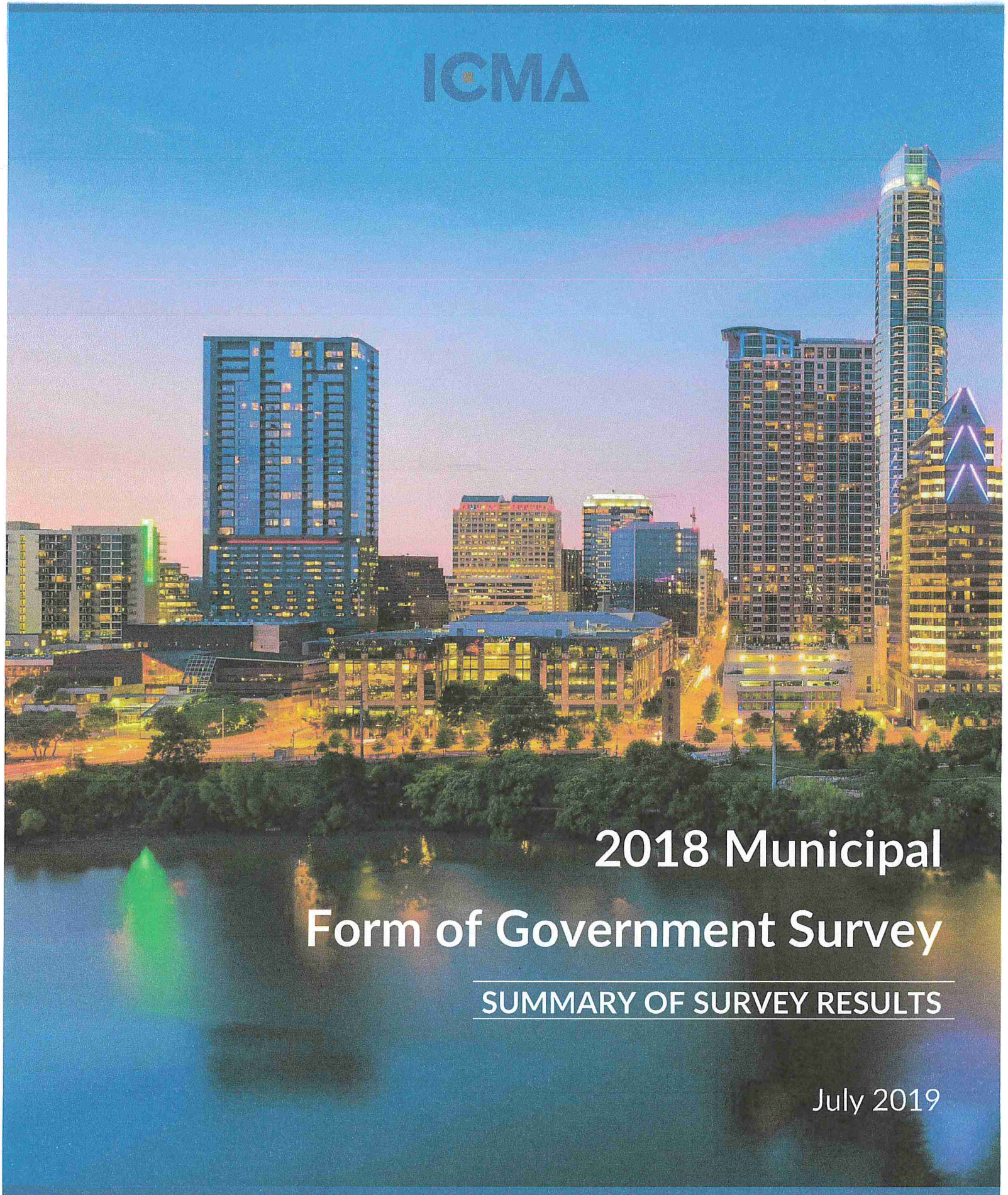
ICMA



2018 Municipal Form of Government Survey

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

July 2019

ICMA | survey research

ICMA, the International City/County Management Association, advances professional local government management worldwide through leadership, management, innovation, and ethics. Through expansive partnerships with local governments, federal agencies, nonprofits, and philanthropic funders, the organization gathers information on topics such as sustainability, health care, aging communities, economic development, cybersecurity, and performance measurement and management data on a variety of local government services—all of which support related training, education, and technical assistance.

ICMA provides support, publications, data and information, peer and results-oriented assistance, and training and professional development to more than 12,000 city, town, and county experts and other individuals and organizations throughout the world.

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Overview

ICMA's Municipal Form of Government survey has been conducted nine times since 1974 and is the most comprehensive resource available on form of government, provisions for referenda or recall, terms of office, mayoral powers, and other data pertaining to the structure of local government in the United States.

Definitions

Municipality: Refers to cities, towns, townships, villages, and boroughs.

Council: An elected body whose members may be called council members, aldermen, selectmen, freeholders, trustees, commissioners, or a similar title.

Chief appointed official (CAO): Often referred to as a city manager, chief executive officer, city administrator, chief administrative officer, town administrator, village manager, or a similar title.

Chief elected official (CEO): The mayor, president, board chair, etc.

Mayor-Council Form of Government: Elected council or board serves as the legislative body. The chief elected official (e.g., mayor) is the head of government, with significant administrative authority, and generally elected separately from the council.

Council-Manager Form of Government: Elected council or board and chief elected official are responsible for making policy with advice of the chief appointed official (e.g., administrator/manager). A professional administrator appointed by the board or council has full responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the government.

Commission Form of Government: Members of a board of elected commissioners serve as heads of specific departments while also collectively sitting as the legislative body of the government.

Town Meeting Form of Government: Qualified voters convene and act as a legislative body that makes basic policy, votes on the budget, and chooses a board. These elected officials may carry out the policies established by town meeting or may delegate the day-to-day management of the municipality to an appointed manager/administrator.

Representative Town Meeting Form of Government: Similar to town meeting except that voters select residents to represent them at the town meeting. All residents may attend and participate in debate, but only the selected representatives may vote.

Methodology

The 2018 edition of ICMA's Municipal Form of Government Survey was distributed by mail to the clerks of all 12,761 municipal governments in ICMA's database. The survey was returned by 4,109 respondents for a 32.2% response rate.

Respondents were provided with postage-paid return envelopes for their response, but were encouraged to respond through an online survey, the direct link to which was provided on the paper survey. The identity of online respondents was confirmed by requiring respondents to enter a unique, 6-digit ID number, which was provided on the physical survey. The overall standard error is +/- 1% at a 95% confidence interval. Not all respondents answered each question and the sample size for each question is shown as "n."

