

STANDARD CE.7B -- FEDERALISM

Civics and Economics CE.7 Study Guide

STANDARD CE.7A -- STATE GOVERNMENT

The structure and powers of the state government.

The form of government of the **Commonwealth of Virginia** is established by the **Virginia Constitution**.

Legislative, executive, and judicial **powers are separated** at the **state level** of government.

What is the structure of Virginia's state government?

What are some of the powers of the three branches of state government?

The Virginia Constitution distributes power among the **legislative, executive, and judicial branches** of the state government.

The legislative branch is the **General Assembly**, a **bicameral legislature**—the **House of Delegates** and the **Virginia Senate**—that meets annually for a fixed number of days.

The executive power is exercised by the **governor**, who is elected for a **four-year term** of office. The governor appoints members of the cabinet, who oversee specific functions of government.

The **lieutenant governor** and the **attorney general** are executive branch officers who are elected for a four-year term of office.

The judicial power is exercised by a **court system** that consists of **four levels** of courts:

- **Supreme Court**
- **Court of appeals**
- **Circuit courts**
- **District courts** (including small claims courts and juvenile and domestic relations courts)

The relationship of state governments to the national government in the federal system.

The Constitution of the United States of America establishes the principle of **federalism**, which is the **division of power** between the **states** and the **national government**.

The **expansion** of the **national government's powers** into areas traditionally **reserved to the states** has altered the relationship of states to the national government.

*How does the Constitution of the United States of America outline the **division and sharing of powers** between the national and state governments?*

The Constitution of the United States of America establishes a **federal form of government** in which the **national government is supreme**.

The **powers not given** to the national government by the Constitution of the United States of America **are reserved to the states**.

The Constitution of the United States of America **denies certain powers to both** the national and state governments.

Primary **responsibilities** of each level of government

- **National:** Conducts **foreign policy**, regulates **commerce**, and provides for the common **defense**
- **State:** Promotes **public health, safety, and welfare**

Tensions exist when federal **mandates** require state actions without adequate **funding**.



STANDARD CE.7C -- STATE LAWMAKING PROCESS



STANDARD CE.7D -- STATE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The roles and powers of the state executive branch and regulatory boards.

The state lawmaking process.

Members of the **Virginia General Assembly** are elected to make state laws.

All citizens can learn the importance of the individual's participation in the policymaking process through direct participation and simulations.

Which branch of the Virginia state government has the power to pass laws?

How does the Virginia General Assembly make laws?

The lawmaking process in the **Virginia General Assembly**

- **Introducing a bill**
- Working in **committees**
- **Debating** the bill on the **floor** of each house
- **Voting** on the bill in each house
- Sending the bill to the **governor** to sign into law



Elected officials in the Virginia General Assembly write laws and take action **in response to problems or issues**.

Individuals and **interest groups** help shape legislation.

The **primary issues** in the legislative process at the **state** level

- **Education:** To promote an informed and engaged citizenry (i.e., establish minimum standards for local schools)
- **Public health:** To promote and protect the health of its citizens (i.e., fund health benefits)
- **Environment:** To protect natural resources (i.e., improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay)
- **State budget:** To approve a **biennial** (two year) budget prepared by the governor
- **Revenue:** To levy and collect **taxes**



**Governor Bob
McDonnell**

The **executive branch** of the **Virginia** state government **enforces the laws** and plays a key role in the policymaking process.

*What are the roles and powers of the **executive branch** at the state level?*

The **governor** of Virginia exercises the formal powers granted by the Virginia Constitution.

In carrying out both the formal and informal powers of the office, the **governor** fills **several roles**, including

- chief of state
- chief legislator
- chief administrator
- party chief
- commander-in-chief.

Cabinet secretaries and departments, agencies, commissions, and regulatory boards

- administer laws
- enforce laws
- regulate aspects of business and the economy
- provide services.

Civics and Economics

CE.8 Study Guide

STANDARD CE.8A -- LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The structure and powers of the local government.

The units of **local governments** in Virginia are political subdivisions **created by the General Assembly**.

What are the units of local government in Virginia?

The units of local government in Virginia are **counties, towns, and cities**. Local governments **exercise legislative, executive, and judicial powers**.

Each Virginia **county** has an elected **board of supervisors**, which exercises **legislative powers**, enacting **ordinances** (local laws) and adopting an annual **budget**.

Each Virginia **county** and **city** has an elected or appointed **school board**, which oversees the operation of the K–12 public schools in the county or city.

Each Virginia **incorporated town** has an elected **town council**, which exercises **legislative powers**, enacting ordinances and adopting an annual budget. A **mayor** is elected either by the voters or the town council members.

Each Virginia **city** has an elected **city council**, which exercises **legislative powers**, enacting **ordinances** and adopting an annual **budget**. A **mayor** is elected either by the voters or the city council members.

In Virginia counties, towns, and cities, a **manager** may be hired by the elected legislative branch **to oversee the operations** of the local government.

In every Virginia locality, **state courts** resolve judicial disputes. Judges of the **circuit courts, district courts, juvenile and domestic relations courts, and small claims courts** hear cases in each locality.

Which officials are locally elected?

The Virginia **Constitution** requires that voters in every locality elect a **sheriff, a clerk of the circuit court, a commissioner of revenue, and a treasurer**.

Which powers do local government exercise?

Virginia local governments exercise **defined and limited powers**, including the power to

- **enforce** state and local laws
- promote **public health**
- protect **public safety**
- **educate** children
- protect the **environment**
- regulate **land use**
- levy and collect **taxes**.

STANDARD CE.8B -- LOCAL VS. STATE GOVERNMENT

The relationship of local government to the state government

The authority of local governments in Virginia is **derived from the state**.

What is the relationship between the state government and local governments in Virginia?

All powers of local governments in Virginia are given to them by the **Constitution of Virginia** and acts of the **General Assembly**.

Not all counties and cities are given the same powers. **Cities have charters** listing their powers.

STANDARD CE.8C -- LOCAL LAWMAKING PROCESS

The local lawmaking process

Counties, cities, and towns **adopt and enforce ordinances** to **provide services** for their residents.

All citizens can learn the importance of the individual's **participation** in the policymaking process through direct participation and simulations.

How do localities enact ordinances?

An elected **board of supervisors** is the **local legislative body** in counties and is responsible for passing laws (ordinances) for the county.

An **elected council** is the local legislative body in independent **cities** and incorporated **towns**.

Individuals can have the **greatest influence** on the decisions made by **local government officials**.