



Local Government In Maine

An Introduction

SPEAKER(S):



Deb Paredes
(they/she)

Organizer



deb@lwvme.org



Sherry Beck Paprocki
Volunteer



Paprockiltd@cs.com

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN MAINE

- The three buckets of Local Government
- Home Rule
- Municipal government
- Municipalities in Maine
- How to get involved

ACKNOWLEDGING WABANAKI NATIONS

The indigenous populations of the land now called Maine include the [Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, Penobscot, Mi'kmaq, and Abenaki](#).

Collectively known as the Wabanaki, or People of the Dawnland, these nations have long lived on this land despite efforts of settler-colonists to displace them.

Towns and other municipalities in Maine are built on land that settler-colonists took from these Wabanaki nations. Settlers were authorized to build and govern settlements on the land not by the Wabanaki people who lived there, but by England, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or after 1820, the state of Maine.

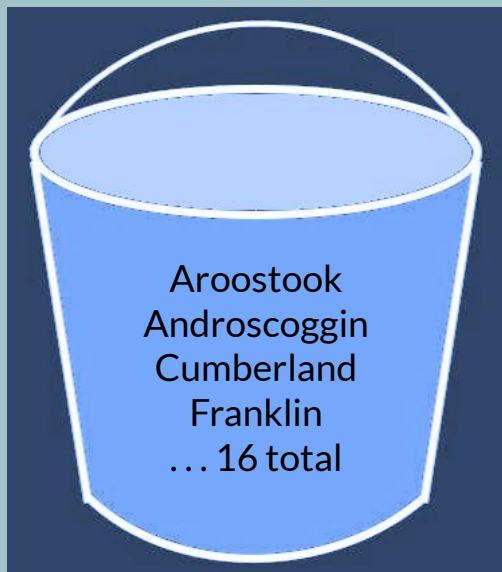
We begin with this acknowledgement because the history of settler-colonialism has shaped what local government in Maine looks like today.



WABANAKI SOVEREIGNTY

- Wabanaki Nations are sometimes treated like local governments by surrounding municipalities or the state of Maine
- Wabanaki Nation's right to govern themselves comes from their own inherent sovereignty

