

Maxwell School Center for CAREER DEVELOPMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

OVERVIEW

State governments encompass policy issues related to agriculture and rural policy, education, environment, fiscal management, health, infrastructure, and public safety and justice. Managers organize and provide direction for a team of administrators and staff who together develop programs and deliver services to the public. State and local government managers work to implement the policies of the elected official – mayor, governor, and council members. Specific responsibilities are highly dependent upon the size and needs of the community for which they work. Among the typical responsibilities are: meeting with elected officials, hiring and training administrators, implement laws and policies and ensuring they are upheld, investigating citizen concerns, soliciting bids from government contractors for building and development, and managing the day-to-day operations of the city, county, or state operations (ICMA, Local Government Management: It's the Career for You).

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities in state and local governments cover a wide range of interest areas. Governments need and hire individuals to work on a broad range of issues and with diverse constituents. Some of the common areas in which state and local government employees' work include: program management and evaluation, social services, healthcare, human resources, public relations, economic development, financial management, urban/town planning, and policy making. State and local government employees may be elected, appointed, or hired through traditional means.

State and local government managers bring management experience, technical knowledge, academic training and a commitment to public serve to the community they serve. Their basic mandate at both the state and local levels is to provide public services to the community effectively and efficiently. Because the goal of government officials is to provide public services, it is essential for anyone entering the field to have a demonstrated commitment to making a difference. A strong sense of integrity and ethics as well as administrative and leadership abilities is also essential. Work in state and local government requires the ability to enforce established policies and regulations, to communicate effectively with a range of constituents and colleagues, and to work well under pressure.

TYPES OF JOBS

- City or town manager
- County or state administrator
- Planner
- Fiscal director
- Innovation fellow
- Budget analyst

QUALIFICATIONS + SKILLS

- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Program and project management
- Policy implementation skills
- Interpersonal/human resources skills
- Budgeting and financial literacy
- Working creatively with limited resources

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SAMPLE EMPLOYERS

To locate specific career opportunities, contact the human resources office of the cities, counties, and states you would like to work for. Often a visit to the website for that geographic location will lead you to concrete information about opportunities available. Many states, cities, and counties also offer established full-time management training programs (often referred to as internships). These are ideal opportunities for individuals seeking a career in management who need to gain professional experience.

- American Association of Port Authorities
- American Planning Association
- American Society of Public Administration
- Council of State Governments
- International City/County Management Association
- International Personnel Management Association
- National Association for County Community and Economic Development
- National Association of Counties
- National Association of State Budget Officers
- National Association of Towns and Townships
- National Civic League
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National Governors' Association
- National League of Cities
- U.S. Conference of Mayors
- Great Lakes Commission
- Delaware River Basin
- Multi-State Tax Commission
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana Regional Council of Governments
- Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor

SAMPLE MAXWELL CLASSES

- Public Budgeting
- State and Local Government Finance
- Urban Policy
- Metropolitan Government and Politics
- Education Policy
- Regulatory Law and Policy
- Ethics and Public Policy
- Health Economics and Policy
- Digital Government
- Human Resources Management for the Public Sector

RESOURCES

- GovtJobs.com
- StateLocalGov.net
- Maxwell's ICMA student chapter

RELATED CAREER GUIDES

- Non-profit Management
- Consulting
- Education Policy
- Economic Development

PRO TIP: The job outlook in state and local governments is reflective of the current economic condition of a given state, county or city as well as the federal government. Relocation may be necessary if you seek more responsibility or leadership opportunities.