

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 political subdivisions **created by the General Assembly**.

What are the units of local government in Virginia?

The units of local government in Virginia are **counties, towns, and cities**. Local governments **exercise legislative, executive, and judicial powers**.

Each Virginia **county** has an elected **board of supervisors**, which exercises **legislative powers**, enacting **ordinances** (local laws) and adopting an annual **budget**.

Each Virginia **county** and **city** has an elected or appointed **school board**, which oversees the operation of the K–12 public schools in the county or city.

Each Virginia **incorporated town** has an elected **town council**, which exercises **legislative powers**, enacting ordinances and adopting an annual budget. A **mayor** is elected either by the voters or the town council members.

Each Virginia **city** has an elected **city council**, which exercises **legislative powers**, enacting **ordinances** and adopting an annual **budget**. A **mayor** is elected either by the voters or the city council members.

In Virginia counties, towns, and cities, a **manager** may be hired by the elected legislative branch **to oversee the operations** of the local government.

In every Virginia locality, **state courts** resolve judicial disputes. Judges of the **circuit courts, district courts, juvenile and domestic relations courts, and small claims courts** hear cases in each locality.

Which officials are locally elected?

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**.

Which powers do local government exercise?

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**.

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**.

What is the relationship between the state government and local governments in Virginia?

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.

STANDARD CE.8C

-- LOCAL LAWMAKING PROCESS

The local lawmaking process

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

All citizens can learn the importance of the individual's **participation** in the policymaking process through direct participation and simulations.

How do localities enact ordinances?

An elected **board of supervisors** is the **local legislative body** in counties and is responsible for passing laws (ordinances) for the county.

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**.