In this report, questions are organized by topic rather than the order in which they originally appeared in the survey instrument. The appendix provides a sequential list of questions mapped to the page and section in which summary data can be found.

Survey Population

Survey Population	Surveyed	Responded	Response Rate
Total	12,761	4,115	32.2%
Census Population	**Surveyed**	**Responded**	**Response Rate**
Over 1,000,000	9	3	33.3%
500,000 - 1,000,000	26	7	26.9%
250,000 - 499,999	44	10	22.7%
100,000 - 249,999	235	81	34.5%
50,000 - 99,999	549	192	35.0%
25,000 - 49,999	1,028	377	36.7%
10,000 - 24,999	2,332	771	33.1%
5,000 - 9,999	2,750	823	29.9%
2,500 - 4,999	3,963	1,112	28.1%
Under 2,500	1,825	739	40.5%
Geographic Division	**Surveyed**	**Responded**	**Response Rate**
New England	982	386	39.3%
Middle Atlantic	2,425	549	22.6%
East North Central	3,705	1,024	27.6%
West North Central	1,211	498	41.1%
South Atlantic	1,349	582	43.1%
East South Central	579	160	27.6%
West South Central	1,021	364	35.7%
Mountain	547	210	38.4%
Pacific	942	336	35.7%

Section 1 – Form of Government

Survey Highlights

- Among survey respondents, the council-manager form of government remains the most popular form of government for medium to large local governments and is concentrated among municipalities in Southwest and Atlantic Coast states.
- The mayor-council form of government is the most popular form of government among responding municipalities with fewer than 5,000 residents.
- Nearly half of responding local governments established their form of government through a charter.
- Responding local governments in the South are about twice as likely to have their form of governments established by charter than local governments elsewhere.
- Massachusetts is the only state in which form of government is commonly established by by-law.
- Three in four responding local governments have a chief appointed official (CAO), including more than half of mayor-council local governments.
- The CAO position in responding council-manager governments nearly always has the authority to independently develop the budget and make budget recommendations. In non-council-manager governments, the responsibility is delegated to a variety of positions.
- Very few responding local governments attempt to modify their structure or form of government; however, attempts to do so are typically successful.

Response Summary

1. Indicate your municipality's current form of government as defined by your charter, ordinance, or state law. (n=4,020)	Percent of Respondents
Mayor-council	38.2%
Council-manager	48.2%
Commission	3.2%
Town Meeting	8.1%
Representative town meeting	2.3%

2. How is your municipality's structure or form of government established? (n=3,942)	Percent of Respondents
Charter	47.3%
State law	26.1%
Ordinance	18.9%
Resolution	1.3%
By-law	1.9%
Special election/referendum	2.5%
Other	2.1%

3. Does your municipality have the position of chief appointed official? (n=4,030)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	75.7%
No	24.3%

3a. If your municipality has the position of chief appointed official, what action established the position? (n=3,000)	Percent of Respondents
Charter	39.6%
State law	7.7%
Ordinance	30.8%
Resolution	2.5%
Chief elected official created position	1.6%
Elected council/board created/voted on position	12.4%
Referendum	0.8%
Town meeting	2.5%
Other	2.1%

3b. If your municipality has the position of chief appointed official, who appoints that position? (n=2,945)	Percent of Respondents
Appointed by chief elected official alone	3.2%
Appointed by council alone	59.5%
Appointed by combination of chief elected official & council/board	25.7%
Nominated by chief elected official; approved by council/board	9.4%
Nominated by council/board; approved by chief elected official	1.0%
Other	1.2%

5. Who has the independent authority to develop and make recommendations for the budget submitted to the council? (n=3,940)	Percent of Respondents
Chief elected official	15.0%
Chief appointed official	48.9%
Combination of CEO and CAO	10.5%
Chief financial officer	14.1%
Other	11.5%

6. Are your department heads: (n=3,817)	Percent of Respondents
Only elected	4.4%
Only appointed	79.0%
Combination; some are elected, some are appointed	16.6%

7. Please indicate how the following positions in your jurisdiction are selected.	Police Chief (n=3,290)	Fire Chief (n=2,972)	City Attorney (3,658)	City Clerk (n=3,712)
Elected	2.5%	3.0%	2.6%	18.7%
Appointed by the chief elected official (CEO)	12.1%	10.6%	8.6%	7.0%
Appointed by the chief appointed official (CAO)	26.3%	22.5%	6.8%	17.6%
Appointed by the council	22.9%	18.1%	53.1%	33.9%
Appointed by a combination of CAO & CEO	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Appointed by a combination of CAO & Council	3.7%	2.9%	3.7%	3.3%
Appointed by the CAO with council's advice & consent	5.5%	4.6%	3.2%	3.5%
Appointed by a combination of CAO & CEO & council	3.0%	2.1%	3.0%	2.2%
Appointed by the CEO with council's approval	12.6%	9.5%	12.9%	9.2%
Other	10.3%	25.7%	4.9%	3.5%

12. Please indicate whether there have been any proposals to change your municipality's structure or form of government since January 1, 2011. If yes, also indicate whether the change was approved.

Type of Change	Proposed	Not Proposed	Approved	Not Approved
Change in the form of government (n=3,460)	4.8%	95.2%	63.2%	36.8%
Change from at-large to ward/district elections (n=3,397)	1.8%	98.2%	72.9%	27.1%
Change from ward/district to at-large elections (n=3,394)	0.9%	99.1%	71.4%	28.6%
Change to a mixed system with some at-large and some ward/district elections (n=3,394)	0.7%	99.3%	90.5%	9.5%
Add the position of chief appointed official (n=3,415)	4.2%	95.8%	88.8%	11.2%
Eliminate the position of chief appointed (n=3,395)	1.1%	98.9%	64.7%	35.3%
Increase in powers/authorities of the chief elected official (n=3,407)	2.0%	98.0%	88.7%	11.3%
Decrease in powers/authorities of the chief elected official (n=3,400)	1.7%	98.3%	72.5%	27.5%
Change who appoints the chief appointed official (n=3,395)	0.4%	99.6%	53.8%	46.2%
Change the mix between the number of council members elected at large and the number elected by ward/district (n=3,400)	1.1%	98.9%	81.8%	18.2%
Change the method of election of the chief elected official (n=3,394)	1.0%	99.0%	83.9%	16.1%
Increase the number of council or board members (n=3,413)	1.6%	98.4%	64.6%	35.4%
Decrease the number of council or board members (n=3,398)	1.1%	98.9%	64.5%	35.5%

12A. If a change in form of government was approved, what was the approved change?

