

NEWLY ELECTED MANUAL



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WELCOME TO CITY GOVERNMENT!

City Government 101

Congratulations on your election! This guide is here to help you understand the basics of city government and the resources available to assist you.

Idaho's cities are engines of our state's economy and over 70% of Idahoans live in cities, a percentage that has steadily increased in recent decades. The services and infrastructure necessary for communities including roads, water and wastewater facilities, police, firefighters, ambulances, parks, and libraries are often provided by cities.

Because Idaho is a state that has communities that vary from being urban to very rural, Idaho's 199 cities are as diverse as our state. Each city has a unique mix of services that are provided that varies depending on the population, citizens' priorities, and presence of single purpose taxing districts like highway districts, fire protection districts, or library districts.

Cities are different from other types of local governments like counties and special taxing districts because they are created by citizens to provide needed services for the community, have the power to offer a broad array of services, and have the power to pass laws regulating people and property within city limits.

By contrast, counties are created by the state and administer primarily state-mandated functions such as law enforcement and the property tax system at the local level. The services provided by counties are much more uniform. Special purpose taxing districts, like highway districts, library districts, and water/sewer districts, are formed at the request of residents within the geographic area to provide specific services and don't have power to pass laws.

Forms of City Government

Mayor-Council: The most common form in Idaho.

- Mayor is elected separately from the Council.
- The Council has four or six elected members.
- Some cities hire a City Administrator to help the Mayor.

Council-Manager: Rarely used in Idaho.

- A professional, unelected City Manager serves at the pleasure of the City Council.
- The Mayor is selected by the Council from among its members or may be independently elected.
- The City Manager has most of the executive and administrative powers, and the Mayor's primary role is chairing Council meetings.

Essential Reading

Every city will have documents specific to that city that will help newly elected officials understand the priorities, goals, and challenges unique to their city. Below are some examples of helpful resources that will assist you getting familiar with your city:

- City ordinances and resolutions
- Recent Council meeting minutes and rules of meeting and public hearing procedures
- Strategic plan
- Capital improvement plan
- Comprehensive plan and land use ordinances and policies
- The city budget and most recent audit report
- Disaster and emergency plan or continuity of operations plan
- Organizational chart and staff rosters
- Personnel policies
- Maps of facilities including parks, buildings, public works, etc.
- Contracts
- Calendar of events

Roles & Responsibilities

Three Branches of City Government

Just like state and federal government, city government has a separation of powers and checks and balances. Separation of powers means responsibilities are divided between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Checks and balances mean that each branch is given certain powers and responsibilities to check and balance the others.

Executive Branch – Mayor Powers and Responsibilities:

- ▶ Hiring, firing, and supervising city employees
- ▶ Enforcing ordinances
- ▶ Breaking tie votes of the Council, except where state law requires passage by majority of full Council
- ▶ Initial local disaster declaration effective for up to 7 days
- ▶ Ordering emergency holdbacks in spending
- ▶ Vetoing ordinances, subject to override by majority of full Council
- ▶ Calling special Council meetings
- ▶ Presiding over Council meetings (but the Mayor is not a member of the Council)
- ▶ Appointing and removing members of city boards, commissions, and committees, subject to Council confirmation
- ▶ Nominating and removing city appointed officers, subject to confirmation by majority of full Council
- ▶ Signing official documents, including checks used to pay for goods or services (checks also signed by City Treasurer-or Clerk/Treasurer or Financial Officer)
- ▶ Administering oath of office

Legislative Branch – Council Powers and Responsibilities:

- ▶ Must act as a body
- ▶ Passing local laws (ordinances) effective within city limits
- ▶ Annexing territory by ordinance
- ▶ Extending local disaster declarations beyond first 7 days
- ▶ Adopting comprehensive plans, land use ordinances and policies guiding growth and development
- ▶ Licensing and regulating businesses and occupations
- ▶ Adopting building, residential, energy, and other codes
- ▶ Approving payables, budgets, and tax levies
- ▶ Adopting policies guiding the city’s internal operations by resolution, including records retention, personnel, purchasing, investment, etc.
- ▶ Confirming appointment and removal of city appointed officers by majority of full Council, and confirming appointment and removal of members of city boards, commissions, and committees

Judicial branch (State Courts) – Courts Powers and Responsibilities:

- ▶ Hears cases challenging validity of local laws and policies, and violations of ordinances or laws

“The best piece of advice I have for any newly elected official is to trust your staff. The people who work for your city are professionals who take pride in what they do. They aren’t there to play politics but to make sure their city and their community are taken care of in the best way possible. Lean on them and learn from them.”

Brian Blad
Mayor City of Pocatello

City Appointed Officers

The Mayor, with confirmation by a majority of the full Council, appoints the City Clerk, City Treasurer, City Attorney, and other appointed offices established by local policy. Other positions commonly included as appointed officers include City Administrators, Public Works Directors, Police Chiefs, and Fire Chiefs. The appointed officers have a unique status because their appointment and the removal processes are outlined in state law, not in local personnel policies.

The officers designated by state law—the City Clerk, City Treasurer and City Attorney—have responsibilities for their position that are set in state law and form the core of the city’s operations. The Clerk and Treasurer positions are commonly combined, especially in smaller cities, so that the same person holds both positions.

City Clerk’s Responsibilities

- Records custodian
- Issue licenses and permits
- Point of contact for public and media
- Meeting notices, agendas, packets, and minutes
- Handle public records requests
- Help candidates for Mayor and Council file to run for office
- Oversee publishing of legally required notices
- May be risk manager
- File annual city street finance report with the State Controller’s Office



City Treasurer’s Responsibilities

- Oversee accounting, financial reporting, and investments
- Helps facilitate annual audit of city financial reports
- Publish quarterly financial reports
- Prepare and give monthly report on city finances to the Council
- Sign or authorize checks, with the Mayor, to pay for goods or services

City Attorney’s Responsibilities

- Legal advisor to city
- Draft and review ordinances, resolutions, policies, and legal notices
- Interpret federal, state, and local laws and policies
- Review public records requests or denials according to the Idaho Public Records Act
- Approve summaries of adopted ordinances before publication to ensure the summary is accurate and provides adequate public notice
- Prosecute infractions and misdemeanors—often done by contract counsel or contract with county prosecutor
- Sign off on records proposed for destruction that have met the required retention period

The most important things a newly elected official needs to know:

- How the budgeting process works.
- Importance of saving for a rainy day ... city reserves or “rainy-day funds” are essential.
- You serve the citizens of the city.
- You are not in it for the money, it’s because you want to serve.
- You cannot and will not make everyone happy.
- Minority (loudest voice) does not rule.