THE THREE BUCKETS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT



County

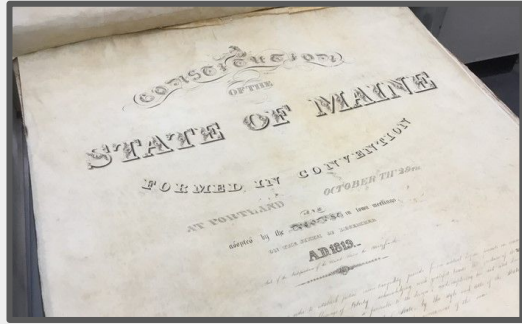


Municipal



Regional and
Municipal Districts

HOME RULE: Adopted in 1969



Maine State Constitution
Article VIII, Part 2: Municipal
Home Rule,



Maine State Law
Title 30-A, Chapter 111:
Home Rule

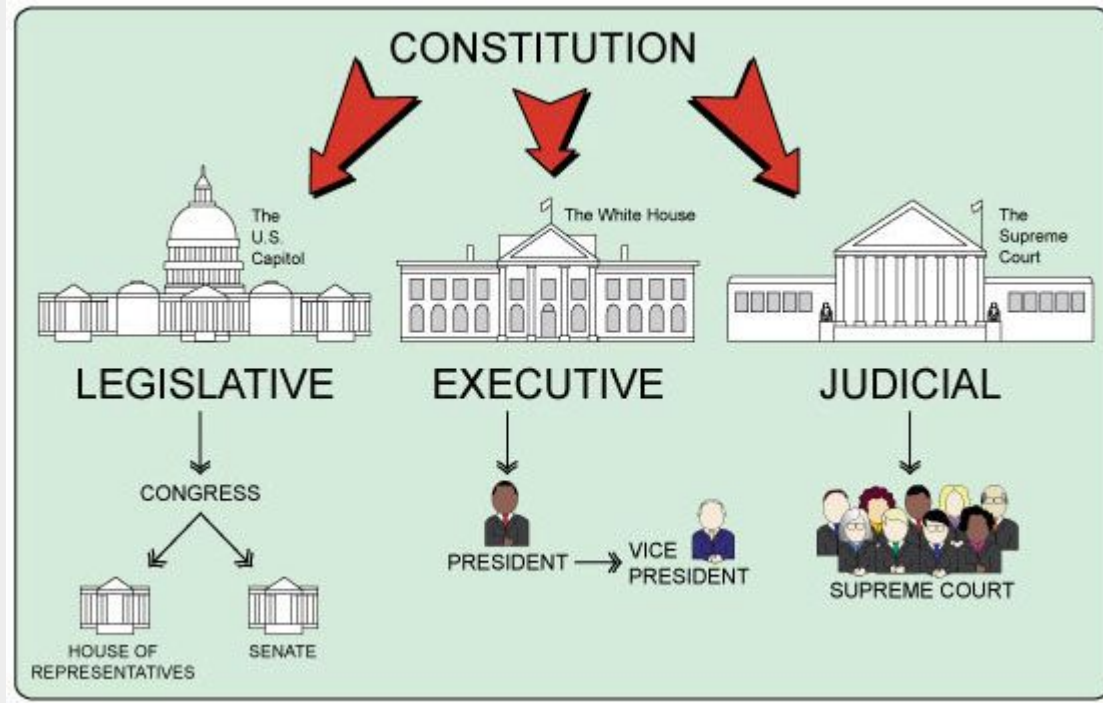


Photo by Ashley L. Conti, Central
Maine
Towns & Cities

TO SUM UP:

The state of Maine authorizes municipalities to make decisions for their communities, *unless* those decisions are in conflict with state law.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT: GOVERNMENT IN MINIATURE

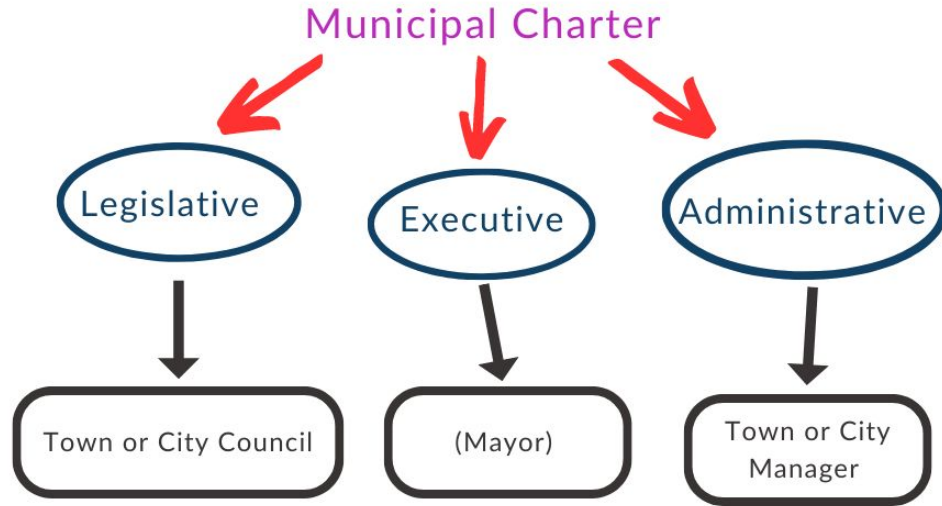


Federal Government in the United States:

- Governing Document
 - Constitution
- Legislative Branch
 - Congress
- Executive Branch
 - President
- Judicial Branch
 - Supreme Court

Graphic from Van Norman Law:
<https://vannormanlaw.com/the-three-branches-of-government/>