Form of Government	From (n=68)	To (n=80)
Mayor-council	72.1%	22.9%
Council-manager	16.2%	67.5%
Commission	5.9%	3.6%
Town meeting	4.4%	6.0%
Representative town meeting	1.5%	0.0%

Section 2 – Local Government Procedures

Survey Highlights

- Most local governments do not have residency requirements for employees. Residency requirement are more common among local governments in sparsely populated areas.
- The most popular method for placing questions on the ballot for voter approval is legislative referendum.
- Approximately one-fifth of responding local governments have a provision for all three methods of placing questions of the ballot for voter approval: initiative, legislative referendum, and popular referendum.
- Whether or not a local government has provisions for recall is extremely state dependent.
- Most local governments have standing committees that consider specific policy matters.
- Nearly all cities, towns, villages, and boroughs have resident authorities, boards, or commissions. They are typically advisory in nature.

Response Summary

4. Does your municipality have residency requirements for any of your employees? (n=3,925)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	41.3%
No	58.7%

4A. If yes, which employees have residency requirements? (n=1,690)	Percent of Respondents
All municipal employees	16.2%
Chief appointed official	51.7%
Public safety employees	17.6%
Other employees	38.6%

8. Does your municipality have a provision for Initiative? (n=3,827)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	45.3%
No	54.7%

8A. If yes, which of the following initiative processes does your municipality provide? (n=1,586)	Percent of Respondents
Indirect	51.2%
Direct	45.6%
Non-binding initiative	16.0%

9. Does your municipality have a provision for legislative referendum? (n=3,780)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	62.5%
No	37.5%

9a. If yes, what type of items must the council place on the ballot for voter approval? (n=2,103)	Percent of Respondents
Local bond measures	65.9%
Proposed charter amendments	48.3%
Proposed ordinances	28.6%
Proposed home rule changes	26.3%
Other	15.2%

10. Does your municipality have a provision for popular referendum? (n=3,551)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	33.7%
No	66.3%

11. Does your municipality have a provision for recall? (n=3,640)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	48.5%
No	51.5%

39. Does your municipality have standing committees (permanent bodies with set memberships and regularly scheduled meeting times) that consider specific policy matters? (3,764)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	69.4%
No	30.6%

40. Does your municipality have resident authorities, boards, or commissions? (n=3,837)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	88.3%
No	11.7%

40A. If yes, are members: (n=3,351)	Percent of Respondents
All elected	1.9%
All appointed	85.1%
Combination of elected and appointed	12.9%

40B. If yes, in what capacity do they serve? (n=3,307)	Percent of Respondents
Advisory	87.4%
Decision/policy making	43.2%
Quasi-judicial	29.7%

40C. If yes, on which areas do they focus? (n=3,334)

Area of Focus	Percent of Respondents
Growth	31.8%
Transportation	19.8%
Zoning	86.6%
Finance	24.7%
Airports	14.9%
Art	14.1%
Beautification	24.9%
Cable TV	8.1%
Civil service	13.3%
Libraries	34.6%
Housing	28.7%
Community-police relations	12.6%
Economic development	44.2%
Planning	82.9%
Environmental issues	23.7%
Historic preservation	34.6%
Architectural review	16.9%
Code enforcement	27.6%
Parks and recreation	62.6%
Ethics	9.3%
Charter review commissions	10.2%
Education/Schools	8.6%
Cemeteries	14.2%
Other (Please specify)	14.9%

41. Please provide your city's most recent bond ratings next to the name of the rating agency.	a. Moody's (n=788)	b. Standard & Poor's (n=914)	c. Fitch (n=156)
Prime	17.3%	15.3%	27.6%
High Grade	54.4%	53.4%	53.8%
Upper Medium Grade	23.7%	26.7%	13.5%
Lower Medium Grade	2.5%	2.1%	1.9%
Non-Investment and Below	1.0%	0.4%	0.6%
Other	1.0%	2.1%	2.6%

Section 3 – Chief Elected Official

Survey Highlights

- The vast majority of chief elected official positions are part-time and receive an annual salary or stipend.
- Local governments rarely place term limits on chief elected officials, but those that do most often limit those terms to two four-year terms.
- Most chief elected officials may vote on all issues during council meetings.
- Recalls of the chief elected official are rare, and successful recalls are even rarer.

Response Summary

13. Does your municipality have a: (n=3,808)	Percent of Respondents
Mayor	58.4%
Council president/board chair	24.0%
Both	17.6%

14. Is the position of chief elected official in your local government officially full-time or part-time? (n=3,691)	Percent of Respondents
Full-time	16.7%
Part-time	83.3%

15. Is the chief elected official a member of council? (n=3,786)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	72.3%
No	27.7%

17. How is your chief elected official selected? (n=3,802)	Percent of Respondents
Voters elect directly	75.6%
Council selects from among its members	21.3%
The council member receiving the most votes in the general election becomes the chief elected official	0.9%
Council members rotate into the position of chief elected official	1.6%
Other	0.7%

18. How long is the chief elected official's term of office by law? (n=3,793)	Percent of Respondents
1 year	13.5%
2 years	28.6%
3 years	6.1%
4 years	49.4%
Other	2.4%

19. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms allowed for the position of chief elected official? (n=3,800)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	8.6%
No	91.4%

19A. If yes, what is the maximum number of terms allowed by law? (n=318)	Percent of Respondents
1 term	3.8%
2 terms	51.1%
3 terms	26.2%
4 terms	11.0%
Other	7.9%

19B. If yes, what authority limits the number of terms for the position of chief elected official? (n=314)	Percent of Respondents
Ordinance	15.0%
Charter	69.0%
State law	13.4%
Other	2.6%

20. Does the chief elected official (CEO) have the authority to do any of the following? (n=3,688)	Percent of Respondents
Vote during council meetings	68.5%
Nominate the chief appointed official without council review or approval	6.9%
Appoint the chief appointed official without council review or approval	3.5%
Remove the chief appointed official without council review or approval	4.0%
Veto council-passed measures	39.4%
Assign council members to chair or serve on committees and make assignments to those committees	55.6%
Appoint residents to serve on advisory or quasi-judicial authorities, boards, or commissions	55.1%
Receive the annual budget developed by the chief appointed official and present the budget with comments and suggestions to the council for consideration	34.7%
Prepare the annual budget	21.4%
Make an annual report to the council and residents on the state of the community	39.9%

20A. Under what circumstances does the CEO have the authority to vote in council meetings? (n=3,686)	Percent of Respondents
On all issues	56.1%
Only to break a tie	31.8%
Only to make a quorum	0.6%
Never	8.7%
Other	2.9%

20B. If the CEO has the authority to veto council-passed measures, is a "super majority" vote of the council required to overturn the CEO's veto? (n=1,357)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	51.3%
No	48.7%

