

# 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.

*What is the structure of Virginia's state government?*

*What are some of the powers of the three branches of state 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

#### -- FEDERALISM

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.

*How does the Constitution of the United States of America outline the **division and sharing of powers** between the national and state governments?*

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

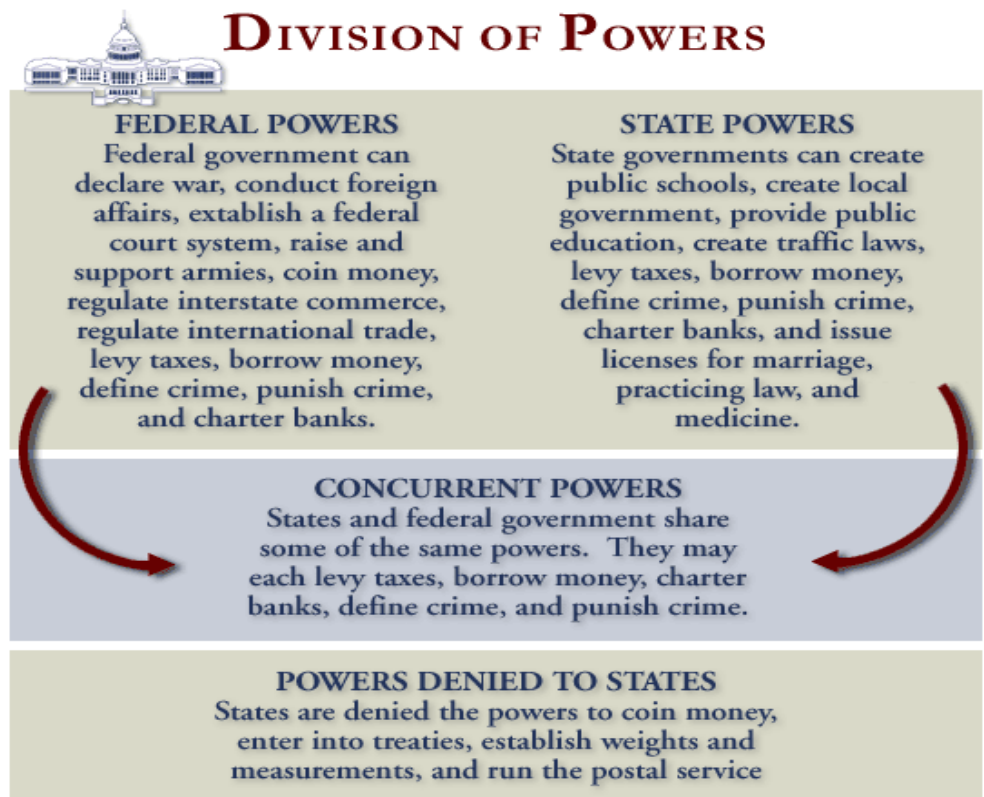
The **powers not given** to the national government by the Constitution of the United States of America **are reserved to the states**.

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

Primary **responsibilities** of each level of government

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

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



# STANDARD CE.7c -- STATE LAWMAKING PROCESS



## STANDARD CE.7D -- STATE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

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



Gov. Terry  
McAuliffe

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

*What are the roles and powers of the executive branch at the state level?*

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
- chief legislator
- chief administrator
- party chief
- commander-in-chief.

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

- administer laws
- enforce laws
- regulate aspects of business and the economy
- provide services.

### The state lawmaking process.

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

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

*Which branch of the Virginia state government has the power to pass laws?*

*How does the Virginia General Assembly make laws?*

The lawmaking process in the **Virginia General Assembly**

- **Introducing a bill**
- Working in **committees**
- **Debating** the bill on the **floor** of each house
- **Voting** on the bill in each house
- Sending the bill to the **governor** to sign into law



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 (i.e., fund health benefits)
- **Environment:** To protect natural resources (i.e., improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay)
- **State budget:** To approve a **biennial** (two year) budget prepared by the governor
- **Revenue:** To levy and collect **taxes**

# 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**.