

## SECTION TWO

Institute for Local Government: New to Public Service  
<https://www.ca-ilg.org/newly-elected-officials-orientation-materials>

- Newly Elected Officials Orientation Materials

Institute for Local Government: For Elected Officials  
<https://www.ca-ilg.org/elected-officials>

- Effective Governance
- Making Decisions
- Responsibilities and Powers
- Working with Staff
- Media Relations
- Leadership Skills
- When Bad Things Happen
- Personnel/Labor Relations/Pensions



# INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT<sup>SM</sup>

*Promoting Good Government at the Local Level*

## Orientation Materials for Introducing Local Government to New Audiences

In addition to your agency's own materials (policies, calendars, staff rosters, etc.), the Institute's resources can help electeds, staff and community members understand the roles and responsibilities of local government officials and local government agencies. Typical items in an orientation packet may include:

- Specific City Council or Board of Supervisor Adopted Policies
- Rules of Order (Robert's, Rosenberg's, etc.)
- Fiscal Year Budget Preparation Calendar
- Approved Board / Council Meeting Calendar
- Committee and Liaison Assignments
- Brown Act and Ethic Law Resources
- Agency's General Plan
- Agency's Adopted Budget
- Agency's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)
- Emergency contact Information for executive staff and colleagues

The Institute's is currently offering materials relating to these topics:

- Responsibilities and Powers
- Budgeting and Finance
- Leadership Skills
- Making Decisions
- Engaging the Public
- Public Trust & Transparency
- Working with the Media
- Working with Staff
- When Bad Things Happen

Note that, in some cases, similar information is presented in different ways. For example, the list below includes comprehensive publications Understanding the Basics of Local Agency Decision-making, The People's Business: A Guide to the Public Records Act, and Understanding the Basics of Public Service Ethics: Personal Financial Gain Laws. For those agencies that simply want pieces of this publication (or want the information with fewer graphic elements), specific pieces of those publications are also provided.

In addition to orienting elected and appointed officials to your agency via your own materials and these resources, your organization can seek out training opportunities on AB1234, AB1661, and the Brown Act to support the official's transition to public service.



Table of Contents (Editable Document, Updated August 2013)



Responsibilities and Powers - Local Agency Powers and Limitations



Responsibilities and Powers - Who Does What in California Local Government



Responsibilities and Powers - Sources of Law Affecting Local Agencies



Responsibilities and Powers - Legislative versus Adjudicative Decision Making



Budgeting and Finance - Basics of Municipal Revenue (Counties, Cities and Special Districts)



Budgeting and Finance - Financial Management for Elected Officials: Questions to Ask



Leadership Skills - Governing Tips



Leadership Skills - Understanding the Role of Chair



Leadership Skills - Working Together to Achieve One's Goals: Some Strategies for Success



Leadership Skills - Transparency in Local Government: Protecting Your Community Against Corruption



Leadership Skills - Tips for Promoting Civility in Public Meetings



Making Decisions - How Local Agencies Make Things Happen



Making Decisions - How Your Agency Counsel Should Advise You When Agency Contracts Represent a Conflict of Interest



Engaging the Public - Why Engage the Public?



Engaging the Public - Principles of Public Engagement



Orientation Samples & Tools from Special Districts



Public Trust & Transparency - The ABCs of Open Government (Brown Act)



Public Trust & Transparency - The Ethics of Speaking One's Mind



Public Trust & Transparency - Key Ethics Law Principles



Working with Media - Tips for Newly Elected Officials



Working with Media - Short Sound Bite Secrets



Working with Staff - Board / Executive Staff Communications Strategies



Working with Staff - Common Staff Positions within Agencies



Working with Staff - Elected Official Direction to Staff



When Bad Things Happen - Saying You're Sorry



When Bad Things Happen - A Leader's Role When Tragedy Strikes



Comprehensive Resource - Guide to Local Planning



Comprehensive Resource: Understanding the Basics of Public Service Ethics Laws





# INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT<sup>SM</sup>

*Promoting Good Government at the Local Level*

## For Elected Officials

Being an elected official in local government is not an easy task. You are confronted with challenging issues and circumstances, often with limited resources to address them. Establishing and maintaining an effective working relationship with your manager/administrator and staff is critical to your mutual success and the success of your community. An effective working relationship between local elected officials and with the organization's chief executive is fundamental to the success of the organization. The resources below aim to help local elected officials enhance their ability to work collaboratively with their peers and their administrative staff.

---

### Effective Governance

California's cities, counties and special districts need the best of leadership and management to effectively govern. When elected officials and top management professionals partner and govern efficiently, the municipal agencies can more effectively serve their constituencies.

---

### Making Decisions

Decision-making in the public sector is a much different process than what they are used to in the private or nonprofit sector.

**Making  
Decisions**



---

### Responsibilities and Powers

This section of resources is devoted to informing newly elected and appointed officials, staff, public and media about the roles, responsibilities and powers of local agencies. Topics include the authorities and limitations of local agencies, sources of law and descriptions of individual agency functions as defined by statutes and charters.

**Local Agencies:  
Responsibilities  
and Powers**



---

### Working with Staff

An agency's professional staff will be an important source of information for newly-elected officials. If your agency does not have an orientation for newly elected officials, make an appointment to get acquainted.

Some questions to ask include:



- What issues does the agency executive see as most pressing?
- What process does the agency use for developing and approving its budget? What are the key budgetary challenges?
- What is the status of long-range plans and capital projects?
- Are there other key staff members with whom the official should meet and be briefed by, based on their particular interests?

---

## Media Relations

Working with the media, elected officials have an opportunity to communicate key messages and information to the public a local agency serves.

---

## Leadership Resources for Local Officials

Being a leader, particularly in local government, isn't easy. Institute for Local Government makes a priority of making resources available to local leaders to help them in their service to their communities.



Management is doing things right; **leadership** is doing the right things.—Peter Drucker

---

## When Bad Things Happen

Despite best efforts, unfortunate things happen. The resources below offer thoughts on how to respond.



Additional suggestions for resources welcome. [Contact ILG.](#)

---

## Personnel and Labor

Materials presented here provide local agency officials and staff with information about public agency personnel and labor-related matters.