21. Since 2011 have any recall initiatives been filed against the chief elected official? (n=3,740)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	3.1%
No	96.9%

21A. If yes, were any successful? (n=109)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	22.9%
No	77.1%

22. How many staff work directly for the chief elected official?	a. Full-time staff (n=3,105)	b. Part-time staff (n=2,107)
Mean	7.7	2.7
Median	1.0	0.0

Section 4 – Council

Survey Highlights

- Less than one-third of local governments do not require council candidates to submit a candidate filing fee. For those that do, the average filing fee is $76.54.
- Being a member of the council is rarely a full-time position. Over 90 percent of respondents indicated that their council member positions are all part-time.
- Term limits on council positions are rare overall but are most commonly found in communities with 100,000 residents or more.
- About half of responding local governments fill vacant council positions through an appointment by the sitting council members, but many change the method of filling vacancies depending on the length of the term remaining.
- Less than one in five responding local governments have concurrent council terms. Few local governments put all council seats up for election in the same year.

Response Summary

23. Does the political party affiliation of council candidates appear on the ballot in a local general election? (n=3,869)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	30.1%
No	69.9%

24. What is the current filing fee for running for a seat on the council? (n=3,572)	Dollars
Mean	$22.35
Median	$0.00
Minimum	$0.00
Maximum	$3,044.00
Mean non-zero	$76.54

25. How many council positions are there on your council? Include the CEO if they sit on the council. (n=3,910)	Percent of Respondents
Four or less	12.0%
Five	39.3%
Six	12.5%
Seven	26.1%
Eight or more	10.1%

26. How are your council members selected? (n=3,855)	Percent of Respondents
All at large	68.0%
All by ward/district	18.4%
Combination of at large and by ward/district.	13.6%

26A. If you selected c above, please indicate the number of council members elected by each method:	a. At large (n=512)	b. By ward/district (n=508)
Mean	2.2	4.8
Median	2.0	4.0

27. Are council members full-time or part-time? (n=3,795)	Percent of Respondents
All full-time	5.5%
All part-time	92.1%
Combination of full-time and part-time	2.3%

28. Please indicate the length of term for council members.	2 years	3 years	4 years	6 years	Other
Council members elected at large (n=3,254)	18.6%	13.1%	63.6%	2.8%	1.9%
Council members elected by ward/district (n=1,296)	24.0%	7.6%	64.7%	2.0%	1.8%

28A. Are the terms of office for council members staggered or concurrent? (n=3,851)	Percent of Respondents
Concurrent	19.2%
Staggered	80.8%

29. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms a council member may serve? (n=3,899)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	8.7%
No	91.3%

29A. If yes, what is the maximum number of terms allowed by law? (n=313)	Terms
Mean	2.8
Median	2.0
Minimum	1.0
Maximum	12.0

29B. If yes, by what authority is the number of terms limited? (n=332)	Percent of Respondents
Ordinance	15.7%
Charter	69.5%
State law	12.4%
Other	2.4%

30. How is a council member's seat filled if it is vacated before the term has expired? (n=3,866)	Percent of Respondents
Method depends on length of term remaining	23.5%
Special election	8.0%
Appointed by council	49.4%
Appointed by chief elected official	9.4%
Position left vacant until next regular election	1.2%
Other	8.6%

31. Since 2011, have any recall initiatives been filed against council members? (n=3,871)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	4.0%
No	96.0%

31A. If yes, were any successful? (n=149)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	28.9%
No	71.1%

37. How often does the council formally meet, excluding work sessions? (n=3,832)	Percent of Respondents
More than once a week	0.2%
Once a week	3.0%
Three times a month	2.1%
Twice a month	58.7%
Once a month	34.4%
Less than once a month	0.9%
Other	0.6%

38. Does the council employ staff to work exclusively on council business? (n=3,784)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	16.4%
No	83.6%

38A. If yes, how many are:	a. Full-time staff (n=480)	b. Part-time staff (n=225)
Mean	3.8	2.3
Median	1.0	1.0

Section 5 – Mayor/Council Compensation and Demographics

Survey Highlights

- Local elected officials are nearly always paid a salary or stipend.
- Chief elected officials (mayors or the council president) are paid an average of $16,837 per year.
- Full-time mayors are paid an average of $61,723.
- Part-time council members are paid an average of $5,244 per year.
- Some local governments symbolically pay their elected officials $1 per year. This typically only happens among council-manager communities in which elected officials do not provide day-to-day administration.
- Among respondents, nearly three-quarters of council members in the U.S. were male (note that the survey was administered prior to the 2018 elections).
- More than two in five council members in the U.S. are over the age of 60.
- Council members are most commonly retirees. When not retired, they come from a variety of occupations, the most common being business executives or managers.

Response Summary

16. Does the chief elected official (CEO) receive an annual salary or stipend for any of his/her services? (n=3,800)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	86.0%
No	14.0%

16A. If yes, please indicate the approximate annual dollar amount that your CEO receives: (n=3,006)	Annual Dollars
Mean	$16,837
Median	$7,200
Minimum	$1
Maximum	$236,000

32. Are any council members (excluding the chief elected official) paid an annual salary or stipend for any of their services? (n=3,895)	Percent of Respondents
Yes	83.7%
No	16.3%

32A. If yes, please indicate the approximate annual dollar amount that your council members receive.	Full-time council member (n=200)	Part-time council member (n=2,829)
Mean	$13,655	$5,245
Median	$3,000	$3,331
Minimum	$1	$1
Maximum	$115,000	$72,000

The following statistics break down demographic information for the total amount (a) of council members reported by the number of local governments responding to each question (n).

For example, 3,878 responding local governments reported gender information on a total of 22,509 council members across the entire U.S. Overall, 72.8% were identified as male, and 27.2% were identified as female.

