a four-year term of office.

The judicial power is exercised by a court system that consists of four levels of courts:

- **Supreme Court**
- **Court of appeals**
- **Circuit courts**
- **District courts** (including **small claims** courts and **juvenile** and **domestic relations** courts)



STANDARD CE.7B

-- FEDERAL SYSTEM



The relationship of state governments to the national government in the federal system.

*The Constitution of the United States of America establishes the principle of **federalism**, which is the **division of power** between the **states** and the **national government**.*

*The **expansion of the national government's powers** into areas traditionally **reserved to the states** has altered the **relationship of states to the national government**.*

The Constitution of the United States establishes a **federal form of government** in which the **national government** is **supreme**.

The **powers not given** to the national government by the Constitution of the United States **are reserved to the states**.

The Constitution of the United States **denies certain powers to both** the national and state governments.

Some powers are **shared** between the national and state government (**concurrent powers**).

Primary responsibilities of each level of government

- **National:** Conducts **foreign policy**, regulates **commerce**, and provides for the common **defense**
- **State:** Promotes **public health, safety, education, and welfare**

Tensions exist when federal **mandates** require state actions without adequate **funding**.

STANDARD CE.7C -- STATE LAWMAKING PROCESS



The state lawmaking process.

Members of the Virginia General Assembly are elected to make **state laws**.

Citizens learn the lawmaking process and influence public policy through direct **participation** and/or **simulation**.

The lawmaking process requires **collaboration** and **compromise**.

The lawmaking process in the Virginia General Assembly

- **Introducing** a bill in either house
- Working in **committees**
- **Debating** the bill on the **floor**
- **Voting** on the bill
- Sending the bill to the **other house**
- Repeat process in the other house
- Sending the bill to the **governor**



Elected officials in the Virginia General Assembly **write laws** and take action **in response to problems or issues**.

Individuals and **interest groups** help shape legislation.

The primary issues in the legislative process at the state level

- **Education:** To promote an informed and engaged citizenry (i.e., establish minimum standards for local schools)
- **Public health:** To promote and protect the health of its citizens
- **Environment:** To protect **natural resources** (i.e., improve **water quality** in the Chesapeake Bay)
- **State budget:** To approve a **biennial** (two year) budget proposed by the governor
- **Revenue:** To levy and collect **taxes**

STANDARD CE.7D -- STATE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The roles and powers of the state executive branch and regulatory boards.

*The **executive branch** of the **Virginia state government enforces the laws** and plays a key role in the **policymaking process**.*

Ways the executive branch influences policymaking

- Proposes **biennial budget**
- Proposes **legislation**
- Approves **veto** or line-item veto bills

The **governor** of Virginia exercises the formal powers granted by the Virginia Constitution.

In carrying out both the formal and informal powers of the office, the **governor** fills **several roles**, including

- **chief of state:** ceremonial head of the state government
- **chief legislator:** proposer of the legislative agenda
- **chief executive:** head of the executive branch of state government
- **party chief:** leader of the political party that controls the executive branch
- **commander-in-chief**
- **chief citizen:** representative of all Virginians



Gov. Terry McAuliffe

Cabinet secretaries and departments, agencies, commissions, and regulatory boards

- administer laws and enforce laws
- create **regulations** to **monitor** aspects of business and the economy
- provide services

Civics and Economics

CE.8 Study Guide

STANDARD CE.8A

-- LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The structure and powers of the local government.

The units of local governments in Virginia are created by the General Assembly.

Local governments exercise legislative, executive, and judicial powers.

Structure

The units of local government in Virginia are **counties, towns, and cities.**

County

- Elected **board of supervisors**, which exercises **legislative** powers, enacting ordinances (local laws) and adopting an annual budget
- A **manager** may be hired by the elected legislative branch to oversee the operations of the local government
- Elected or appointed **school board**, which oversees the operation of the K–12 public schools in the county

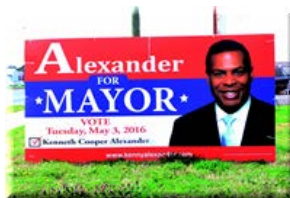


Town (incorporated)

- Elected **town council**, which exercises **legislative** powers, enacting ordinances and adopting an annual budget
- A **mayor** is elected by either the voters or the town council members
- A **manager** may be hired by the elected legislative branch to oversee the operations of the local government
- Located within counties, and citizens receive and pay for services from both the town and county

Cities

- Elected **city council**, which exercises **legislative** powers, enacting ordinances and adopting an annual budget
- A **mayor** is elected by either the voters or the city council members
- A **manager** may be hired by the elected legislative branch to oversee the operations of the local government
- Elected or appointed **school board**, which oversees the operation of the K–12 public schools in the city



Virginia local governments exercise defined and limited powers, including the power to

- **enforce** state and local laws
- promote **public health**
- protect **public safety**
- **educate** children
- protect the **environment**
- regulate **land use**
- levy and collect **taxes.**

In every county and city, **state courts** resolve judicial disputes.

The Virginia Constitution requires that voters in every locality elect a **sheriff**, a **clerk** of the circuit court, a **commissioner** of revenue, and a **treasurer.**

STANDARD CE.8B

-- LOCAL VS. STATE GOVERNMENT

The relationship of local government to the state government

The authority of local governments in Virginia is derived from the state.

All powers of local governments in Virginia are given to them by the **Constitution of Virginia** and acts of the **General Assembly.**

Not all counties and cities are given the same powers. **Cities have charters** listing their powers.

Counties and cities assist in the local implementation of state laws and programs.

Local government derives its funding from its ability to **raise revenue** in addition to money that the state provides.

STANDARD CE.8C

-- LOCAL LAWMAKING PROCESS

The local lawmaking process

Counties, cities, and towns adopt and enforce ordinances to provide services for their residents.

Citizens learn the lawmaking process and influence public policy through direct participation and/or simulation.

The lawmaking process requires collaboration and compromise.

An elected **board of supervisors** is responsible for passing laws (**ordinances**) in counties.

An **elected council** is the local legislative body in independent **cities** and incorporated **towns.**

Individuals can have the **greatest influence** on the decisions made by **local government officials** by communicating with them about their opinions and preference.