Mitchell Hart
Soda Springs Council President

City Boards, Commissions & Committees

Committees play an important role in cities. Committees allow the public to be involved and spread the work that might otherwise fall on already stretched elected officials or city employees. Serving on committees gives the public the chance to actively help with improving their communities and having a say in the strategic direction of their cities. City committees are required to comply with the Idaho Open Meetings Law with advance posting of meeting notice and agenda, and must also have minutes of their meetings, except for groups comprised solely of city staff that are exempt from the Open Meetings Law. Most committees can be categorized as standing or special.

Standing Committees: These are permanent boards, commissions, or committees that meet regularly. Standing committees focus on a particular segment of city government, such as Administration, Finance, Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, etc. Committee members must be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council, and they may be removed in the same manner. The number and qualifications of members, as well as the authority and responsibility of each committee are defined by ordinance. Standing committees adopt bylaws, set regular meetings, have a chair, and have rules for meetings and operations. The Council can eliminate a standing committee by passing an ordinance to repeal the ordinance establishing the committee.

Special Committees: These are temporary committees or task forces formed to examine and make recommendations concerning specific problems or issues. Special committees may be formed by the Mayor, by the Council, or by the Mayor and Council together. Typically, these groups are charged with reporting the outcome of their deliberations by a specific deadline.

Planning & Zoning Commission: This is a special type of standing committee that has much of its form and responsibilities outlined in state law. Cities may choose to establish a Planning and Zoning Commission by ordinance or may have the City Council handle all planning and zoning related matters without a commission. Planning and Zoning Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council and must have resided in the county for at least 2 years before being appointed and must remain a resident of the county during their service on the commission (even for city planning and zoning commissions). The ordinance establishing the commission sets the number of commissioners (between 3 and 12 voting members) and term of office of commissioners (between 3 and 6 years). Commissioners may be removed for cause by majority vote of the Council. Commissioners serve as volunteers but may be reimbursed for expenses. A majority of currently appointed voting members constitutes a quorum.

Library Board of Trustees: A special type of standing committee in some areas, the Library Board is a unique, semi-independent entity within city government. The five-member Library Board is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council; however, unanimous Council approval is required to remove a Library Trustee. The Library Board has the power to hire, supervise, and evaluate the Library Director, who serves at the pleasure of the Library Board. The Library Director has the power to hire library employees at the discretion of the Library Board. The Library Board also prepares a budget for review and approval by the Council. The Library Board also approves expenditures of funds budgeted for library purposes. The intent is that libraries will be divorced from politics.

“Take it slow for your first six months or so and allow yourself to get grounded in the job before ‘stirring the pot.’ Study the duties of your office outlined in state code. Stay in your lane. If you are a Councilor, understand and operate in the legislative role. If you are a Mayor, understand and operate in your administrative role (strong form Mayors).”

John Evans
Mayor of Garden City

What Cities Do

Article XII, Section 2 of the Idaho Constitution grants cities the power to “make and enforce, within [their] limits, all such local police, sanitary and other regulations as are not in conflict with its charter or with the general laws.”

This is called the Police Power and represents the power of cities to regulate to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community, if the policy area has not been declared off-limits by the Idaho Legislature.

The power of cities to levy taxes and use debt financing is much more tightly circumscribed by the Idaho Constitution and state law.

Cities have two types of powers: governmental powers and proprietary powers, which are spelled out in state law.

Governmental Powers

- ▶ **Adopt Ordinances** – Cities can pass laws for the promotion and protection of the public health, safety, and welfare
 - Cannot be unreasonable, arbitrary, or discriminatory
 - Only apply within city limits
 - Cannot conflict with state or federal law
 - Can enforce ordinances with fines up to \$1,000 and / or imprisonment for up to 6 months
- ▶ **Annexation** – Cities have the power to add unincorporated territory into the city by ordinance and the process is set out in state law
- ▶ **Building Codes** – Cities can choose to adopt and enforce building codes
- ▶ **Eminent Domain** – Cities have the power to condemn private property for public use upon paying just compensation to the owner
- ▶ **License** – Cities can license businesses, some occupations, and animals
- ▶ **Planning & Regulating Development** – Each city is required to adopt a Comprehensive Plan guiding the future growth and development of their community, and Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to implement the vision of the Comprehensive Plan
- ▶ **Control Streets** - Cities can regulate encroachments upon sidewalks, streets, and alleys; and remove obstructions from sidewalks, curbs, gutters and crosswalks
- ▶ **Levy Property taxes**—Cities can levy taxes, like the property tax, that are authorized by state law
- ▶ **Establish fees** - Cities may establish fees to pay for the cost of administering and enforcing regulations such as building permit fees, parking meter fees, dog licenses, etc. Fees must be reasonable compared to the actual cost of providing the service for which they are charged

Procedural Requirements for Passing Ordinances

All ordinances must be read at three separate Council meetings, once in full and twice by title, unless a majority of the full Council approves a motion to suspend the reading requirement and have the ordinance be read once, either by title only or in full (if the ordinance is very short).

The Council then approves a roll call vote on the motion to approve the ordinance and each Councilor’s vote is cast individually and recorded individually in the minutes. The ordinance must be published, in full or by summary in the newspaper as a legal notice within 30 days after the Council passes it. Most ordinances take effect upon publication unless there is a specific effective date in the ordinance.

Tip: Don’t pass an ordinance without also considering enforcement – including whether or not you can pay for it!

Resolutions

In addition to passing ordinances, the Council can pass resolutions, which are policy statements of the Council and regulate the city's internal operations. Resolutions are different than ordinances because:

- No reading requirements for resolutions as is the case for ordinances
- Resolutions are equivalent to a motion
- Resolutions are not subject to Mayoral veto
- Resolutions can be superseded by motion
- Resolutions are not required to be published after being passed like an ordinance

Examples of Resolutions

- Set Council meeting procedures
- Set a records retention schedule
- Adopt personnel policies
- Approve contracts with private or public entity
- Set a schedule of fees (e.g. building permit fees, sewer rates, etc.)
- Approve destruction of city records
- Authorize the sale of surplus equipment



Proprietary Powers

Cities can provide certain services to their residents by using the city's own employees, or by contracting with a public or private entity. Examples of commonly provided services include:

- › Water and sewer service
- › Solid waste collection
- › Police, Fire and EMS
- › Streets
- › Parks and libraries
- › Airports



City Services

The Council decides which services will be provided by the city and how they will be provided (staff, contract, service agreement) depending on the size, needs, and resources of the city. The Council approves contracts for services and sets fees for services provided by the city or its contractors. Some examples of services and delivery methods are outlined below.