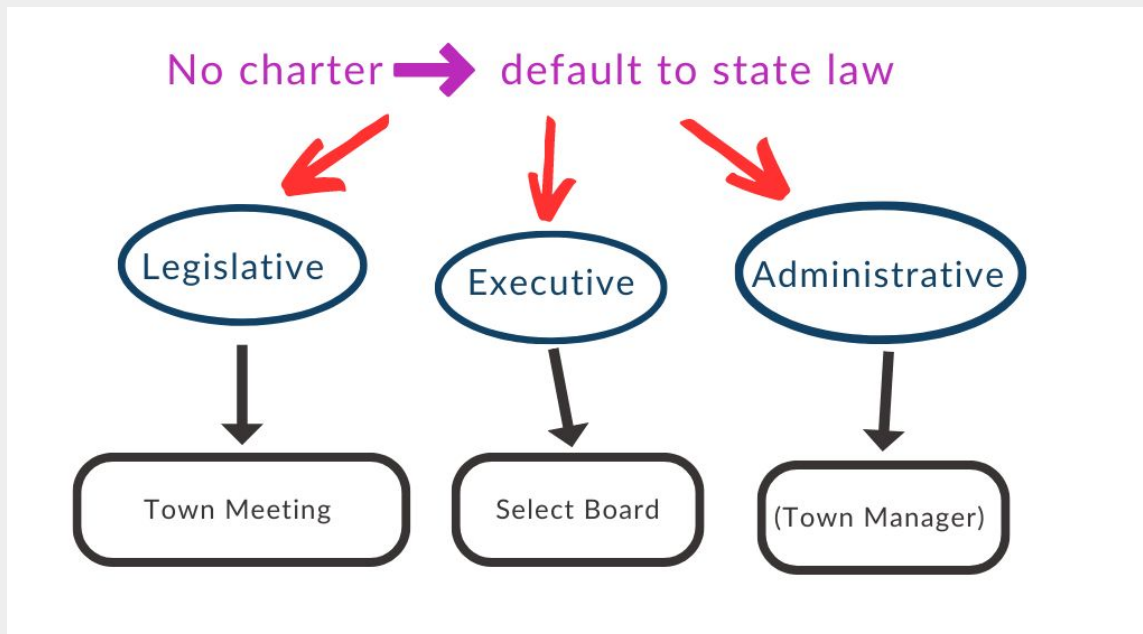
MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT: GOVERNMENT IN MINIATURE



Municipal Government in Maine:

- Governing Document
 - Charter
- Legislative Branch
 - Town or City Council*
- Executive Branch
 - (Mayor)
- Administrative
 - Town or City Manager

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT: GOVERNMENT IN MINIATURE

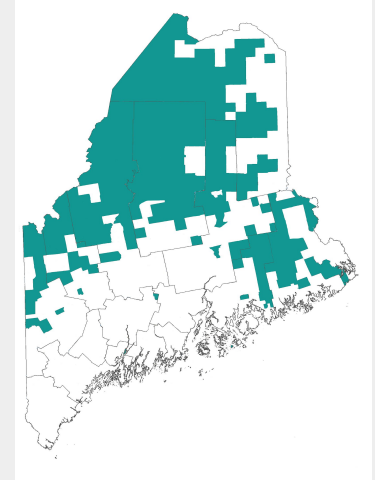


Municipal Government in Maine:

