



## WHAT OFFICE SHOULD I RUN FOR?

There are more than 500,000 elected offices across the country that makes up our representative form of government. Take the time to learn about all the opportunities to serve your community.

Before deciding what office to run for, consider:

- Who are all the elected officials that represent you?
- How can the office help you achieve your long-term vision of change?
- What is full role and scope of the elected office?

The following outlines the general opportunities that exist in almost all communities, emphasizing legislative roles.

For a more complete list and specific information to your area, contact your state's Secretary of State or local or county clerk's office for a list of all elected offices representing your area.

### **State Offices**

#### **Governor**

The Governor is the Chief Executive of the state and runs the executive branch of the state government.

#### **State Senators and Representatives**

State legislators, more specifically known as State Senators and State Representatives (sometimes also referred to as state delegates or state assemblymen) are the legislative branch for state government. In general, they have responsibility for approving new laws, formally adopting state policy, and approving a state budget. In some cases, legislators may need to approve appointees to key government jobs. Each state senate or representative seat represents roughly the same number of people in a given state.

### **County Offices**

#### **County Executive**

As one would assume, this position is the executive of county government. This office is more common in counties with large population. If the position does not exist, the Board of county commissioners (see below) assumes the executive branch powers. In many cases there are other countywide offices (e.g. clerk, prosecutor, sheriff, treasurer, public works commissioner) that have executive powers usually defined by state law.

#### **County Commissioner**



A county commissioner is also known as a freeholders, or county supervisors in certain states. In general the county commission is the legislative body of the county. Counties in general are tasked with delivering services as instructed by state law/ constitution, and enforcing state policy. County boards must also approve and monitor county budgets. In the absence of a county executive, the commission also provides the executive functions not held by other constitutional elected countywide offices. The number of county commissioners in a county varies, usually three or more. Each commissioner represents roughly the same number of people as another in the same county.

### **Local Government**

#### **School Board Members**

Members are the trustees of the school district and responsible for hiring a Superintendent, approving curriculum and general education policy, and adopting and overseeing overall budget for a school district's operations.

#### **City Council and Township Trustees**

Similar to school board members, these officers are responsible for the hiring of executive staff positions, adopting policy, and approving and monitoring the municipal/ township budget as it relate to local government operations (e.g. trash pick-up, parks and recreation, economic development, public safety, etc). Other responsibilities may be prescribed by city/township charter, constitutional mandate, or other laws.

#### **Mayor**

This position is the executive of the local form of government.

Strong Mayor form of Government: The Mayor serves in the full executive role, and has distinct powers separate from that of the council.

City Manager Form of Government: Most cities are organized under this form of government. A city manager is hired by the Mayor and city council and performs most executive responsibilities under the direction of those officers. In this case the Mayor is more ceremonial, and basically shares the same powers of a city council member.

#### **Township Supervisor**

This position is the executive function of township government. There are other officers usually with executive powers (e.g. clerk, treasurer) that have specific powers.