

Summary: Local Government

Citizens Decide

United States citizens make decisions about local, state, and national governments. In some communities, people have town meetings. They listen to each other's ideas. Then they vote to make a decision.

In other communities, citizens hold elections. They vote for representatives who will speak for them. Before elections, citizens ask what these people would do if they were elected. Then citizens vote. The person who gets the most votes wins the election.

What Local Government Does

Local governments make laws and provide services. Communities charge citizens a tax, or fee, to pay for these services. Communities may tax houses, land, or things citizens buy. This pays for services like buses, running water, and trash collection. Citizens vote when to raise or lower taxes. They may also vote on how taxes should be spent.

Types of Local Government

Every community is different. Some communities elect a mayor and a city council. Together they run the city. Some cities have a manager. The city council tells the manager what to do. In a county government, people elect commissioners to run the county. A county includes several communities.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

election *noun*, the process by which citizens vote for people to represent them

tax *noun*, a fee citizens and others pay to the government

mayor *noun*, the leader of a city's government

council *noun*, a group of officials who make rules or laws

county *noun*, an area of a state that includes several communities



After You Read

REVIEW What can citizens do to take part in their local government? Highlight sentences that contain the word *vote*.

REVIEW What are some of the local services paid for by taxes? Underline the sentence that answers the question.

REVIEW Why do communities have different types of government? Underline the sentence that tells you the answer.