

# The Structure of Rural and Urban Local Governments

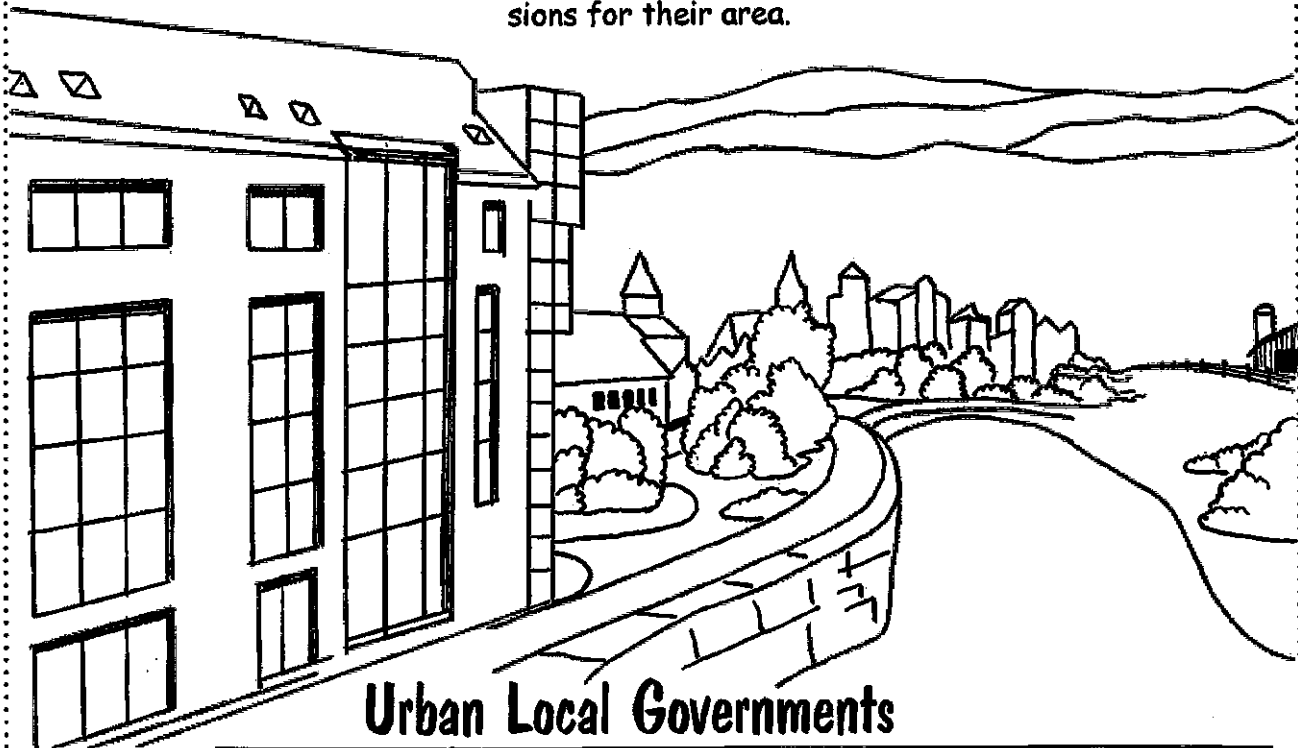
The Municipal Government Act provides the general criteria regarding the formation and designation of municipalities.

Total population and population density form the basis for this criteria.

There are three basic municipalities namely,

rural municipalities, urban municipalities and specialized municipalities.

The municipal governments for all three types have councils that govern, or make decisions for their area.

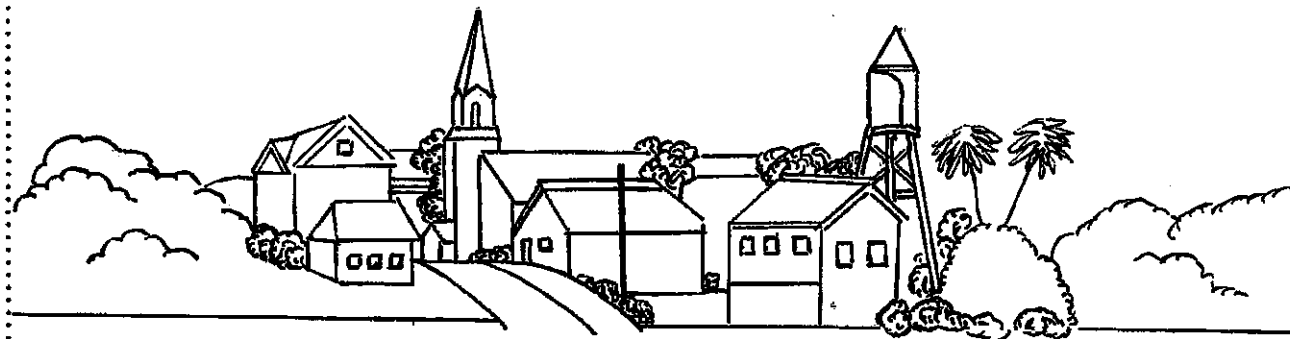


## Urban Local Governments

| Name                   | Description  | Government  |
|------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Cities</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• population over 10,000</li> <li>• majority of buildings are on parcels of land less than 1850 square metres</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ward system, with the same number of councilors in each ward</li> <li>• governed by a mayor and a council</li> </ul> |
| <b>Towns</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• population of 1000 or more</li> <li>• majority of buildings are on parcels of land less than 1850 square metres</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• governed by a mayor and four to six councilors</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Villages</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• population of at least 300</li> <li>• majority of buildings are on parcels of land less than 1850 square metres.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• governed by three councilors</li> <li>• one of the councilors is the mayor</li> </ul>                                |
| <b>Summer Villages</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• population of less than 300</li> <li>• must have at least 50 occupied houses</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• most of the electors are not permanent residents.</li> </ul>   |

## Specialized Local Governments

| Description   | Government   |
|---|--|
| <p>Examples of specialized local governments in Alberta are Strathcona County east of Edmonton and the Municipality of Wood Buffalo in north-eastern Alberta.</p> <p>These municipalities are a combination of rural and urban municipalities. They are characterized by a mix of a very densely populated area surrounded by a more sparsely populated rural area.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has one councilor for every division in the municipal district .</li> <li>• one of the councilors is elected by the council as the reeve</li> </ul> |



## Rural Local Governments

| Name   | Description   | Government   |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Municipal District</b><br/>some are called <b>Counties</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• population of 1000 or more</li> <li>• most of the dwellings are on parcels of land 1850 square metres or more in size</li> <li>• includes farmland, hamlets, subdivisions</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has one councilor for every division in the municipal district .</li> <li>• one of the councilors is elected by the council as the reeve</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Improvement Districts</b></p>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• originally set up in sparsely populated areas</li> <li>• not sufficient population or tax base to support and finance a local government</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advisory council with seven to nine members</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Special Areas</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• southeastern Alberta</li> <li>• severely affected by drought and depression in the 1920's and 1930's</li> <li>• farmers could not pay taxes, left the land, land was acquired by the Province</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advisory board of three people appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Métis settlements</b><br/><b>Indian Reservations</b></p>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reservations are home to more than 60,000 First Nations in Alberta</li> <li>• there are about 9000 Métis living in settlements in Alberta</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• administered by a local government</li> <li>• usually a chief and band council</li> <li>• coordinated on a federal level</li> </ul>                 |