Law Enforcement

- › City Police Department
- › Contract for Service with County Sheriff
- › Contract for Service with Other City
- › County Sheriff without Contract (enforcing state laws only)

Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

- › City Fire Department (may provide EMS)
- › Fire District (may provide EMS)
- › County Ambulance District

Streets

- › City owns and maintains streets
- › Countywide highway district owns and maintains streets within city
- › City owns streets and contracts with a city, county or highway district for maintenance

Misdemeanor Prosecution

- › City Prosecutor (city employee)
- › Contract with private law firm or with County Prosecutor

Solid Waste / Waste Diversion / Recycling

- ▶ City provides services using own trucks and employees
- ▶ City contracts with private sector company
- ▶ Solid waste franchise with one or more companies providing service
- ▶ No sanitation service/landfill provided by county

Drinking Water

- ▶ City utility owns water supply, distribution system and treatment facility
- ▶ Private company or district owns all or portions of water system
- ▶ Individual wells—no city utility

Wastewater

- ▶ City utility provides collection, conveyance, treatment and/or re-use
- ▶ Private company or district provides all or portions of system
- ▶ Individual septic—no city utility

Stormwater Management

- ▶ City owns separate sewer system and provides drainage services
- ▶ Facility specific drainage management



Disaster Emergencies

Mayors and Councilors have an important role in disasters and emergencies. Planning for the various disasters and responses is key. An emergency plan that is periodically exercised and updated can help to:

- Protect public safety
- Minimize response time and increase uptime after an emergency
- Provide for continuity of operations and services to the public
- Reduce costs associated with the emergency

There may be state or federal assistance available depending on the size, type, and scale of the emergency.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Mayor: May make initial declaration of a disaster emergency for up to seven days
Council: Must vote to sustain local disaster emergency declaration beyond the initial seven-day period following the Mayor's declaration

Disaster Declaration provides the city flexibility to purchase without competitive bidding, additional liability protection, and activates the response and recovery aspects of applicable local or intergovernmental disaster emergency plans.

For more information on disaster planning, see Idaho's Office of Emergency Management website listed on the Additional Resources page.

Personnel Management in the Public Sector

To provide services, cities may employ personnel to carry out the various functions. Personnel management in the public sector differs in very important ways from what newly elected officials may have experienced as a supervisor or business owner in the private sector.

Public sector employees have constitutional and legal rights that are unique from employees in the private sector. One of the most significant areas of difference between the public and private sectors is in drug testing. The private sector can have random drug testing, while the public sector can only have random drug testing for employees with Commercial Drivers Licenses and safety sensitive positions (the public sector does have the ability for pre-employment, for cause, and post-accident drug testing).

Idaho Counties Risk Management Program (ICRMP)

The Idaho Counties Risk Management Program (ICRMP) provides property and casualty insurance and risk management for over 900 local governments in Idaho.

ICRMP is a valuable resource for personnel policy guidance, including model personnel policies, and assistance when the city is contemplating undertaking a personnel decision.

Please visit <https://www.icrmp.org/> for more information.



The city's appointed officers and employees are knowledgeable, nonpartisan, professional public servants who provide dedicated service to the community. It is important to get to know them and really understand their performance before deciding to make personnel changes.

Newly elected officials sometimes are suspicious of city employees because they faithfully served other elected officials, but that is their job. Most city employees provide outstanding service regardless of who the elected officials are. Please give them the chance to prove their merit before making personnel changes.

In city government, the Mayor is responsible for hiring and firing of employees in compliance with the city's personnel policies. The only exceptions are appointed officers whose appointment or removal by the Mayor must be confirmed by a majority of the full Council, and library employees who are supervised by the Library Director.

The Mayor also directs the day-to-day work of staff and evaluates employee performance and may grant merit-based raises or bonuses to individual employees if there is money in the department budget to fund them.

The Council, as the city's legislative governing body is responsible for adopting policies governing the city's elected and appointed

officials and employees, including personnel policies, vehicle use policies, purchasing and credit card policies, etc. The Council also sets the city budget and decides whether cost of living allowances and pay increases for a city department or city employees will be granted.

The Council exercises its power as a body in public meetings and individual Councilors have no power to supervise, discipline or fire employees. It is imperative for cities to have a regularly updated personnel policy and for the city to understand the policy and follow it. If the elected officials believe there are problems with the personnel policy, fix the policy and don't ignore it!

Basics of Budgeting & Fiscal Management

Some of the most significant long-term decisions about a community involve budgeting. Having a financially sustainable community is one of the most challenging aspects of city governance. Budgeting is a process where scarce financial resources are allocated among various programs and priorities. Estimating costs and revenues can be difficult and can be impacted by many factors. Idaho law requires that public funds must be used for public purposes and not private persons or private business interests and that budgets balance. Budgets set priorities both in the long and short term.

Two Types of Budgets

- ▶ **Operating Budget:** The operating budget expresses of the vision, goals, objectives, and actions set forth in the strategic plan. It is the regular annual budget for regular revenues and expenditures. Cities set annual budgets to set priorities for the city. The city's fiscal years run from October 1 to September 30 for the annual operating budget. All cities in Idaho are required to have balanced budgets meaning that cities cannot spend more than the revenue collected unless there is an emergency.
- ▶ **Capital Budget:** The capital budget is the fiscal expression of the long-term plan. It is for items such as physical structures and equipment of a lifespan of more than one year. Capital improvement planning reflects the vision of the future community growth. It deals with the development of streets, water, sewer, and other assets needed to support residential and commercial development. Capital improvement planning must consider community needs including anticipated population growth, economic development, and enhancement of quality of life. The capital improvement plan helps to realize the vision of the community set forth in the comprehensive plan, and discourages uncoordinated, piecemeal approaches to solving capital and infrastructure needs. Citizen support for these investments is crucial, particularly if voters will be asked to approve a bond to finance the improvements.

Revenues and Expenditures

All expenses must fall within legal parameters for spending. Budgets should relate to the priorities set in the city's strategic plan, provide for continuous service delivery, and balance competing concerns.

