

Under the council-manager form of government, the elected governing body (commonly called a city council) is responsible for the legislative function of the municipality such as establishing policy, passing local ordinances, voting appropriations, and developing an overall vision. The legislative body, which is voted into office by public elections, appoints a professional manager to oversee the administrative operations, implement its policies, and to advise the legislative body.

The concept of the council-manager form of government was a product of a confluence of the prevailing modes of thought during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Probably the foremost influence was the Progressive Movement. Following along the thought lines of the movement, the municipal reformers of that time wanted to rid municipalities of the abuses of the Spoils system - the practice where a political party, after winning an election, gives government jobs to its voters as a reward for working toward victory, and as an incentive to keep working for the party, as opposed to a system of awarding offices on the basis of some measure of merit independent of political activity.

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