



Strong Mayor v. Council- Manager

KEY DISTINCTIONS IN THE FORMS
OF GOVERNMENT

Structure & Philosophy

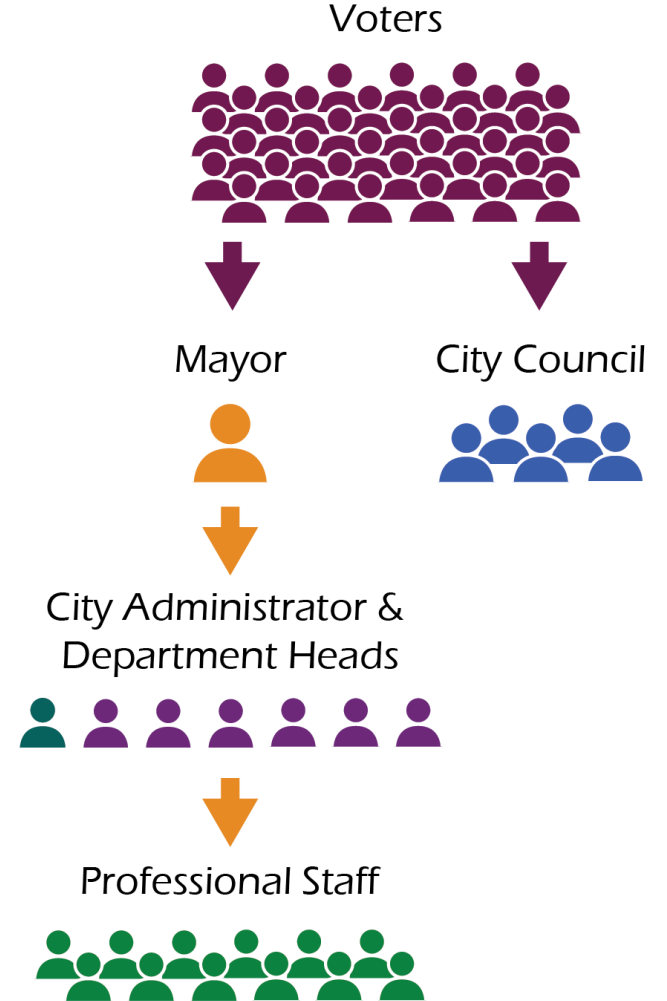
Council-Manager

Shared Powers & Equal Voice



Strong Mayor

Separation of Powers & Hierarchal



Politics or Professionalism

Council-Manager form operates on the premise that the administration of government must be managed by a professional chief executive who remains responsible to fulfilling the goals and objectives adopted by Council

Strong Mayor form system operates on the premise that the administration of government should be directed by the political will of the people as determined through an election process.

Strengths

Council-Manager System

- Requires collaboration among elected officials and professional staff
- More inclusive of diverse voices and communities as each elected official has an equal voice in all matters
- People have greater power over the administration of government since their elected representatives can remove the administrator at any time.
- Greater continuity in the daily operations of government.

Strong Mayor System

- Government can take more immediate action on issues where there is little political agreement
- Mayor has greater political clout since they are directly responsible for the daily operation of government (builds stronger pipeline for candidates interested in higher office)
- Elected officials have a narrower scope of responsibilities

Weaknesses

Council-Manager System

- The people generally have little direct action they can take to force change in government administration
- Divided Councils can cripple the ability for administration to move forward without clear direction
- Innovation can be stifled by ineffective manager and disengaged Council

Strong Mayor System

- Ineffective Mayors hold office for the entirety of their term regardless of their ability to perform the duties.
- Administration of government has a higher risk of politicization
- Strong mayor systems are more likely to have government officials convicted of corruption,
- Staff can become frustrated with new direction every time a new mayor is elected and appoints their own department heads

Role of Administrator

Council-Manager System

- Reports to the Council as a majority
- Hires and fires all department heads
- Delivers programs and services effectively, efficiently, and equitably to achieve the goals and objectives of Council
- Must remain politically neutral as a public servant without any particular allegiance to any one elected official

Strong Mayor System

- Reports to the Mayor
- Manages the daily operations of department heads, but ability to hire/fire department heads generally rests with the Mayor
- Delivers programs and services as directed by the Mayor
- Political neutrality is not necessary. Generally understood as a political appointee working for the political interests of the Mayor