Expenditures include items such as personnel, operations (postage, rent, building maintenance) and capital outlay (building construction, land acquisition, larger purchases like vehicles).

Public Participation

Cities spend public money, so the public has a right to participate. Public notice is required for:

- Budget hearings
- New and increased fees
- Quarterly financial statements
- Sale of bonds

Budgeting Roles and Responsibilities

Mayor and Clerk

- Draft the budget
- Prepare budget calendar

Council

- Adopt city financial, investment, purchasing, credit card and other financial policies by resolution
- Responsible for establishing internal controls to protect city funds and assets
- Designate banks and credit unions used as depositories for city funds by ordinance
- Fund the city's financial audit

Treasurer

- Invest city funds as authorized by Council resolution
- Work with the auditors
- Provide a monthly report on city finances to Mayor and Council
- Publish quarterly treasurer's report as legal notice in newspaper or on city website

Public Purchasing Basics

Procedures vary for bidding on public works; for purchasing materials and supplies unrelated to public works; and for purchasing architectural, engineering or landscape architectural services. There are also different thresholds that determine whether a city can make purchases without going out for bid. Cities should establish sound policies and processes in the pursuit of efficient and cost-effective procurement that will result in the most beneficial outcome for the city. Purchasing personnel should be diligent in practicing good stewardship of public resources.

Elected Officials Should Know

- Basic requirements for purchasing, such as purchases over \$50K must be bid
- Exceptions from Competitive Bidding
- Requirements for using Licensed Public Works Contractors
- Procurement of Public Works Construction
- Purchasing Equipment & Services
- Penalties for purchasing violations
- Purchasing cards (P-cards) and how they can and cannot be used
- Sales and use tax exemptions for public purchasing

Revenues are received from several sources. There may be restrictions on the types of expenditures that can be made from certain sources. It is important to know how revenues can be used and to forecast future revenues as closely as possible to not overextend in expenditures. It is also important to know if revenues are ongoing or one-time.

Some sources of revenues include:

- › Property taxes
- › Highway Revenues
- › State Liquor Account
- › Court Revenues
- › Service or User Charges
- › Local Option Taxes (resort cities only)
- › Impact Fees
- › Franchise Fees
- › Fines
- › Grants and federal funds
- › Long-term debt – municipal bonds and other financing mechanisms such as Local Improvement Districts, Business Improvement Districts, and Urban Renewal Agencies



Budgeting Considerations

Elected officials have different priorities. For some, keeping taxes and utility rates low is their primary goal. Others see value in incrementally saving over time to accrue the revenue to help fund reconstructing streets and needed future water and sewer projects.

The outcomes of these decisions often are not immediately known. For example, focusing solely on tax relief and low utility rates can leave a large bill for future generations to pay when the city's roads or utility systems are at the end of their lifespan. This can force raising fees to the level needed to sustainably support the system moving forward. That can cause rate shock among utility customers as the city's rates will increase dramatically over a short period, rather than increasing incrementally over time.



Principles of Financial Management

- ▶ Build Reserve Funds to Cope with Unforeseen Situations--Reserves or savings are an essential part of the city's fiscal management, and the Council can adopt policies setting specific levels of reserves to be maintained for various funds. These help cities to weather unforeseen circumstances like a major economic downturn or a disaster or save up money to pay for a capital project.
- ▶ Do Not Use One Time Money for Ongoing Expenses--Cities frequently receive nonrecurring revenues because of state or federal policy changes, sale of land or equipment, and grants or donations. It is important to use "one time money" for nonrecurring expenses like building reserve funds, paying down debt, purchasing equipment, and capital projects. Using one time money to pay recurring expenses means that the city will have to find another source of revenue to fund those expenses in future years.
- ▶ Maintain a Long-Term Financial Perspective--New programs and services need to be scrutinized to determine the long-term impact on the city budget. Does a dollar invested today save the city money in the future? Can a new program or service generate revenue to offset its costs? What will be the cost of the new program or service when it is fully implemented?

Managing City Finances is an Ongoing Process

The Council plays a critical role in financial management and that is an ongoing process that involves hearing monthly reports on city revenues and expenses from the City Treasurer, approving all bills or payables prior to payment, setting the city's budget and tax levy, and adopting policies governing investing city funds, purchasing, and creating internal controls to prevent fraud, etc.



Internal controls

One of the best ways to prevent theft, fraud and abuse is to establish and maintain a system of internal controls. Like the separation of powers, internal controls vest different functions with different people to ensure that the people's money is being spent the way that it should be. The Council must approve all claims before payment, and the Council is responsible for establishing and maintaining an adequate and reasonable system of internal controls. Payments may be made by check, warrant or by electronic transfer following approval by the Council and must be signed or authorized by the Mayor and Clerk/Treasurer.



Seven Elements of the Internal Control Environment

- 1. Integrity and Ethical Values:** All employees should clearly understand the expectations and standards for their behavior, which should be specified in writing. Management leads by example in demonstrating a commitment to integrity and ethical values.
- 2. Commitment to Competence:** Every city employee must have a minimum level of competence and training with clear expectations, which should be in writing.
- 3. Leadership by Oversight Bodies:** The City Council plays a significant role in establishing and evaluating the control system.
- 4. Management Philosophy and Operating Style:** Management's attitude toward internal controls and safeguarding of assets will be followed by others in the organization.
- 5. Organizational Structure:** Internal controls require that cities clearly define the duties of each position; and lines of authority and responsibility; and separates duties to avoid issues. Each city should have a procedures manual indicating how each transaction should be initiated, which position should approve it, and which position should record and verify it. Periodically assessing risks internal and external is important.
- 6. Assignment of Authority and Responsibility:** It is essential to have clear, concise lines of authority for each transaction.
- 7. Human Resource Policies and Practices:** The city's human resource policy reveals its values, ethics, managerial philosophy, and other characteristics that influence the control environment. Policies that establish expected performance levels and require objective documentation of performance show the city's commitment to openness and fairness, as well as expected levels of job performance and behavior. Personnel policies detailing procedures for hiring, orientation, training, supervising, evaluation, counseling, promotion, compensation, and discipline of personnel should be available to all employees.

Planning & Zoning Basics

The Idaho Local Land Use Planning Act governs comprehensive planning and land use regulation in Idaho, setting the statewide policy framework for cities and counties. Regulations are flexible to allow planning to meet local needs. Depending on the size of the city, the Council either handle all the planning and zoning issues or a Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) can be established to help the Council avoid some of the detailed, time consuming minutiae of planning and zoning work. The Commission is intended to advise the City Council and can be given power to decide matters that do not require passing an ordinance (like variances and subdivision preliminary plats).

