

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.

