

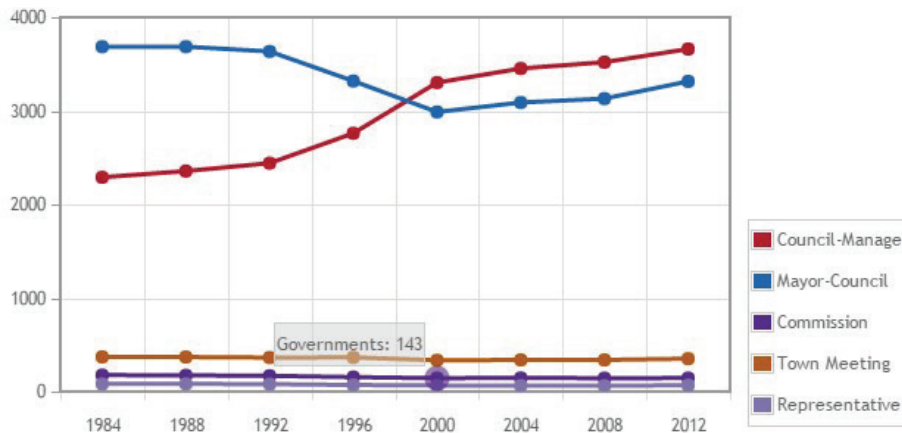
Trends in Municipal Government Form

Recently released figures from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) show that as cities grow in population they are likely to switch from the Council-Mayor form of government to the Council-Manager form. According to ICMA’s Municipal Yearbook¹:

As of 2011, council-manager forms made up 38 percent of all municipalities with populations between 2,500 and less than 5,000. This figure jumps to 47 percent of governments with populations between 5,000 and 9,999, and 53 percent for those with at least 10,000 residents and fewer than 25,000.²

The trend is explained by James Svava, Director of the Center for Urban Innovation at Arizona State University: “As they get larger, the government needs to do more, perform at higher levels, and they recognize this is beyond the capabilities of elected officials.”³

The fact that a significant number of cities still use the Mayor-Council form of government is explained by Michele Frisby, ICMA’s Public Information Director, as due to the growing number of governments serving populations exceeding 250,000.⁴ But even these cities which are served by full-time Strong-Mayor systems are employing more Chief Administrative Officers and City Managers to assist the political leaders, according to Svava.⁵



Source: ICMA’s Municipal Yearbook.

For more information on this topic, read “Muscatine Needs Professional Management,” at <http://limitedgovernment.org/brief24-9.html>.

(Endnotes)

¹ Form of Government Statistics (2011): Council-Manager versus Mayor-Council in Specific Population Ranges, ICMA, <http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/documents/kn/Document/9364/Form_of_Government_Statistics_CouncilMan%20%20ager_versus_MayorCouncil_in_Specific_Population_Ranges> accessed on March 15, 2017.

² By the Numbers, “Growing Cities Swap Council-Manager, Mayor-Council Governments,” *Governing* (June 26, 2012) <<http://www.governing.com/blogs/by-the-numbers/government-mayor-council-manager-form-changes.html>> accessed on March 15, 2017.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.