



NATIONAL LEAGUE of **CITIES**

Mayoral Powers

Mayors are bestowed varying degrees of responsibility and authority across the nation, especially depending on a city's form of government.

These responsibilities may include:

- Serving on the [city council](#);
- Voting in council meetings;
- Assigning council members to chair or serve on committees;
- Appointing citizens to serve on advisory boards or commissions;
- Preparing the annual budget; Receiving the annual budget developed by chief administrative official or city manager; and
- Making an annual report to the council.

Weak or Strong Mayors

Cities in the United States are sometimes characterized as having either "strong" or "weak" mayors. The term is not a judgement of effectiveness, rather it distinguishes the level of political power and administrative authority assigned to the mayor in the municipal charter. In practice, there is no sharp category that distinguishes between "weak" and "strong" mayors, but rather a continuum of authority and power along which cities are spread. However, the designation of "weak" and "strong" are useful in showing the variations in mayoral authority that exist.

Most "strong" mayors are in the mayor-council form of government, and are directly elected by citizens to that office. Most "weak" mayors are mayors in a council-manager form, and are elected from within the city council.

Characteristics of a "strong" mayor:

- The mayor is the chief executive officer, centralizing executive power.
- The mayor directs the administrative structure, appointing and removing of department heads.
- While the council has legislative power, the mayor has veto power.
- The council does not oversee daily operations.

Characteristics of a "weak" mayor:

- The council is powerful, with both legislative and executive authority.
- The mayor is not truly the chief executive, with limited power or no veto power.
- The council can prevent the mayor from effectively supervising city administration.
- There may be many administrative boards and commissions that operate independently from the city government.

Sources

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