33. Council member gender (n=3,878; a=22,509)	Percent of Total
Male	72.8%
Female	27.2%

34. Council member age (n=3,580; a=20,855)	Percent of Total
Under 22	0.1%
22-29	1.4%
30-39	9.5%
40-49	17.7%
50-59	29.7%
60 and over	41.5%

35. Council member race/ethnicity (n=3,677; a=21,466)	Percent of Total
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.7%
Hispanic or Latino	3.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.4%
White, not of Hispanic origin	89.1%
Black or African American	6.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%
Middle Eastern or North African	0.2%
Some other race, ethnicity, or origin	0.4%

36. Council member occupation (n=3,559; a=20,256)	Percent of Total
Legal services	4.4%
Business executives/managers	15.4%
Manufacturing	2.6%
Service and sales employees	8.9%
Finance, insurance, real estate	7.6%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	2.2%
Construction	4.2%
Law enforcement	1.8%
Teachers or other educational personnel	6.1%
Clergy	0.8%
Other professionals (health, engineering, etc.)	9.8%
Retiree	28.5%
Other	7.7%

Survey Question Appendix

Question	Section	Page
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3a. If your municipality has the position of chief appointed official, what action established the position?	1	2
3b. If your municipality has the position of chief appointed official, who appoints that position?	1	2
4. Does your municipality have residency requirements for any of your employees?	2	4
4A. If yes, which employees have residency requirements?	2	4
5. Who has the independent authority to develop and make recommendations for the budget submitted to the council?	1	2
6. Are your department heads:	1	2
7. Please indicate how the following positions in your jurisdiction are selected.	1	2
8. Does your municipality have a provision for Initiative?	2	4
8A. If yes, which of the following initiative processes does your municipality provide?	2	4
9. Does your municipality have a provision for legislative referendum?	2	4
9a. If yes, what type of items must the council place on the ballot for voter approval?	2	5
10. Does your municipality have a provision for popular referendum?	2	5
11. Does your municipality have a provision for recall?	2	5
12. Please indicate whether there have been any proposals to change your municipality's structure or form of government since January 1, 2011. If yes, also indicate whether the change was approved.	1	3
12A. If a change in form of government was approved, what was the approved change?	1	3
13. Does your municipality have a: (CEO)	3	7
14. Is the position of chief elected official in your local government officially full-time or part-time?	3	7
15. Is the chief elected official a member of council?	3	7
16. Does the chief elected official (CEO) receive an annual salary or stipend for any of his/her services?	5	13
16A. If yes, please indicate the approximate annual dollar amount that your CEO receives:	5	13
17. How is your chief elected official selected?	3	7
18. How long is the chief elected official's term of office by law?	3	7
19. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms allowed for the position of chief elected official?	3	8
19A. If yes, what is the maximum number of terms allowed by law?	3	8
19B. If yes, what authority limits the number of terms for the position of chief elected official?	3	8
20. Does the chief elected official (CEO) have the authority to do any of the following?	3	8
20A. Under what circumstances does the CEO have the authority to vote in council meetings?	3	8
20B. If the CEO has the authority to veto council-passed measures, is a "super majority" vote of the council required to overturn the CEO's veto?	3	8
21. Since 2011 have any recall initiatives been filed against the chief elected official?	3	9
21A. If yes, were any successful?	3	9
22. How many staff work directly for the chief elected official?	3	9
23. Does the political party affiliation of council candidates appear on the ballot in a local general election?	4	10
24. What is the current filing fee for running for a seat on the council?	4	10
25. How many council positions are there on your council?	4	10
26. How are your council members selected?	4	10
26A. If you selected c above, please indicate the number of council members elected by each method:	4	11
27. Are council members full-time or part-time?	4	11
28. Please indicate the length of term for council members.	4	11
28A. Are the terms of office for council members staggered or concurrent?	4	11
29. Is there a legal limit on the number of terms a council member may serve?	4	11
29A. If yes, what is the maximum number of terms allowed by law	4	11
29B. If yes, by what authority is the number of terms limited?	4	11

30. How is a council member's seat filled if it is vacated before the term has expired?	4	12
31. Since 2011, have any recall initiatives been filed against council members?	4	12
31A. If yes, were any successful?	4	12
32. Are any council members (excluding the chief elected official) paid an annual salary or stipend for any of their services?	5	13
32A. If yes, please indicate the approximate annual dollar amount that your council members receive.	5	13
33. How many of your current council members are: (Council member gender)	5	14
34. What is the age breakdown of your current council members? (Council member age)	5	14
35. What is the ethnic/racial breakdown of your current council members? (Council member race/ethnicity)	5	14
36. How many current council members are in each of the following occupational categories? (Council member occupation)	5	14
37. How often does the council formally meet, excluding work sessions?	4	12
38. Does the council employ staff to work exclusively on council business?	4	12
38A. If yes, how many are: (full-time/part-time)	4	12
39. Does your municipality have standing committees (permanent bodies with set memberships and regularly scheduled meeting times) that consider specific policy matters?	2	5
40. Does your municipality have resident authorities, boards, or commissions?	2	5
40A. If yes, are members: (elected/appointed)	2	5
40B. If yes, in what capacity do they serve?	2	5
40C. If yes, on which areas do they focus?	2	6
41. Please provide your city's most recent bond ratings next to the name of the rating agency.	2	6

May 2019

New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia *(AP)*

By Alan Ehrenhalt | Senior Editor

Nick Gradisar used to joke that if Martians landed in his hometown of Pueblo, Colo., and said, "Take us to your leader," he wouldn't know what to say. That's because Pueblo didn't really *have* a leader. Nobody had held the position of mayor since 1954, when the city did away with the practice of designating the council president as mayor. Before that, no one had actually been elected to the post since 1911. Pueblo, population 110,000, is the only American city of comparable size that functioned for the past 65 years without even a figurehead mayor in the corner office.

That's no longer the case. Gradisar fought for years to change the system, got that done in a referendum in 2017, and then ran for the job himself. He won, and this January he was sworn in as the city's first elected mayor in more than a century. Now Pueblo not only has a mayor but a strong one: Gradisar has the authority to make all the executive decisions, handle the important personnel appointments and prepare the budget. The city manager who did some of those things under the old system has already cleaned out his desk.

You're probably wondering just how big a deal this is. After all, cities all over the country have mayors who function largely in a ceremonial capacity while the council or manager takes care of the administrative side. But as the citizens of Pueblo finally realized, there's a difference between a ceremonial mayor and no mayor at all. When corporate executives made site-location visits to Pueblo and asked if they could meet the mayor, they had to be told something like, "Um, we don't have one." Any management consultant will tell you that's not a very good way to impress a CEO.

It's easy to see why Pueblo might have wanted to try something different. Once the second-largest city in Colorado, it slipped to ninth in recent decades after its main employer, a huge steel mill, largely shut down. Its current unemployment rate is the highest among Colorado cities. None of those things can be blamed directly on missing-mayor government. But taken together, they persuaded the city's electorate to move to a strong-mayor system after rejecting the idea decisively eight years earlier.

They didn't have to go as far as they did. They could have just slapped a new title on the council president and left everything else the same. But they felt the need to make a bolder move. "Economic development is a huge issue for that city," says Sam Mamet, the longtime executive director of the Colorado Municipal League. "They wanted someone in charge."

