

WHAT IS LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

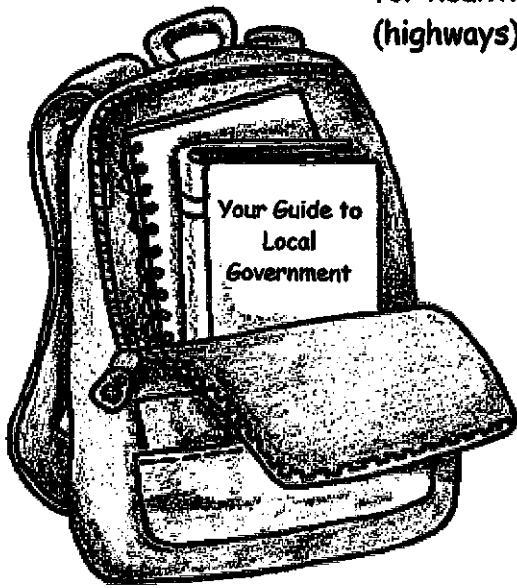
There are several levels of government in Canada:
federal, provincial, territorial, and local government.

Federal

Led by the Prime Minister and Parliament, the federal government provides services and makes decisions that affect the entire country. It is responsible for national defense, foreign policy, criminal law, citizenship authority and responsibility for governing the territories.

Provincial

Led by the Premier and legislature, the provincial government provides services and makes decisions to meet provincial needs. It is responsible for health care, education, transportation (highways), property and civil rights.



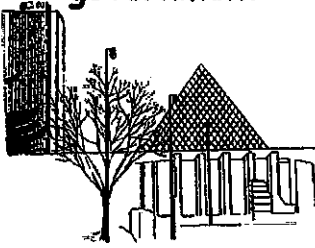



Local or Municipal

Led by the mayor/reeve, councilors/alderman, directors, agencies, the municipality provides services to meet local needs. It is responsible for local police and firefighting, local transportation, planning and development, public utilities, local health, libraries, education facilities, parks, recreation and culture.

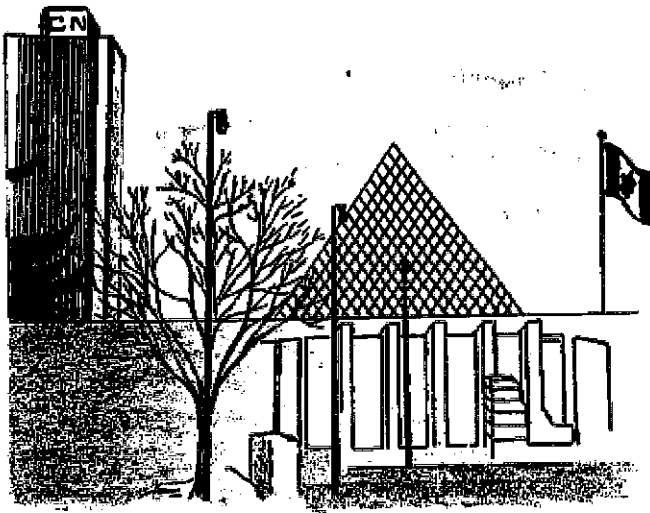
...MORE ABOUT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Local governments have a variety of names

Name	Usual location	Officials
<p>Municipal government</p> 	<p>city, town, district</p>	<p>mayor, councilors, alderpersons</p>
<p>County government</p> 	<p>rural area, small town</p>	<p>reeve, warden, councilors</p>
<p>Regional government</p> 	<p>large city and surrounding area</p>	<p>chairperson, councilors, directors</p>
<p>First Nations government</p> 	<p>First Nation reservations</p>	<p>band chief, band councilors</p>

The Municipality

The council is the most important political structure in any local municipality. The council consists of political officials, usually called councilors. The council also has a leader who is usually referred to as a mayor. The councilors are elected to office and may represent a certain area of the municipality or are elected at large in city-wide elections. The mayor is usually elected in a city wide election and is responsible for presiding over council meetings. The mayor usually has very little power independent of their council.



How are the mayor and the council chosen?

The mayor and the council are elected by the residents of the municipality who are 18 years of age and older. There are two types of electoral systems:

1. at-large electoral system
2. ward - or constituency- based electoral system.

At-large Electoral System:

This type of electoral system is usually utilized by smaller communities. The council members and the mayor are chosen in city-wide votes.

Ward - or Constituency - based electoral system:

This type of electoral system is usually utilized by larger cities. The city is divided into separate wards and each ward elects their own councilors. Mayors are usually elected in a separate, at-large mayoral election.

The elections in Alberta are generally non-partisan. This means that candidates are not linked to any particular political party and run as independents.