

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ISSUES

Directions: In each section on these pages, complete the sentences by filling in the spaces with the appropriate words, names, and terms from the list.

cities	inferior schools	services	populations	small towns
ghettos	businesses	black Americans	racial conflicts	governments
Hispanic	difficulties	suburbanization	urbanization	

Local governments in the United States face many problems in trying to provide (1) _____ for their residents. Many of these problems start from population changes, financial (2) _____, and conflicts in authority.

Population changes have affected local governments in the United States throughout its history. The movement of people from rural to urban areas is called (3) _____. When the first census of the United States was taken in 1790, only 5 percent of Americans lived in (4) _____. In 1920, about 50 percent of Americans resided in cities. Today, about 75 percent of Americans live in urban areas. As (5) _____ have grown, demands for services have increased. However, urbanization seems to have slowed, and rural areas and (6) _____ have begun to grow again.

Especially during the 1900s, American cities were confronted with (7) _____, the movement of people from the city to areas outside it. Many more white families than black families moved to the suburbs. Central city (8) _____ were typically poorer than suburban ones. (9) _____ also moved from cities to suburbs, which reduced jobs and economic opportunities in the cities.

The urbanization of minority groups also affected local governments. In 1910, only about 10 percent of (10) _____ lived in urban areas. Today, about 85 percent of them do. Millions of black Americans live in (11) _____, crowded, poorer neighborhoods where minority groups are forced to reside because of social and economic pressure. (12) _____ in cities have presented difficult problems for local governments. During the 1960s, riots broke out in the black ghettos of Detroit, Los Angeles, Cleveland, and other cities. Black leaders complained about (13) _____, limited economic opportunities, and unfair treatment by police officers. These complaints are still common today. Local governments of major cities now also face the needs of growing (14) _____ and Asian-American populations.

laid off workers	Northeast	protested	West	grants-in-aid
estimated value	reduced	people	ability	infrastructure
deteriorating	bankruptcy	declining	growing	property taxes
assessing				

Local governments have been affected by a regional shift. Cities in the South and (15) _____ have grown in population, while cities in the (16) _____ have declined. Local governments in rapidly (17) _____ cities struggle to meet the service needs of expanding populations, including transportation and water. Older cities face problems of (18) _____ populations and weakening economic opportunities. Local governments in older cities also must repair or replace (19) _____ bridges, roads, school buildings, and other facilities, often called the (20) _____.

Traditionally, the major source of revenue for local governments has been (21)_____. Local governments collect these taxes from homeowners, businesses, and other owners of taxable property. The amount of tax is based on the property's (22)_____. Many object to property taxes. They point out that standards for (23)_____ (determining the value of) property vary from city to city and from one assessor to another. Many also believe that property ownership is a poor measure of the (24)_____ to pay taxes.

People in many parts of the United States have (25)_____ the taxes collected by local governments. For example, in 1978, California voters approved an amendment to the state constitution that (26)_____ property taxes. This amendment was called Proposition 13 because of its position on the ballot. As a result of its approval, many local governments in the state reduced services and (27)_____.

All municipalities have become more dependent on (28)_____ from the state and federal governments. Some local governments have financial troubles despite aid from the higher levels of government. A few cities have come close to (29)_____. Such financial problems are more severe in Northern cities that have lost many (30)_____ and businesses.

**central city
close
consolidated**

**variety
power
suburbs**

**one
annexing
community**

**metropolitan
higher taxes
areawide**

**decentralization
local
overlapping**

Almost every metropolitan area has a wide (31)_____ of local governments. The Chicago area has about 1,400 local governments. Philadelphia has about 875, and Houston has about 800. No one local government may have sufficient (32)_____ to solve certain problems, and the different authorities with (33)_____ jurisdictions may find it difficult to work with one another. Many experts on government believe that small, ineffective local units should be (34)_____ (combined) into larger, more efficient ones. At one time, cities solved part of this problem by (35)_____ (adding) surrounding areas as the cities grew. But today, most large cities are surrounded by incorporated suburbs that the (36)_____ government could not annex if it wished to do so.

In some areas, citizens have tried to bring the central city and the (37)_____ under the authority of (38)_____ government. This metropolitan government would be responsible for police protection, water supply, mass transportation, and other services that might be handled best by an (39)_____ authority. The metropolitan areas of Miami and Jacksonville, Florida, and Nashville, Tennessee, have (40)_____ governments. However, most U.S. voters have rejected such consolidation proposals because they fear (41)_____ and believe that only small local governments can remain (42)_____ to the people.

Although some citizens have worked for consolidation, others — especially those in large urban ghettos — have fought for more (43)_____ control. Some blacks and members of other minority groups have demanded (44)_____ (splitting up) of authority to give neighborhood residents a greater say in controlling their own affairs and providing (45)_____ services.

Local Government Issues

Completion

- (1) Local governments in older cities face such challenges as repairing or replacing deteriorating bridges, roads, school buildings, and other facilities, often called the _____.
- (2) Traditionally, the major source of revenue for local governments has been _____ taxes.
- (3) During the urban riots of the 1960s, black leaders complained about such issues as limited economic opportunities and unfair treatment by _____ officers.
- (4) When voters in the state of _____ passed Proposition 13, many local governments in the state reduced services and laid off workers.
- (5) All municipalities have become more dependent on grants-in-aid from the state and _____ governments.

Matching

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| (6) _____ suburbanization | (a) the movement of people from rural to urban areas |
| (7) _____ consolidation | (b) combining smaller, ineffective local government units into larger, more efficient ones |
| (8) _____ urbanization | (c) adding surrounding areas to the jurisdiction of a city government |
| (9) _____ annexation | (d) splitting up authority to give neighborhood residents a greater say in controlling their own affairs and providing community services |
| (10) _____ decentralization | (e) the movement of people from cities to surrounding communities |

True/False

- (11) _____ Today, central city governments are wealthier than rural area governments.
- (12) _____ Inferior schools in cities have presented difficult problems for local government.
- (13) _____ In some areas, citizens have tried to bring the central city and the suburbs under the authority of one government.
- (14) _____ Local governments in rapidly growing cities struggle to meet the service needs of expanding populations.
- (15) _____ Most minority groups in the United States live in suburban areas.
- (16) _____ No one today believes that small local governments can remain closer to the people.
- (17) _____ A city with a declining population usually has a weakening economy.
- (18) _____ During much of the history of the United States, there has been a shift in the population from rural to urban areas.
- (19) _____ The amount of local tax paid by the owner of a home or business is based on the property's assessed value.
- (20) _____ Over half of the cities in the United States have come close to bankruptcy because of severe financial problems.