

Steps for Making or Changing a Local Law

- 1. Problem or Need**
 Citizen or group identifies a problem or need that could be addressed through a new or revised local law.
- 2. Proposal**
 Citizen or group presents proposed law to mayor, council, commission, administrator, or staff person.
- 3. Discussion**
 Local lawmaking body discusses pros and cons of proposed law and makes changes.
- 4. Investigation**
 Staff person investigates need for proposed law.
- 5. Legal Review**
 Lawyers review proposed law to see if it conflicts with existing laws.
- 6. Draft of Ordinance or Regulation**
 Proposed law is written in draft form in legal language.
- 7. Public Discussion or Hearing**
 Lawmaking body presents proposed law in a public meeting so other people can hear about it and comment on it.
- 8. Vote by Lawmaking Body**
 If there is one, the city council (or other lawmaking body) votes on the proposed law. If the body votes “no,” the process ends here; if “yes,” the proposed law is passed on to the chief executive.
- 9. Law Signed, Not Signed or Vetoed**
 The chief executive (mayor, commissioner, or administrator) does one of three things: signs the proposed law, making it a real law; leaves it unsigned; or vetoes (rejects) it. If the law is left unsigned, it may become a real law anyway after a certain number of days, depending on the local government.

Adapted with permission from Lewis, Barbara. *The Kid's Guide to Social Action*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, 1991.