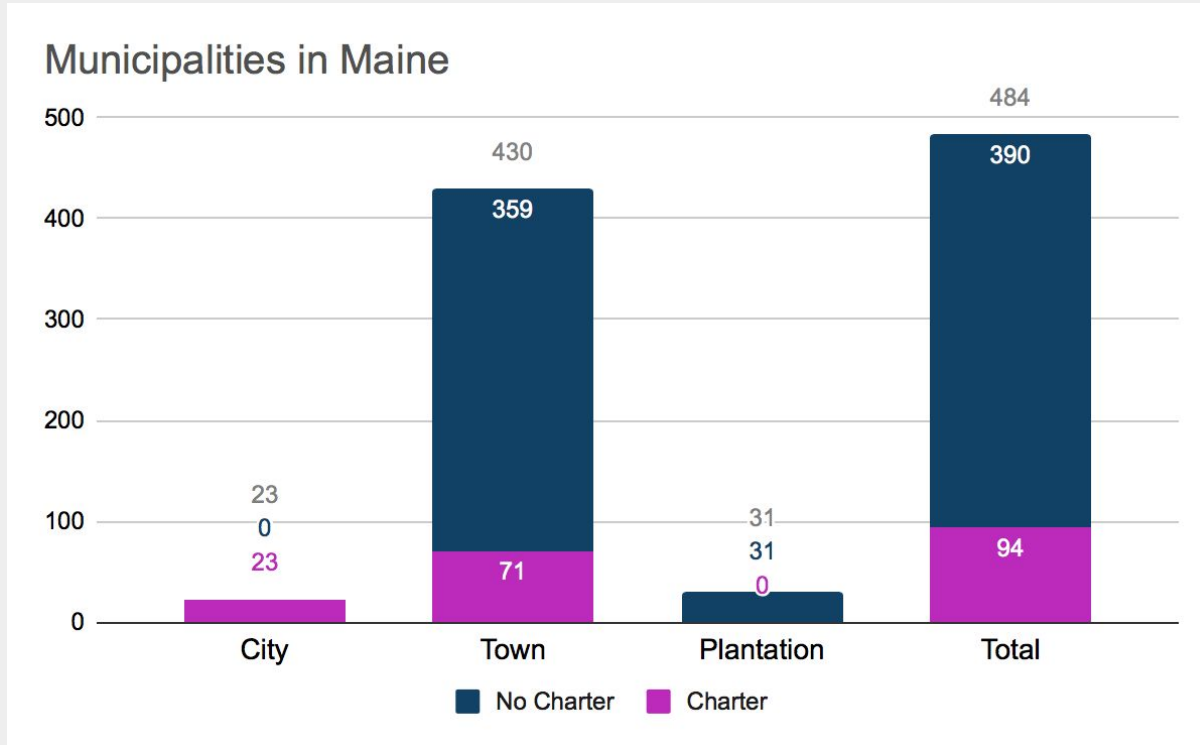
- Governing Document
 - State Law
- Legislative Branch
 - Town Meeting
- Executive Branch
 - Select Board
- Administrative
 - (Town Manager)

WHAT ABOUT UNORGANIZED TERRITORIES AND PLANTATIONS ?

- 429 townships comprise Unorganized Territories
 - Services are provided by County governments, state agencies, and neighboring municipalities
- ~30 Plantations
 - Hold annual meetings and elect assessors

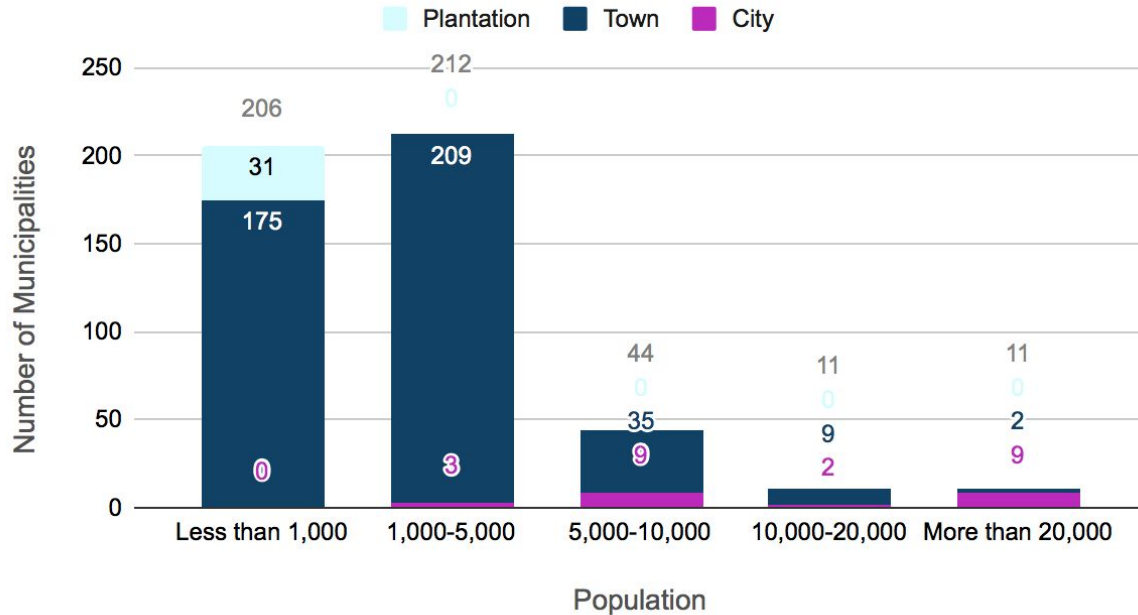


MUNICIPALITIES IN MAINE



MUNICIPALITIES IN MAINE CONT.

