





Appointed City Officials

While citizens elect or vote on people to make some decisions about how a city is run, other people are appointed or hired to implement the city council's actions. Some of the key city staff are described below.

-  **City manager:** The council-manager form of government requires that the city council appoint or hire someone to run the city. Not all cities have this form of government. This person is often referred to as the chief administrator or city manager. The city manager supervises and coordinates the various departments throughout city hall. The city manager prepares the budget for the council's consideration and makes reports and recommendations to the city council. All department heads usually report to the city manager. The manager's position is expected to be non-political.
-  **City clerk:** All Florida cities have a city clerk. Usually the city charter says what the duties of the city clerk should be. The responsibilities of the clerk typically include attending all city council meetings, taking minutes of the meetings, and being responsible for all or most official records. Additional duties of the clerk may include those of the treasurer, purchasing officer, etc. In a few cities, the clerk is elected by the people, but in most the clerk is appointed by the city manager or city council. In some municipalities, one person is chosen to be both city manager and city clerk.
-  **Finance officer:** The finance officer, who is sometimes referred to as the treasurer, usually serves as the chief financial officer for the city. This is typically clarified by the city charter. Duties of the finance officer include the collection and receipt of all city monies. The finance officer is responsible for keeping records of city monies and for investing these funds. He/she is responsible for paying city employees and others who provide goods and services to the city. The finance officer often reports to the city manager and city council on the financial condition of the city.
-  **City attorney:** In most cities, the city council appoints a city attorney to give them legal advice. The city attorney may be a full-time employee, part-time employee or hired on a case-by-case basis. The city attorney gives legal opinions on issues affecting the city and advice on laws that the council is considering.

Student Activities

2nd Grade

- ☞ Introduce the terminology of the appointed city personnel. Describe their duties to the students and how their positions are different from elected positions. If at all possible, have the actual city staff come for a visit to the classroom.

3rd Grade

- ☞ Students can research the different appointed city positions available through history. Presentations can then be made to the class.

4th Grade

- ☞ Students can research the appointed city positions through Colonial times as compared to current practices, identifying the specific functions of the positions. Field trips or classroom visits by city personnel would be appropriate.

5th Grade

- ☞ Students can develop their own appointed positions in the classroom. They must have job descriptions in order to fill the city positions appropriately through the hiring process.
- ☞ Reports and/or interviews can be done about the specific city positions.

Student Questions:

1. Why are some city officials elected and others appointed? What positions are appointed in your city (or a nearby city)?
2. What types of appointed city officials are needed to provide the wide range of city services? How do these positions compare to jobs at other places within the community?