The Comprehensive Plan, adopted by Council resolution, is the community's vision for the future and serves as the foundation for the city's land use ordinances.

The Plan is developed with considerable public input and must cover 17 specific areas including: property rights; population; school facilities and transportation; economic development; land use; natural resources; hazardous areas; public services, facilities, and utilities; transportation; recreation; special areas; housing;

community design; agriculture; implementation; National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors; and public airport facilities.

The city is required to have a Zoning Ordinance that defines acceptable land uses for residential, commercial, and industrial zones within the city that must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Ordinance serves to minimize conflicts and provide buffers between land uses, like between residential and industrial zones. The Zoning Ordinance also ensures that land uses are compatible with infrastructure in the area.

The city is also required to have a Subdivision Ordinance that sets standards for new development, including constructing streets, sidewalks, and other infrastructure.

Planning and Zoning Decision Processes

Property development applications can't be arbitrarily decided and must go through a process to protect the constitutional rights of the property owner. The City Council and P&Z Commission must follow procedures, and base decisions on facts in compliance with local policies.

One of the most important requirements is to hold a hearing and direct people with comments about the development proposal to the public hearing, or to request they submit written testimony to the city in advance of the hearing. City Councilors or P&Z Commissioners communicating with the applicant or citizens outside of the hearing process is prohibited.

Hearings need to follow a particular order to ensure that everybody's constitutional rights are protected. For example:

1. Applicant presentation
2. Staff presentation
3. Written correspondence
4. Testimony by supporters
5. Comments by neutrals
6. Opponents speak
7. Rebuttal by Applicant
 - a. Address only points raised by opponents
 - b. No new evidence should be submitted
 - c. If new evidence is presented, hearing should be reopened for limited response to rebut the new evidence
 - d. All comments should be directed through the chairperson



In contrast, P&Z policy decisions that affect broader slices of the community, like adopting a new Comprehensive Plan or redefining permitted uses within a particular zoning district, have more flexibility in terms of how the process is conducted, how public comment is requested and received, and the criteria for decisions does not have to be based solely on facts in the record and in compliance with local policies.

Planning and Zoning

- Establishes a future acquisitions map
- Provides for development agreements
- Allows transfers of development rights
- Establishes hearing examiners
- Regulates planned unit developments
- Provides for enforcement of land use regulations
- Establishes development standards
- Provides for conditional use permits

Powers of Planning and Zoning

- Soliciting funds from federal, state and local governments and from civic and private sources
- Spending funds within the limitations established by the governing board through the budgetary process
- Hiring or contracting with employees and technical advisors, including planners, engineers, architects, and legal assistants
- Overseeing the comprehensive planning process
- Entering private property with the consent of the owner
- Bringing legal action, as necessary
- Making recommendations to the governing board
- Calling meetings and determining the agenda, though the commission is responsible for responding to requests by the governing board

Transparent & Ethical City Government

Types of Council Meetings

Regular Meetings: Regularly scheduled meetings of Council, commission, or board

Meeting Notice: regular meeting day, time, and place, posted at City Hall, and on city website and/or social media (if city has website and/or social media)
Agenda: Posted at least 48 hours before meeting at City Hall, and on website and/or social media (if city has these)

Special Meetings: Held to deal with time-sensitive issues and can be called by the Mayor or a majority of the full Council

Meeting Notice and Agenda: Posted at least 24 hours before meeting at City Hall, and on city website and/or social media (if city has these)

Emergency Meeting: Under special circumstances, emergency meetings can be held – see Idaho Code 74-204



Open Meetings

By law, all decisions made by the Council, or city boards, commissions and committees must be made in a meeting in accordance with Idaho's Open Meetings Law. The Open Meetings Law also covers when, how, and where a meeting notice and agenda must be posted, what can be done in executive session, and more.

Preparing for Council Meetings

Good preparation and a well-organized agenda along with using a form of parliamentary procedure goes a long way toward promoting decorum, keeping meetings productive, and keeping the proceedings legal. Only putting items on the agenda that should be there and adding start and end times can help to regulate the length of meetings/discussions.

A Quorum of the Council is Required to Conduct Business:

- ▶ Majority of full Council—participating in person or remotely— is required to transact business
- ▶ Mayor is not counted toward the quorum
- ▶ If Council President or another Councilor is presiding in the Mayor's absence, they are counted toward the quorum

Meeting Procedures

Cities can adopt formalized rules by ordinance or create their own rules for conducting meetings. Whatever system is adopted should ensure the rights of citizens to participate and should not conflict with federal or state laws.

Some Helpful Agenda Tips:

- Follow Open Meetings Law
- Identify action items
- Set by Mayor with input from Councilors and city department heads
- Amending the agenda -- if the change is after posting deadline, Council must approve a motion to amend the agenda stating the good faith reason why the item was not on original agenda. No action can be taken on an item added to the agenda after the start of the meeting unless Council passes a motion declaring an emergency with justification in minutes.

Debate should be encouraged. If any one voice consistently dominates the discussion and decisions, the Council may make decisions that do not represent the will of the citizens.

A consent agenda or consent calendar can be used on the Council agenda to handle multiple routine, noncontroversial items like approving minutes and payables, by approving a single motion. Any Councilor can ask questions about these items or request to remove a specific item from the list so it can be considered on its own.

Public participation should be encouraged, but the Council and Mayor should:

- Control the meeting
- Insist on decorum
- Possibly limit time so that all interested parties can be heard – particularly on controversial issues
- Sincerely listen to the public to learn and understand
- Be thoughtful and respectful in reactions to criticism
- Recess to restore order if a meeting gets out of hand
- Not allow personal attacks



Voting

- Most issues may be decided by voice vote
- Councilors should declare a conflict if one exists, and speak with legal counsel to determine the best course of action
- Certain actions require each Councilor’s vote be cast individually and recorded individually in the minutes:
 - Passing ordinances
 - When requested by a member
 - Approving contracts, and
 - Motions to go into executive session



Executive Session

Certain topics authorized by Idaho law may be discussed in closed executive session. The discussion must stick to the topic(s) specified in the motion to enter executive session and no other topics can be discussed. Executive session can be held:

- To hire a public officer, employee, staff member, etc.
- To evaluate, dismiss or hear complaints or charges about a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual agent
- To acquire real property not owned by a public agency
- To consider records exempt from public disclosure
- To consider negotiations regarding trade or commerce where the city is in competition with other states or nations
- To communicate with legal counsel on pending litigation
- To communicate with risk managers or insurance providers regarding claims
- To consider labor contract matters

The motion to go into executive session must:

- Be decided by roll call vote recorded in the minutes by individual vote
- Pass by two-thirds vote
- State the specific subsection(s) of Idaho Code 74-206(1) that authorizes the executive session in the minutes and motion

Penalty for Violating Open Meeting Law

Any action occurring at a meeting held in violation of the Open Meetings Law is void. The following fines are paid personally by members of the governing body.