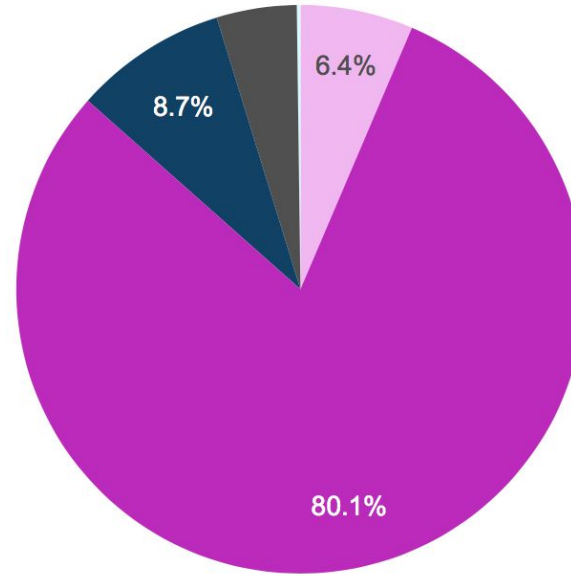
Municipalities by Population



MUNICIPALITIES IN MAINE CONT.

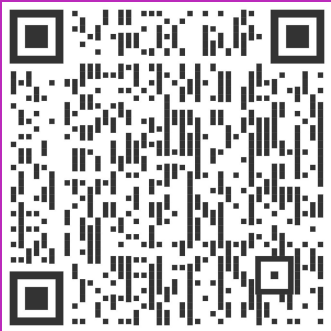
Form of Municipal Government

- Assessors/Select Board
- Select Board/Town Meeting
- Town Council
- City Council (4.6 %)
- Select Board & Town Council



ACTIVITY!

Can you find any volunteer or elected municipal roles currently available in your town?



Use this: [Municipal Governments in Maine](#)

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Join a committee

Attend a budget hearing

Help your town
apply for a grant

Volunteer for your local library
or community garden

Petition for an ordinance

Attend a school board meeting

Invite your city councilor to coffee

THE MAINE FREEDOM OF ACCESS ACT



- The Maine Freedom of Access Act (“FOAA”) grants the people of Maine a right of access to public records while protecting legitimate governmental interests and the privacy of individual citizens.
 - ◆ Ensures accountability of the government to the citizens
 - ◆ Transparency and open decision-making are fundamental principles of the Maine Freedom of Access Act

Open government is good government and the state is committed to ensuring and protecting your “right to know.”

From www.Maine.gov/foaa/

ATTEND A LOCAL PUBLIC MEETING

→ Meetings are **public**

- ◆ Public notice is required for a gathering of three or more council, board or committee members
- ◆ Check the entity's website to find the meeting schedule
- ◆ Emergency meetings also must provide public notice

Gain a Deeper Understanding:

- If your community has a comprehensive plan, get a copy and read it
- Go deeper into the budget of your community to better understand revenue and expenses

COMMENT AT A PUBLIC MEETING

- ➔ If you wish to comment, public comments are usually scheduled during a meeting.
- ➔ Some meetings are scheduled primarily to gather public comments.
- ➔ At other times, the public meeting might just be a work session of the budget committee so no public comments may be solicited.

REASONS A MEETING MIGHT BE CLOSED

- Personnel related
- Employee health records
- Juvenile records
- Others as Permitted by Law

All votes must be held in public, even if the entity has been in an executive session.

They must then re-enter the public meeting, or invite the public back into the room.

VOLUNTEER FOR A COMMITTEE

- Requests for involvement will be made by the local entity. You will likely need to apply to sit on a committee.

- The town or city manager, or select board, usually appoints people to boards and committees.
 - ◆ Some examples of local committees and/or boards might be:
 - the planning committee
 - the committee overseeing building permits
 - property tax abatement committee
 - the board of appeals, etc.

BE APPOINTED OR ELECTED TO LOCAL OFFICE

- City or Town Council
- School Board
- Water or Sanitary district board members are usually appointed

Maine has 16 counties. Run for Election as a County official:

- County Commissioner
- Sheriff
- Registers of Deeds
- County Treasurer



QUESTIONS?

Thanks!
Get in
Touch:



@lwvme   

We're an email away:
info@lwvme.org