Pueblo is an extreme case, but quite a few cities that long had weak-mayor governments have gone strong-mayor in the past couple of decades. Colorado Springs, just up the road from Pueblo, is one. Among the others are Cincinnati, Oakland, Calif., Richmond, Va., and St. Petersburg, Fla.

If you mention this to people at the International City/County Management Association, they will remind you that the city manager system is the most popular form of urban government in America, used in 55 percent of all jurisdictions, and gaining new adherents all the time. That is true. But it doesn't apply to the largest places: Of the 30 most populous U.S. cities, 21 operate under some form of strong-mayor regime.

And for all the cogent arguments the city management people have made for the past 100 years about the virtues of nonpartisan administrators over politicized and personally ambitious mayors, it remains true that the best strong mayors are the heroes of urban history, the leaders that cities like Cincinnati and Oakland and Richmond longed to produce.

Anyone who has read about Fiorello LaGuardia as mayor of New York in the 1930s, or better yet seen a video clip of him in action -- making a hundred decisions in a single day, fully absorbed in his work far into the night, riding all over the city to investigate crime and fire scenes, wheedling billions of dollars for roads and bridges out of the federal government -- anyone who has seen this will find it hard to resist the idea of LaGuardia as the gold standard in American urban government. Or consider a less dramatic example: Boston Mayor Tom Menino, whose mildly autocratic mayoral regime in the 1990s and 2000s was instrumental in resuscitating Boston to prosperity and coolness. And of course there are the Mayors Daley of Chicago. You may love them or hate them, but it's hard to ignore the transformation of that city from an overgrown Midwest factory town to a global metropolis over 40 years of combined Daley stewardship.

Other, less-celebrated cities have also made impressive advances in recent years by managing to elect a string of honest and competent strong mayors one after another. Nashville is one example (with the sole exception of Mayor Megan Barry, who in 2018 resigned in scandal after less than three years in office); Indianapolis is another. Those are examples that any aspiring metropolis is bound to look at.

There have been a few highly visible strong-mayor disasters over the same period. Detroit kept Coleman Young in office for 20 years, starting in 1974, and watched as he all but urged the middle class to leave the city, with ruinous consequences. Kwame Kilpatrick, one of his successors, was sentenced to a 28-year term in federal prison. When strong-mayor government produces the wrong leaders, there are few protections against its abuse.

At the same time, clever politicians elected mostly as figureheads in weak-mayor cities have learned how to make the most of those situations for their own and their constituents' benefit.

Freed from the responsibility of managing city services and departments, they have built reputations as dynamic representatives on economic development and national political issues. Henry Cisneros wrote the book on this in San Antonio in the 1980s; Julián Castro rode a weak-mayor position in the same city 20 years later into a federal cabinet position and a presidential candidacy. In Phoenix, Phil Gordon and Greg Stanton took historically ceremonial mayoralties and used them to promote and develop a successful public transit system.

When you add it all up, though, it seems fair to conclude that the original idea of city-manager government, developed by Richard Childs in the early 20th century as a progressive solution to urban problems, has not traveled very well to the 21st. Childs' idea was that the city manager would be an unshakably nonpolitical presence, making decisions on the strength of statistics and hard evidence and avoiding partisan infighting like the plague. The belief survived longer than the reality. Most city managers found it impossible to stay out of politics, even if they were able to eschew formal partisanship. Generally conservative by temperament, they tended to run their cities as offshoots of the local chamber of commerce, often settling on the important decisions with business leaders over morning coffee at a friendly diner in the shadow of city hall. It was nonpartisan government, but it was also, at least by today's standards, closed government. It isn't practical now in any city of decent size.

Over time, strong-mayor and weak-mayor government have tended to move closer together. Many places that used to elect ribbon-cutting figureheads have gradually given their mayors additional tools to work with. At the same time, places that once dumped virtually every form of governmental responsibility on an elected partisan mayor have brought in managers to take over some of their administrative burden. The distinction between the two systems isn't nearly as clear-cut as it was a couple of generations ago.

The one fundamental truth that seems to emerge from a century of experimentation is that no one arrangement is ideal for every city. Almost anything can work with the right sort of community leadership. Dallas and Houston provide an interesting case. Their systems of government couldn't be much more different. In the past several decades, Houston has had a series of strong mayors who have not only dominated the city but frequently become familiar names on the broader urban government scene. Dallas, administered largely by an appointed city manager, has had a series of mayors whose names tend to be forgotten outside the city once they leave office.

The results of these different approaches have been pretty similar. Dallas and Houston both have more than their share of urban problems, but they have largely thrived in recent years, attracting new businesses and residents and earning reputations as two of America's better-governed cities. As the Colorado Municipal League's Mamet likes to say, it's not the system, it's the people.

Still, it's hard to argue with the decision Pueblo made this year. When corporate recruiters knock on the door of city hall, it's best to have somebody sitting at a desk with a nameplate that says "Mayor" on it. The details can be worked out later.

Alan Ehrenhalt | Senior Editor | aehrenhalt@governing.com

Why homelessness is going down in Houston but up in Dallas

Although the view on the streets might tell a different story, Houston decreased its homeless population by 54% since 2011, according to an annual census. In Dallas, the trend is the opposite — and housing affordability might make the problem even worse.

BY **JUAN PABLO GARNHAM** JULY 2, 2019 12 AM

Women line up outside Austin Street Center, an emergency homeless shelter in Dallas. Leslie Boorhem-Stephenson for The Texas Tribune

In the 1990s, Houston's urban core looked very different than it does today, with restaurants and coffee shops mingled among a burgeoning number of high-rise residences downtown. The city's bayous hadn't yet been beautified, with the clean biking and running trails that now wind through parks.

Back then, the bayous were a refuge for the city's homeless residents. And downtown, a multitude of organizations served food or offered beds, often without a lot of coordination with one another.

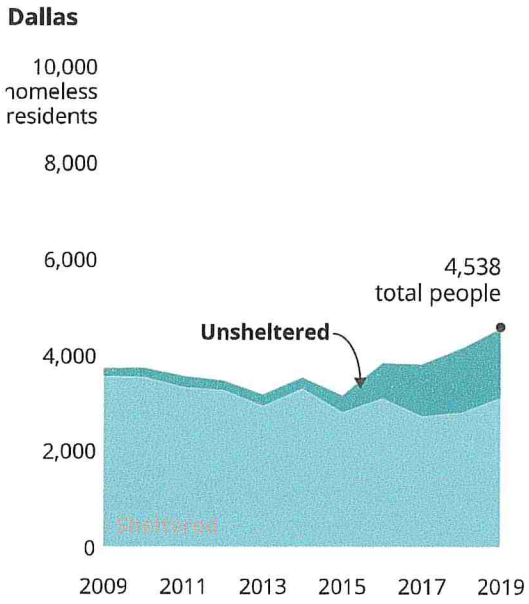
But things have radically changed. While redevelopment has maybe made homelessness more visible to the urban core's new residents, the numbers show a 54% decrease in the Houston area's homeless population since 2011. This is according to the Point-in-Time count, a census that is done at the end of each January across the country, including in 11 urban areas of Texas. Although it is extremely difficult to count the homeless community in a precise way, experts agree that this process gives a good snapshot that allows people and governments to analyze general trends, and Houston's numbers look exceptionally low.