- A \$250 civil fine each for an initial violation.
- A \$1,500 civil fine each for a knowing violation.
- A \$2,500 civil fine each for repeated knowing violations within 12 months.

Undergoing the cure process below protects members of the governing body from the \$250 civil fine, but it does not protect them from liability for knowing violations.



Most Common Open Meeting Law Violations:

- ▶ Late posting of notice / agenda
- ▶ Discussing a topic not on the agenda or voting on an item not marked as an action item
- ▶ Improperly adding a topic to the meeting agenda
- ▶ Communication between governing board members outside of public meeting – for example replying to all on emails
- ▶ Discussing a topic in executive session that must be discussed in public meeting



Council Meeting Minutes

- ▶ The City Clerk ensures accurate minutes are taken of Council meetings that are available to public within reasonable time after the meeting
- ▶ City Council must approve the minutes, noting any changes

Minutes Best Practices

- ▶ Reflect what was decided at a meeting
- ▶ Minutes should be an expanded version of the agenda, but follow the flow of the meeting, so if the agenda is reorganized, minutes should capture the order things happened in
- ▶ Minutes provide a valuable record documenting decisions for succeeding generations
- ▶ Should not be a verbatim transcript — just a summary



How to Fix a Violation

In the case of a citizen complaint, the city has 14 days to respond and either acknowledge the violation on the record at a Council meeting and express the city's desire to cure it, or state that no violation occurred, and no cure is necessary.

The city may also recognize on its own that a violation has occurred and within 14 days, the Council must acknowledge on the record at a meeting that the law was violated.

Then, Council must declare the action(s) taken at the meeting void and may thereafter proceed to readopt the decision(s) in compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

Minutes Must Contain:

- ▶ The date, time, and place of the meeting, and whether it is a regular or special meeting
- ▶ The names of the Mayor and Councilors in attendance
- ▶ A record of each motion, the person making the motion, the person seconding the motion, and the vote
- ▶ All resolutions and ordinances proposed
- ▶ Upon request by a single governing board member, the roll call vote on the motion. Roll call vote is also required for motions to approve ordinances, enter executive session, and approve contracts

Executive sessions are excluded from the minutes, except the motion to enter executive session with the statutory authorization, and the time the governing board entered executive session and the time the session ended.

Meeting Roles and Responsibilities

Mayor

- Works with Councilors and department heads to set Council meeting agenda
- Presides over Council meetings — in the Mayor's absence the Council President presides
- Mayor may break tie votes of Council in certain situations, but breaking ties is the only time when the Mayor may vote on a motion

Council

- Read packets to prepare for meeting
- Suggest items for Council agenda
- May approve amendments to the agenda for items that were unforeseen when original agenda posted
- Make decisions by passing motions—usually only required to pass by majority of those present and voting, but sometimes requires majority of full Council (a majority is three Councilors for a four-member Council or four Councilors for a six-member Council)

City Clerk

- Posting the notice and agenda
- Preparing and distributing packets
- Taking minutes and posting in a timely fashion after the meeting

Attorney

- Ensures proper Open Meeting proceedings for example, proper reasons to enter executive session or to add agenda items



Ethical Considerations

Contracting:

Elected officials cannot:

- Be paid to work for the city over and above their salary as an elected official
- Have an interest in a contract let to the city
- Sell goods or services to the city
- Purchase surplus property

Bribery & Corruption:

Idaho law prohibits bribery, threats, and improper influence by elected officials, which includes:

- Compensation or retaliation for past actions
- Buying or selling political endorsement
- Using city funds or property for financial benefit
- Using or disclosing confidential information for economic gain



Gifts:

Gifts to city elected officials and staff are prohibited, with the following exceptions:

- Fees that a public servant is legally entitled to receive
- Gifts from family, friends, or business acquaintances
- Trivial gifts under \$50 in value

Idaho Ethics in Government

Elected officials are given the public's trust to use their tax dollars wisely and act on their behalf. The public's confidence in government is only as strong as the integrity displayed by government officials. Public votes as well as private acts of elected officials are scrutinized. Idaho has several laws to enforce ethics in public leadership, but even if officials are always following the law, sometimes an action won't pass "the smell test" or look good on the front page of your local paper. Questions of ethics are often complicated because in addition to the letter of the law, there is also the court of public opinion. Sometimes just the perception of a conflict can damage the public's trust as much as an actual violation.

Most written communication (including emails and texts concerning city government) can be public information and could become part of a court case, so always use caution. If you don't want to see it in the paper, don't write it down. When you do write it down, remember that more than just the person you intended to receive it might eventually read it.

What is a Conflict of Interest?

The law prohibits city officials—elected, appointed, and staff—from taking any official action or making a formal decision or recommendation on any matter where the official has a conflict of interest and has failed to disclose the conflict of interest. Conflict of interest is defined as an action, decision or recommendation by a city official which would financially benefit the city official, a member of their household, or a business with which the city official or a member of their household is associated.



The law provides an exception for situations where the benefit arises from an action that affects the city official in the same way as others engaged in a particular industry or occupation. There is also no conflict of interest on revenue or tax measures when the city official is affected similarly to the public.

The city official should seek advice from the city attorney to determine if a conflict of interest exists. If the city attorney advises that no real or potential conflict of interest exists, the public official may proceed to act and is not subject to the provisions of the Ethics in Government Act.

If the city attorney advises that a real or potential conflict of interest exists, then the official must disclose the conflict as follows:

- ▶ An elected city official must disclose the nature of the conflict on the record at a Council meeting before the Council acts on the matter and is subject to any city rules governing conflicts of interest.
- ▶ An appointed or employed city official must prepare a written statement to the Mayor and Council describing the matter and the nature of the conflict. The city official is entitled to act on the legal advice of the city attorney.

