Who Runs the City?

**Objectives**

Students will:

- Recognize the City and County Building as headquarters for Salt Lake City government.
- Locate the mayor and council offices by examining a floor plan of the City and County Building.
- Experience the mayor/council system through a mock city government demonstration.

**Student Instruction**

1. Introduce the idea of city government by talking about leaders in your school. **Ask students:** Who is in charge of making sure everyone obeys the rules at our school? Who helps make the rules at our school?

2. **Explain:** Salt Lake City has leaders just like our school has leaders. The group that makes the laws for the city is called the city council. The person in charge of putting the laws into action is the mayor. The city council and the mayor work at the City and County Building. We’ll see the place where all the laws for the city are made on our field trip to the building.

3. Pass out copies of the *City and County Building Third Floor Plan*. Ask students to locate the offices of the mayor and the council, the mayor’s conference room, and the council chambers.

**Student Activity**

1. Students will create a mock city government to help them understand how the government works. Pass out the *Government Leader Job Descriptions Handout*. As a class, read the handout and review the responsibilities of the mayor and city council members.

2. Ask students to brainstorm the qualities they think a city official should have.

3. Encourage students to run for office. Each candidate will make a short “campaign speech.” Students will vote for a mayor and five council members.
4. Council members sit facing the class at the front of the room. Ask student “citizens” to present ideas for classroom “laws” to the council. Speakers will stand before the council, mention a class problem, and suggest a new rule. Other students may speak in favor of or against the proposal.

5. The council will briefly discuss the proposal and vote to adopt or reject it. The council may consider several proposals, as time allows.

6. If the rule is approved, the mayor assigns a committee to make sure that the rule is enforced. (Example: A student complains that chairs are not pushed in and that this creates a hazard. The council votes that all chairs must be pushed in before recess. The mayor appoints someone to make sure that all chairs are pushed in.)

7. If students live in Salt Lake City, ask them to find out who the mayor and their council representative are. If students live outside the city, ask them to find out how their local government works and identify key officials.

**Extensions**

**City Government**

Students will brainstorm the services needed to run a city to better understand how the city meets its needs. Compare lists to the city departments found in the phone book under the blue pages in the “Salt Lake City Government” section.

Students living outside Salt Lake City could identify their own form of local government and compare it to Salt Lake City's government.

**Communication, Interview Skills**

Students may identify their council member and interview him/her regarding neighborhood issues.

**Careers**

Students discuss jobs within the city as possible career choices.

**Resources**

For additional information on Salt Lake City government, order *User Friendly Government for Young Citizens* from the Salt Lake School District Education Foundation by calling (801) 578-8212.
Key

304  Council Office
315  Council Chambers
325  Council Members' Offices
326  Council Conference Room
306  Mayor's Office
336  Mayor's Staff
338  Mayor's Conference Room
City Government Leader Job Descriptions

The City Council

Just as the Congress makes all the laws for the United States, the city council makes all the laws for Salt Lake City. The city council has seven members. They meet in the Council Chambers at the City and County Building twice each month to discuss ideas for new laws.

Citizens can come to these meetings, too. Citizens can tell the council about a problem in their neighborhood, suggest a new law, or speak for or against a law the council is discussing.

The city council listens to citizens’ opinions about an idea for a new law. Then it votes to approve the law or reject it. If the law is approved, everyone in Salt Lake City must obey it.

The Mayor

The mayor is like the President of Salt Lake City. The mayor’s job is to put into action the laws passed by the city council. Many city departments help the mayor with this job. For example, if the council passes a new traffic law, the mayor tells the police department to enforce it.

The mayor also makes sure the city government provides services to keep citizens safe and healthy. Different city departments provide different services. For example, the water department brings clean water to all the buildings in the city. The sanitation department picks up trash and recycling each week.

The mayor is in charge of all city departments. If citizens have problems with their city services, they can go to the mayor for help.