In the meantime, other Texas cities, like San Antonio, Fort Worth and Austin — which recently passed an ordinance that allows sitting and camping in public — are experiencing increases in the number of residents who don't have homes. And such an increase is especially dramatic in Dallas, which according the 2019 Point-in-Time count, saw its homeless population surpass Houston's.

These counts can vary each year depending on how meticulously they are conducted, and some cities have experienced increases once they've perfected the methodology, like the Dallas area did in 2015. But no one denies that the rising number of homeless people is a growing problem in this city and its surrounding region.

"If you look at our percentage of growth over the last three years [from 2015 to 2018], it is higher than most of the other cities in the country. It is really alarming," said Wayne Walker, executive director of the Dallas faith-based homeless organization Our Calling. "If you see our Point-in-Time count compared today to what we had last year, Dallas has more homeless people than any city in the southern U.S. except for Phoenix."

HUD requires regional or local planning bodies to conduct an annual survey on a single day in the last 10 days of January to count the homeless populations in every U.S. city.



So how do the two most populated regions in the state tell such different stories?

"It's very perplexing, to be honest, because you have leaderships in both communities that are very concerned with the issue," said Eric Samuels, president and CEO of the Texas Homeless Network. "In Houston, the former Mayor Annise Parker made it a priority to end homelessness. [Current Houston Mayor] Sylvester Turner has also made it a priority. But you can't say that [former] Mayor [Mike] Rawlings, in Dallas, did not make it a priority, because he did."

In Houston, the change in direction started in 2010.

A large homeless camp near downtown Houston. Michael Stravato for The Texas Tribune

"Houston was notified by the HUD that we were not doing an adequate job on homelessness," said Mike Nichols, interim CEO of the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County, the local continuum of care, a regional planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless people. "We became a test site, with tremendous help from HUD."

Things didn't improve right away. In 2011, Houston reached a peak of 8,538 people in the late January count. But the wheels were rolling. The organizations involved in the issue knew they needed to get the community united around the cause. They started a plan that first focused on military veterans, a group that represents roughly 9% of the national homeless population.

months. The success gave them a credibility boost in the city.

"It was an early win. We got it, and then we built around that," Costis said.

In three years, Houston would house 3,650 veterans, in what would become a model at the national level.

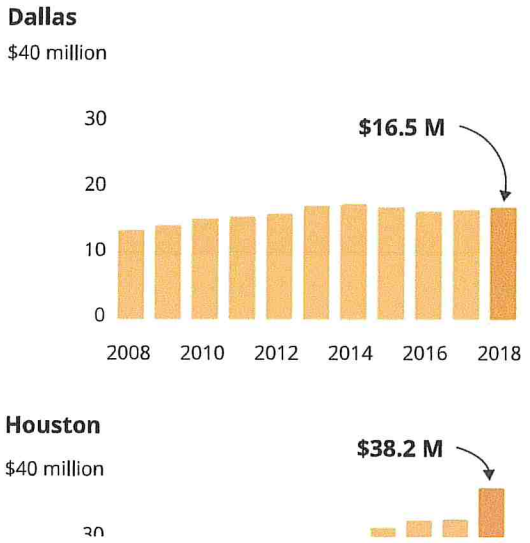
The change was achieved with a lot of coordination among Parker, HUD, police, businesses and about 100 organizations. Eva Thibaudeau-Graczyk, chief program officer of the Coalition for the Homeless, said the collaboration "brought new partners to the table with resources that had never been there before."

Among them was the Houston Housing Authority. "Prior, they've never seen themselves as a leader or a main partner in ending homelessness," Thibaudeau-Graczyk explained. But since then, this agency was key, allowing the city to complement the funds for homelessness provided by HUD with the resources that were already available for affordable housing.

"This starts off with a simple dictate: The solution to homelessness is a home," said Andy Icken, chief development officer for Turner, the current mayor. "Our focus was to create permanent supportive housing, so that we're not continually cycling people in and out of shelters, temporary or more permanent shelters."

The good results translated into more funds from HUD because part of that money was tied to performance. From 2008 to 2018, Houston added more than $18 million. To put that in perspective, in 2018, Dallas' total funds from HUD were $16.5 million.

receives in any given year.



Although there are still challenges like encampments in different parts of the city, since 2012, Houston has housed around 17,000 formerly homeless people, according to the Coalition for the Homeless. Many are connected with supportive services.

"If you have a homeless person and you put them in [permanent supportive housing] and simultaneously give them social, behavioral and health support services, 92% of them will be stable in that facility," Nichols said.

But there's a secret in Houston's formula: coordination.

The scenario from 20 years ago, when different organizations would serve food, give clothes or offer shelter — all done separately — has changed. There's now constant communication between these institutions and a digital database called the Homeless Management Information System, which allows people at several organizations to understand each case. Most cities today have HMIS in place, but Houston was quick to adopt it, and that helped organizations strategize, analyze, share information and find personalized solutions.

Percy Lyons has lived in a permanent supportive housing unit in Houston for four years. Michael Stravato for The Texas Tribune

About a decade ago, Percy Lyons arrived in Houston, hoping to live with his father.

“But his mental state wasn’t right," Lyons, now 44, said. "He turned his back on me.”

Lyons ended up living on the street. At some point, he applied for housing, but he never heard back from anyone until a police officer saw him and decided to check what had happened with his case, in collaboration with Search.

“They pulled out my information and saw everything,” Lyons said.

Thanks to this coordinated database, officials could find out what had happened — his case was "lost in the system," he said — and try to find a solution for him.

Now he lives in a permanent supportive housing unit.

“The difference of what is going on in Houston is its networks,” Lyons said.

The challenge of affordability in Dallas

Although Carl Falconer has worked with homeless people for more than two decades, his first Point-in-Time count in Dallas was this January. In November, he moved to Texas from Florida to become CEO of the Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance, the local continuum of care, which brings together around 85 shelters and programs in Dallas and Collin counties.

“One thing that stuck out there that night is that people in the streets did not have a sense of hope in the system," Falconer said. “They didn't have any confidence that they would be out of the streets any time soon."