The law requires recusal in matters involving planning and zoning and urban renewal. A city official (elected, appointed or staff) with a conflict of interest must recuse themselves from participating in deliberations and the decision. In other areas, when the city's ethics policy or state law does not expressly require recusal, the city official has the discretion to decide whether to participate in deliberations and the decision.

The Local Land Use Planning Act prohibits a member of the city Council, a planning and zoning commissioner, or a city employee from participating in any proceeding or action if the person, their employer, business partner or associate, or any person related by blood or marriage within the second degree has an economic interest in the proceeding or action. Any actual or potential conflict must be disclosed at or before the meeting at which the action is to be heard. Knowing violation is a misdemeanor.

Likewise, Idaho law also prohibits any city elected officials, city or urban renewal agency employees, or urban renewal commissioners from voluntarily acquiring any interest in any urban renewal project or property to be included in an urban renewal project, or any contract associated with an urban renewal project. A conflict of interest must be disclosed in writing to the agency and reflected in the urban renewal agency meeting minutes, and the person must recuse themselves from the matter. A violation of the urban renewal conflict of interest prohibition constitutes misconduct in office.

What restrictions apply to gifts received by city officials?

Idaho law prohibits public officials—elected, appointed and staff—from soliciting or accepting any compensation or gift from any person subject to city regulation, inspection, or investigation; from any person known to be interested in or likely to be interested in any contract or purchase; or from any person known to be interested in any administrative matter. There is an exception for trivial gifts and benefits which do not exceed \$50 in value, which are incidental to personal, professional, or business contacts.

Ethical Pitfalls

Over the years, many people have gotten themselves into hot water by misusing some of the following:

- Travel privileges, agency vehicles, agency gas cards and agency credit cards
- Using letterhead, email, phone, fax, computers for personal or political uses
- Using the elected position for personal financial gain or to garner special privileges

Avoiding the Pitfalls

- Follow Idaho's Ethics in Government Act, Idaho Public Records and Open Meeting Laws
- Identify and consult with legal counsel on conflicts of interest
- Always strive for the appearance of fairness
- Spend public funds properly

I May Have a Conflict, What Should I Do?

- Seek advice from your city attorney

Liability Protection for Local Government Officials and Employees

One of the worries that newly elected officials frequently have is that they could be sued because of their public service and potentially face crippling personal losses as a result. Fortunately, Idaho law provides protection for city elected and appointed officials, and staff, if they “stay in their lane” in terms of carrying out their responsibilities.

The Idaho Tort Claims Act allows local governments to be sued for civil damages to the extent that private persons would be liable under Idaho law. Claims may be filed against local governments, elected and appointed officials, employees, and volunteers.

The city is obliged to provide a defense for city officials and indemnify them against claims when the person is acting within the course and scope of their position or employment. Officials will only be personally liable if acting outside of the course and scope, which includes things like sexual misconduct, criminal intent or malice.



Can a Mayor or Councilor be paid for goods or services aside from their compensation as an elected official?

No. It is illegal for the city to pay for goods or services (bookkeeping, purchasing equipment, running the snowplow, etc.) aside from their compensation as an elected official. Violation is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and one year in jail.



Is it true that relatives of Mayors and Councilors cannot be selected to work for the city?

Yes. Idaho law prohibits any person related to a Mayor or Councilor by blood or marriage within the second degree (parents, children, siblings, grandparents, aunts / uncles, cousins, nieces / nephews, and grandchildren) from being hired, appointed, or selected for any paid work for the city. Violation is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and one year in jail and potential forfeiture of office.

If a relative of a current employee is elected Mayor or Councilor does this jeopardize the person’s employment with the city?

No. An employee who holds their position prior to their relative’s election is entitled to retain their position and receive cost of living increases, merit increases, and promotions.

Examples of Ethical Breaches

- ▶ Harassment
- ▶ Public records release without authority
- ▶ Destroying or removing public records without authority
- ▶ Open meeting violations
- ▶ Failure to follow bid/public works statutes
- ▶ Inappropriate relationships with employees /co-workers
- ▶ Failure to disclose and step down when necessary in conflict situations
- ▶ Misuse of public funds – embezzlement and other less obvious issues (like use of public gas cards/purchasing cards for personal purchases and overstating expenses – for example claiming meals on a work trip that were provided)
- ▶ Threats and Improper Influence – for example threats of unlawful harm to any person with purpose to influence his decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or other exercise of discretion as a public servant, party official or voter.

Public Records and Records Retention

Public accessibility of government records is a foundation of transparent and ethical government. The definition of public record established by law includes any recorded information, regardless of medium, that relates to the business of city government. Public records can be paper documents, books, maps, pictures, audio/visual recordings, microfiche, or electronic documents (including computer files, text messages and email concerning city business, even when sent using personal accounts and devices).

Records vary in their utility and significance. Ordinances, resolutions, and minutes are important for the day-to-day operation of city government and are historically significant and are not to be destroyed. Many other types of public records should be kept for the applicable retention period and then destroyed.

City Clerks have the responsibility by state law to ensure that a records retention schedule exists. State law also designates certain records to be permanent or semi-permanent or temporary and governs the destruction of records. All city records are property of the city, and no city official, elected, appointed or staff, has any personal or property right to such records. The unauthorized destruction or removal of city records is prohibited. A good records retention policy and program goes a long way toward assisting with responding to public records requests. No records, even if they can be destroyed according to the records retention policy should be destroyed if they are the subject of a public records request, lawsuit, or have historic value.

Public Records Requests

The Idaho Public Records Act establishes the ground rules for those who want to examine or receive copies of public records from state and local government agencies. Citizens and the media have a strong interest in reviewing public records and city officials must respond in a timely manner.

Records custodians (City Clerk) should work with the City Attorney in responding to public records requests. The law provides many exemptions and determining the scope of these exemptions requires the assistance of legal counsel. The City Attorney must also be involved in redacting nonpublic information from public records.