2006 and 2018. Only Austin, Denver and San Francisco topped Dallas in this indicator.

"Our homelessness numbers reflect the increase in housing costs across the Metroplex," said Daniel Roby, CEO of the Austin Street Center, one of the biggest shelters in the city.

He remembers coming to the center as a volunteer when he was 7 years old. At that time, suburban powerhouse Plano was practically grasslands. Now he says that he gets homeless people in the center from that city or other suburbs even farther out.

Hope Beaver, a complex needs case manager at Austin Street Center, speaks with a client. Leslie Boorhem-Stephenson for The Texas Tribune

"Our Metroplex is massive compared to what it was then," he said. "But we have not grown our social service infrastructure. For the most part, we have the same number of beds now that we had then. Maybe we've added a few hundred beds, but our Metroplex has grown 10 times over."

According to Monica Hardman, director of Dallas City Hall's Office of Homeless Solutions, around three quarters of homeless people are "economically homeless," which means they fell into homelessness due to some kind of unforeseen problem, without a safety net. That includes situations like losing a job or having an unexpected health issue or an accident.

"One of the biggest factors is the housing conditions and the housing market here in Dallas. [It] is extremely hard to find housing that is affordable, especially if you are not making a living wage," Hardman said.

For people like Carlton Nalley, who lives near Dallas City Hall and spends most days in the Downtown Branch of the Dallas Public Library, this isn't just about housing.

"The prices in general are going up," said Nalley, who has been homeless since 2017, when he was released from federal prison. "Buying in the farmers market is like going to a shopping mall. You have to make three times the rent, and that will give you a small place in a neighborhood where you won't feel safe."

And the rapid redevelopment in the city's urban core could exacerbate things, especially since it is arriving in areas that weren't as highly valued before and is replacing affordable units. Then there's another potential problem: expensive new residences' sudden proximity to existing shelters.

"Right behind us, probably within a matter of six months, there's going to be rents of $3,000 potentially for a one-bedroom unit," said Rebecca Cox, chief services officer at The Bridge, one of the leading providers of homeless services in the city. "We are concerned that we are going to be seen as undesirable."

But affordability isn't the only problem in Dallas. Institutions play a role here, too.

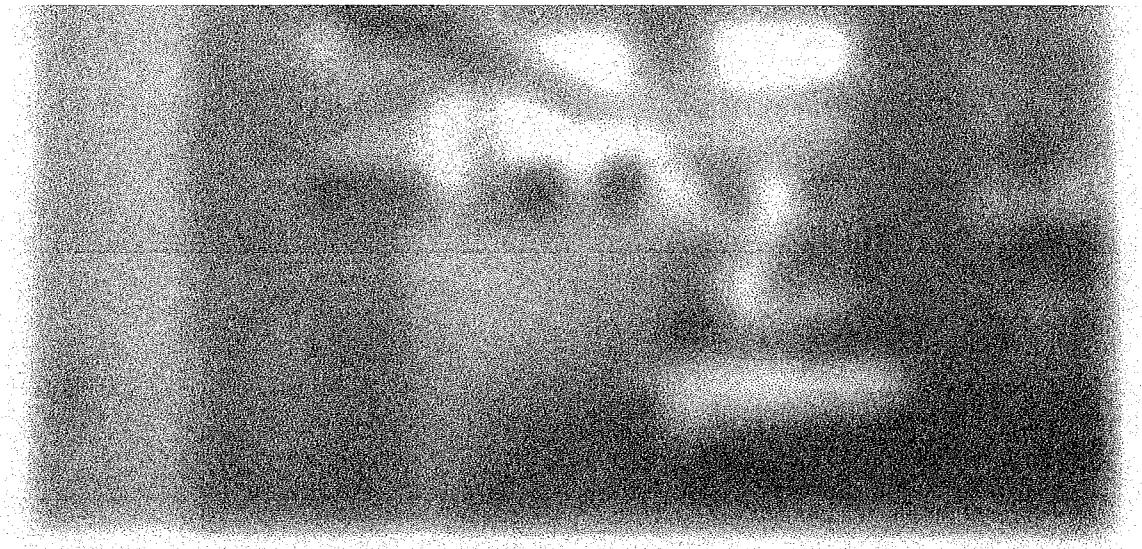
Roby said Houston has some governmental advantages.

"They have a strong mayoral form of government," he said. While in Houston, the executive power is in the hands of the mayor, in Dallas, the mayor plays a role similar to a board chairman, with a city manager directing most departments and employees. "We [in Dallas] need to collaborate to get the support here, while there, the mayor can just move on with the mayor's agenda."

At the same time, Dallas has had issues in terms of affordable housing. In March of last year, *The Dallas Morning News* discovered a case of corruption in a $825,000 contract to build and repair affordable units. HUD has been conducting audits, and the city might have to pay millions back for mismanaged funds.

Meanwhile, City Hall only got its first department dedicated to homelessness in 2017.

"For example, if there was a homeless encampment in a park, the parks department would do their best to clean it up, and they would contact the police department if there was resistance, but there was no one really there as an advocate to be able to talk to the persons experiencing homelessness, and then to be able to link them to shelter and to services," said Hardman.



Dallas' Austin Street Center has 400 beds and meets or nears capacity every day. Leslie Boorhem-Stephenson for The Texas Tribune

And the Homeless Management Information System, a key part of Houston's success, has had hiccups in Dallas. It's going to be changed for a third time soon, and many in the community have resisted the previous versions.

"It is exceptionally difficult to be able to have a high-functioning collaborative system when you change it so often," said Roby.

But nothing matters if Dallas doesn't build affordable housing, Falconer said. The unsheltered homeless population increased 725% from 2009 to 2019. The sheltered homeless population remains relatively stable because the number of beds at shelters has been the same for a long time.

"The unsheltered number is going up because the shelters are full," Falconer said. "People don't have anywhere to go; they can't go to the emergency shelters, and the reason why the emergency shelters numbers remain the same is because housing is not affordable and people can't move out of the shelter."

Dallas needs more housing, especially what is called rapid rehousing, which includes a bed, services and financial assistance for short periods. City officials, in the meantime, have put in place a program with four tracks: They are paying a shelter $12 per night per bed for up to 90-day stays; they have been working to create shelters for inclement weather; they got $1.3 million in the 2019 fiscal year budget for rental subsidies and other housing assistance; and they plan to build or create 1,000 housing units over the next three to five years. For the last item, the city will be dedicating $20 million in bond funds, and the request for developers' interest was just released.

Falconer is hopeful.

"One of the things that drew me to Dallas is that I really feel this is an opportunity to end homelessness here. Not manage it, not make it a little better