The Public Records Act

- Citizens have a right to examine and/or receive copies of documents
- Requests may be required in writing
- Cities can't ask why the document is requested

Exempt Records

All records are presumed public unless specifically exempted by state or federal law such as:

- Certain law enforcement investigatory records
- Bids or trade secrets provided by businesses in bids
- Records concerning assistance to businesses looking to locate, invest in or expand operations
- Certain personnel records—there is also personnel info that is public and must be disclosed

Denial of a Request

- Must be done in writing
- City attorney must be involved
- Must state the specific provision of law exempting the records from disclosure
- Must also state the requester's right to appeal and the timeframe for appealing

Charges for Requests

- First 100 copies and first 2 hours of labor for each request are free
- City may recover actual labor and copying costs under certain circumstances and the Council should adopt a fee schedule



Communicating with the Media



As a public official, anything you write, say, or do can now end up on the front page of the paper, on television or on social media spinning virally out of control. However, the media and social media can also be valuable partners in communicating with the public. Some best practices to avoid public embarrassment and to put the city in the best light are:

- Be honest and prepared. Sometimes bad things do happen, so it's best to be open and honest. If you have the luxury of having a spokesperson, utilize their expertise.
- Give a consistent message as much as possible.
- Even if the reporter is your friend, be aware anything you say can end up in the paper.
- Create good relationships and think of the press as your ally instead of as your adversary, as the press can be helpful in getting messages out to the citizens.
- Be open and invite members of the press to events as appropriate. This will also help to build good relationships.
- Be responsive in a timely manner recognizing the deadlines that the press work under.
- Be clear about who in the city has the authority to talk to the press.

Encouraging Public Participation

Mayors and Councilors receive many calls on a variety of issues, concerns, and topics. It is important that officials attend to the concerns of citizens, however, capturing both sides of the issue is important and will allow officials to make informed decisions rather than reacting based on one upset caller.

For example, if a citizen voiced their frustration with a city department, follow-up by speaking with the department and listen to their perspective of what happened. It may be that they were following a city ordinance and didn't have discretion to do what the constituent wanted. In some cases, these concerns may spotlight the need for changes to ordinances or there may be good reasoning behind the established policy.

Having a community relations strategy can be a great way to communicate with citizens. Strategies can include communicating with constituents through city Council meetings, individual meetings, social media, press releases, and newsletters. Involving the community in making decisions by forming boards, commissions, committees, and advisory panels can also be part of the strategy. These areas help bring the perspective of the public to projects and can also help get people involved in their government to help the public understand the issues elected officials face. This may also help create the next generation of leaders. Creating multiple opportunities for citizens to get involved and providing multiple locations, times, and formats can all increase public participation.

Some additional ways to involve the public:

- ▶ Conduct surveys of residents
- ▶ Create a city service hotline
- ▶ Have a social media presence
- ▶ Create a mayor's youth advisory council (MYAC) program to involve youth leaders

Benefits of public participation:

- ▶ Mayor and Council have a broader range of perspectives to use in making decisions
- ▶ Helps the public understand trade-offs required for decisions and the difficult choices elected official must make based on finances, competing land-use needs, environmental factors, etc.
- ▶ Ensures that the unique nature of each community is represented
- ▶ Increases trust in public officials
- ▶ Helps citizens feel that they have a stake in their community



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The AIC website contains FAQs, training videos, and more in-depth manuals on most of the items covered in this manual. <https://idahocities.org/>

Additional Resources:

- ▶ Department of Environmental Quality <https://www.deq.idaho.gov/>
 - Drinking Water; Groundwater; Waste/Reclaimed Water; Surface Water Quality
- ▶ Department of Water Resources <https://idwr.idaho.gov/>
 - Water Rights; Wells; Stream, Dams, Floodplains/Floodways; Water Supply; Spatial Data; Underground Injection Control Program Wells
- ▶ Department of Agriculture <https://agri.idaho.gov/main/>
 - Pesticide Certification; Invasive Species; Groundwater Monitoring & Protection; Surface Water Quality
- ▶ Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing <https://dopl.idaho.gov/>
 - Plumbing Code; Public Works Contracting
- ▶ Idaho Public Utilities Commission <https://puc.idaho.gov/>
 - Rates and Policies for Privately-Held “Public” Drinking Water Utilities
- ▶ Idaho Health Districts <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/health-wellness/community-health/public-health-districts>
 - Public Swimming Pools; Septic Systems; Public Health Preparedness
- ▶ Idaho Transportation Department <https://itd.idaho.gov/>
 - Highways, streets
- ▶ Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC) <https://lhtac.org/>
- ▶ Idaho’s Office of Emergency Management at <https://ioem.idaho.gov/>
- ▶ 8 Regional Planning Organizations
 - Community Planning Assn. (COMPASS): Treasure Valley <https://www.compassidaho.org/>
 - Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Org. (KMPO) <https://www.kmpo.net/>
 - Bannock Transportation Planning Org. (BTPO) <https://www.bannockplanning.org/>
 - Lewis-Clark Valley Metropolitan Planning Org. (LCVMPO) <https://lewisclarkmpo.org/>
 - Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Org <https://www.bmpo.org/>
- ▶ Office of the Attorney General Transparent and Ethical Government manuals:
 - Idaho Open Meeting Law: <https://www.ag.idaho.gov/content/uploads/2018/04/OpenMeeting.pdf>
 - Ethics: <https://www.ag.idaho.gov/content/uploads/2018/04/EthicsInGovernment.pdf>
 - Public Records: <https://www.ag.idaho.gov/content/uploads/2018/04/PublicRecordsLaw.pdf>

NOTES

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF IDAHO CITIES (AIC)

Mission: To promote excellence in and advocate for city governance, community leadership, and services to citizens to strengthen Idaho cities.

Vision: AIC is the leading resource for effective city governance in Idaho and is the go-to source for city related communication, ideas, education, training, technical assistance, and credible data and research.

What we provide: Advocacy/Training and Education/Technical Assistance

Advocacy -- AIC serves as the cities' voice with the Idaho Legislature, the Governor and executive branch agencies, state and federal Courts, and Congress.

AIC online Bill Tracker and Bill Summaries help city officials understand and keep track of important policy issues.

Weekly email updates during the legislative session include summaries of legislative activity and recommendations for how city officials can effectively engage on policy issues.

Training and Education -- AIC holds the following annual events:

- ▶ January — City Officials' Day at the Capitol in Boise
- ▶ January — Water Summit in Boise
- ▶ April — Regional Spring District Meetings
- ▶ June — AIC Annual Conference in Boise
- ▶ September — Idaho City Clerks, Treasurers & Finance Officers Association Institute
- ▶ November — Regional Fall Academies
- ▶ December - Legislative Summit in Boise

Additionally, Frequently Asked Questions, and manuals are available online (ask your city clerk for login information) at idahocities.org



Technical Assistance -- AIC is here to help answer your questions on city governance, budgeting, planning and zoning, purchasing, and many other areas (except personnel).

The Idaho Counties Risk Management Program (ICRMP) is here to help you navigate personnel-related decisions and policy development.

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